

HOMES

Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service, Inc. (HOMES, Inc), is a private non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation established to serve the housing needs of low and very low income households in our established service area. HOMES is a Certified Housing Development Organizations (CHDO) allowing access to special set-asides of federal housing funds with which additional housing challenges can be met.

Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service, Inc. is exactly what the name implies. It is a Christian ministry with no denominational affiliations. Although several associations have been established, no regular financial support is received.

We utilize all funds, both private and public, at our disposal. Although we rely heavily on volunteer labor and donations, we do have full-time carpenters whose living is building for very low and low-income families. We also make it clear at the outset that each family is expected to pay for their home or the repairs done at a rate that is affordable to that particular family.

HOMES, Inc. has been in existence since 1984, and came about as a result of the merger of Whitesburg Home Repair, a volunteer repair service started in 1975 by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and Eastern Kentucky Housing Development Corporation (EKHDC), a private non-profit construction company started in 1967. Homes has always relied on volunteers to assist in the fruition of its mission. The first staff were two Mennonite volunteers.

How Does HOMES Operate?

A volunteer Board of Directors that meets monthly governs HOMES. Nine directors constitute the Board. HOMES' Board of Directors are all volunteers. Anyone living in HOMES' service area may become a member of the corporation by paying a \$1.00 per year membership fee. All clients and tenants of HOMES are encouraged to participate in the governance of HOMES.

The Board empowers Executive Director, Don Profitt, with day-to-day management within the confines of the Articles of Incorporation, by-laws, and published policies and procedures. He, in turn, delegates to administrative personnel, carpenters, and volunteers to carry forward the Mission.

HOMES is a member of the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises, Inc., (FAHE), an umbrella association of non-profit housing organizations located throughout Central Appalachia, (Kentucky; Tennessee; Virginia; West Virginia). Through its association with FAHE and USDA Rural Development services, and securing state and federal funds, HOMES is able to provide funding for approximately 25 new homes, 10 major rehabilitations, and 30 minor repairs annually to residents of its service area.

Clients must be at or below 115% of the adjusted median income for the county in which they reside, have reasonably good credit, and have some repayment ability in order to qualify for service by HOMES, Inc. Clients lose self-esteem if all services are given to them; therefore, some payment is required. HOMES services some loans on which the monthly payment is \$10.00.

To finance construction, HOMES competes competitively for federal funds from Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and several state programs operated by Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC).

Volunteers are extremely important in these efforts, because every hour of volunteer labor leverages \$10 of funding from one of these public sources.

Donations of cash and materials from volunteers further extend the number of households that can be served by grant and loan funds.

HOMES also partners with local banks to provide very low interest rates to qualified families.

HOMES also offers housing and budget counseling. In order for any family to qualify for a home, they must attend counseling sessions with the Housing Coordinator. The degree of counseling depends on the homeownership readiness the client exhibits at the time of application. Some clients require extensive counseling while others require only an hour or so.

HOMES, Inc. also owns several rental properties that are available at affordable rents to low-income clients. To rent from HOMES an applicant must be at 60% or less of median income. The average rent is 20% of monthly income plus utilities.

The Volunteer Program

HOMES, Inc. runs a year-round volunteer program from its headquarters in Neon, KY. Volunteers are accepted every week of the year, except the week of Thanksgiving, and the week of Christmas.

The average stay for a volunteer is one week. Housing is bunkhouse style with separate kitchens and shower facilities. Accommodations are available for approximately 80 persons per week. Volunteer groups are responsible for purchasing and preparing their own meals.

Fees for each person goes toward materials, administration, and expenses related to the volunteer program. Volunteers are also required to furnish appropriate work clothing and certain hand tools and safety equipment.

Facilities

The headquarters was once an active coal mine and the volunteer quarters is in the maintenance building. The space has been converted into sleeping quarters for about 120 volunteers per week, three kitchen spaces, an open space which can be divided into devotional areas or opened into one community room. Shower and bathroom facilities are provided (7 stalls on the ladies' side; 6 on the men's).

Volunteer quarters are similar to a camp bunkhouse. They are heated and air conditioned.

Volunteers are responsible for their own meals. Packed lunches are necessary because some jobs are a distance from the volunteer headquarters and 'fast food' is not available. Water jugs or coolers are essential for all jobs.

Telephone service is available for collector credit card calls. Cell phones do work occasionally in the area, dependent on which side of the hill you happen to be on.

A washer and dryer are located in the Volunteer Quarters; please supply your own detergent.

Tools

Group Equipment

First Aid Kit
Garbage Bags
Paper Towels
Plastic Wrap
Aluminum Foil
Paper Plates
Dish Towels
Dish Washing Cloths
Dish Washing Liquid
Water Jugs
[Toilet paper]

Personal Equipment

Work Gloves
Safety Goggles
Nail Apron
Claw Hammer
Ear Plugs
Water Bottle
Sleeping Bags / Sheets / Blanket
Pillow
Towels and Washcloth
Soap and Shampoo
Toothbrush and Tooth paste
Other toiletries as needed
Sunscreen
Sunglasses

Frequently Asked Questions

What type of work will we be doing?

The work ranges from concrete foundations, porches, roofing, framing, painting, landscaping, demolition, sheetrock installation, etc. The particular project(s) your group will be assigned will be available one week prior to your departure.

What kind of clothes should we bring?

Old clothes are preferable. Some type of sturdy shoe is recommended. Spring and winter groups should be prepared to dress in layers that can be removed as the temperature fluctuates.

Who will be there to meet us?

Greg Hawkins (Volunteer Coordinator) should be waiting on your group if you have notified him about your estimated arrival time. It does not matter what time you arrive as long as we know when to expect you.

What if we have no work experience?

HOMES, Inc. does not allow any volunteers to work unsupervised. All our work is done under the supervision of trained professionals with years of experience teaching unskilled youth and adults the basics of their particular trade.