

OFFICE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

WATER / SEWER CONNECTION PROGRAM

I. Program Description

The Water / Sewer Connection Program provides financial assistance to low and moderate income families to help them connect to the Sarasota County Utilities. The program loans Housing Trust Funds to the families that are repaid to Sarasota County.

II. Eligibility Guidelines

1. The total household income of all residents that will reside in the home must be less than 100% of the median income for Sarasota County as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), adjusted by family size.
2. The residence being assisted must meet the following:
 - a. The housing unit must be located in Sarasota County.
 - b. The home must be a single-family dwelling unit, condominium or town home. A mobile home that is located on land owned by the mobile home owner is also eligible for assistance.
 - c. The value of the home, condominium, town home or mobile home may not exceed the maximum sales value specified in the current Sarasota County Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) for the Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program. The home will be the current market value, as determined by the Sarasota Property Appraiser divided by .85 or an appraisal. For multi-family units, the total value will be divided by the total number of units to determine the value for each housing unit. Properties with an accessory dwelling unit on the site may not exceed 120% of the maximum sales value specified in the current LHAP.
 - d. The applicant must own the housing unit. Eligible forms of ownership may include:
 - i) Fee Simple Title
 - ii) A 99-Year leasehold interest
 - iii) Ownership or membership in a cooperative or mutual housing project that constitutes home ownership under state law.
 - iv) A life estate

- e. The property must not have a restriction or encumbrance that would impair the good and marketable nature of title to the ownership interest. All existing mortgages and property taxes must be current.

III. Uses of Funds

Funds may be used to cover the following costs:

1. The water and sewer impact / assessment and connection fees charged by a public utility and any other approved capital charges for an owner occupied residence. Rental properties or accessory dwellings will not be eligible for assistance.
2. The cost to connect to the utility system including permits, certifications, back flow preventors, disconnecting the well, capping the well and abandoning the existing septic system.
3. The costs incurred to record a lien on the home or special needs housing.
4. Other costs necessary for connection to public utilities as determined by the Director of OHCD in conformance with this program.

The security deposit fee imposed by the Sarasota County Utility Department to initiate service is not an eligible expense.

Applicants who previously received assistance under the SHIP program for water and sewer impact / assessment and connection fees will be eligible to receive a loan under this program for the approved capital charges.

IV. Contractor Selection and Payment.

The applicant will be responsible for selecting the contractor that will work on the property. The selected contractor must meet the following requirements:

1. The contractor and/or all subcontractors must be properly licensed to work in the jurisdiction where the work is being done.
2. The proposal from the contractor may not exceed 10% of the OHCD estimated cost to perform the proposed repairs or be lower than 15%.

- 3 The applicant and the Director of the Office of Housing and Community Development or designee must approve all partial draws and final payments.

V. Maximum Award

The maximum amount of Water/Sewer Connection Program funds that may be provided to any one applicant or non-profit is \$15,000. The amount of equity remaining in the property will not affect the amount of assistance that can be provided under this program

VI. Loan Terms

The interest rate will be 0% with repayments deferred until the home is sold, transferred, no longer the primary residence of the applicant or 30-years, whichever occurs first.

VII. Program Administration

1. The Director of the Office of Housing & Community Development is authorized to approve eligible applicants in conformance with these regulations and consistent with the policy guidelines for the program.
2. The Director of the Office of Housing and Community Development will administer the Impact Fee Program consistent with these policies. In the event an affected party believes that the Director is not interpreting these policies correctly, the affected party must request a meeting with the Director to discuss and seek resolution of the conflict.

If, following a meeting with the Director, the issue remains unresolved; the affected party will have the ability to appeal the Director's decision to the City/County Management Staff. The written appeal must be filed with the Director within 15 days of the meeting with the Director. The affected party(s) must, in writing, describe the issue and the reason they believe the interpretation is not accurate. The City/County Management Staff will consider the request, within 45 days, and make a final decision. **The decision of the City/County Management Staff is final and may not be further appealed.**