

**SC Housing County First Initiative:
Closing the Gap in Rural Homeownership**

Many in rural communities feel that they are the last in line when it comes to getting the services and resources they need. Whether it is having access to broadband to stay connected, medical care for health problems, or buying a home in a community that they love, they often lag behind more urban areas. But the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority (SC Housing) is changing all of that with the launch of its new County First Initiative for these homebuyers. The new initiative offers incentives to increase home ownership in certain rural counties in our state that are considered “economically distressed” by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Interested homebuyers may qualify for a low interest rate loan and \$8,000 in forgivable down payment assistance in order to buy a home in the following rural counties: Abbeville, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Dillon, Edgefield, Fairfield, Georgetown, Hampton, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Newberry, and Williamsburg.

“We took a hard look at where we were making the most home loans and realized that some rural counties were underrepresented,” says Bonita Shropshire, Executive Director of SC Housing. “We knew that we would have to increase our efforts and provide additional assistance in order to increase investment in those counties. If individuals and families in these communities are ready to buy a home, we want to offer them the extra help to do so,” states Director Shropshire.

Mortgage loans are for 30 years and are available through any of SC Housing’s network of more than 100 participating lenders statewide. Maximum income limits are based on the median income per county and household composition. The County First program may not be used for refinancing.

For more information about the County First Initiative, please visit the agency’s website at <https://www.schousing.com/Home/County-First-Initiative> or call (803)896-2211. Follow us on social media at #CountyFirst.

About SC Housing

SC Housing is a self-sustaining housing finance agency committed to ensuring that South Carolinians have the opportunity to live in safe, decent, and affordable housing. Agency operations are supported by a funding base that includes fees and other revenue earned through the administration of agency programs. For more information, visit www.SCHousing.com.

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