



thurstonhousinglandtrust.org

HOMEBUYER GUIDE

WHAT YOU NEED
TO KNOW ABOUT
BUYING A THLT
HOME





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Welcome! We're Glad You're Here...

About THLT

Thurston Housing Land Trust is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We are a democratically governed, community-based housing land trust. Our vision is to create affordable homes for lower/moderate income people, especially those historically excluded from the benefits of stable homeownership and the asset-building opportunity it can provide.

History

THLT started as a group of concerned citizens who met regularly to discuss ways to reduce the impact of rising housing costs in our area. We incorporated in May 2018, receiving our tax exempt status in June 2019. We sold our first home in 2023 and currently have six units being prepared for sale with supportive funding and special buyer subsidies provided by state and county agencies.

Getting Started

For first-time home buyers, the path to affordable home ownership can seem overwhelmingly complicated. We offer support and connections to help you prepare for this step, but also to create a community inspired to make homeownership affordable for as many people as possible. We hope you'll join us.





Step One: Is a Community Land Trust Home Right for You?

THLT operates by the “pay-it-forward” model used by community land trusts. In exchange for the significant down payment assistance that THLT provides, you agree to pass on the good deal to the next eligible buyer. The assistance is not a loan that you are responsible for repaying. The formula resale price means you earn a reasonable amount of equity during the time you own your home - an incremental increase in value, plus paying off the principle of your mortgage - without pricing the next modest-income household out of the market. Finally, while you own the house like any homeowner, THLT owns the land the house sits on, and you pay a modest monthly Ground Lease fee.

Become A Member

THLT is a democratically governed membership organization. Our homeowners have a voice in decision making. A third of the members of our Board of Trustees will be homeowners from our program. Membership also includes those from our community who support our program and mission. You don't have to wait to become a homeowner: you can join now to support our work!

Who Buys a CLT Home?

CLT homeowners include all types of people—families, grandparents, couples and single folks. They are grocery store clerks, mail carriers, teachers, electricians, small business owners, restaurant workers, police officers, and more. The people who will purchase homes through THLT's program are done renting and ready to be homeowners, but cannot afford to buy a home on their own.





Step Two: Are you eligible to buy a THLT home?

To be eligible to purchase a THLT home, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age (legal contract age in Washington).
- Be a first-time home buyer (you must not currently own a home or have owned a home in the past three years).
- Be a Thurston County resident (preferred).
- Be income eligible: your combined household income for all earners must be below the maximum (usually 80% of Area Media Income - see table below).
- Be able to get pre-approved for a mortgage. We can refer you to trusted local financial institutions who are familiar with CLT homeownership and our programs, and can help guide you to become approval-ready.
- Be able to contribute to the down payment. The actual amount depends on the price of the home, and any special grants or subsidies that may be available.

2026 INCOME LIMITS – THURSTON COUNTY 80% AMI

Family Size	Annual Income
1	\$ 68,800
2	\$ 78,640
3	\$ 88,480
4	\$ 98,240
5	\$ 106,160





Step Three: Apply for Mortgage Preapproval

A home bought through THLT costs significantly less than that home's market-rate value. Many homeowners have mortgage payments close to what they paid in rent. We partner with a number of local financial institutions to make sure they understand the unique lending requirements for CLT home sales and can provide our prospective homeowners the pre-purchase support and services they need.

First Steps

Preparing for homeownership can take some time. It's not unusual for families to be correcting or building their credit, taking homebuyer classes, and working with a lender to become pre-approved a year or two before they close on a home. The community lenders on our referral list are dedicated to increasing affordable homeownership in our community, and often offer special low-interest loan programs, down payment assistance, counseling, and other options

Pre-approval

Getting loan pre-approval does not commit you to working with a specific lender, although often they will be your final choice. Getting pre-approved is, however, a requirement for being included on our list of applicants for a specific property.





Step Four: Home Purchase and Financing

Potential THLT homebuyers who are ready to be considered for one of our available homes, will have submitted the necessary paperwork to THLT and be included in our active applicant pool. When a home is ready, we will contact the applicants in that pool to make arrangements for them to see the home and make their own decision about whether to apply.

Once selected from among the eligible applicants who have applied you will be ready to start the homebuying process:

1. Meet with THLT to develop and sign a purchase and sale agreement for your home.
2. Select a lender and complete loan paperwork.
3. Apply for downpayment assistance and other possible homebuyer assistance offered through your lender.
4. Complete loan requirements, such as home inspection, appraisal, and home insurance.
5. Before closing, meet with an attorney to review the Ground Lease (See next section.)

We will be working with you to answer your questions during this process, and we also have a list of community financial partners you can access.





Step Five: The Ground Lease

Before closing, you will meet with a THLT attorney at no cost (or an attorney of your choice, at your expense) to review the THLT ground lease. The ground lease describes your and THLT's rights and responsibilities, including those regarding lease payments, care for your home, occupancy rights and restrictions, home improvements, inheritance of the home and ground lease, and the resale price formula and resale process



Rights

1. To live in the home as long as you want, just like any other home purchase.
2. To care for your home, pay taxes and insurance, and be a responsible neighbor, as with any other home.
3. To sell your home when you want or need to, under the terms of the Ground Lease which determines the resale price.
4. To have the right to peaceful use of your home in all respects, in keeping with the Ground Lease provisions.

Responsibilities

1. To maintain your home in good condition. THLT is here to support our homeowners and help with problem solving.
2. To pay your property taxes and insurance premiums.
3. To pay monthly the small Ground Lease and repair reserve fees.
4. To communicate about financial or other problems that may arise.



Step Six: Closing and Moving In!

As part of the closing process, you will confirm arrangements for the insurance and property taxes on the home, and your monthly lease payment.

Throughout the process, THLT staff and volunteers are available to answer questions and offer guidance. We are all one community, and we demonstrate that by building and valuing our relationships with one another from the beginning. In addition, when you become a member of THLT, you share the same rights to participate in our democratic processes as all members.



Participate

THLT Homeowners are automatically members; we encourage you to participate as a Board member or on advisory committees.

Communicate

We are here to work together to solve problems! We hope our homeowners will help develop and guide the services and support needed for the community to thrive.





Resources

Creating permanently affordable homeownership opportunities requires the shared resources of many different organizations and individuals in our community, and at the county and state level. Here are some resources to support those starting out on their path to homeownership.

WA Homeownership Resource Center

Phone: (877) 894-4663

homeownership-wa.org

Offers free information and referral to vetted homeownership supports including credit counseling and other services.

Washington State Employees Credit Union

Phone: (800) 562-0999

wsecu.org/loans/home-loans-first-time-homebuyers

Credit Union offering homeownership counseling, down payment assistance programs, special loan programs, etc.

Olympia Federal Savings

Phone: (360) 754-3400

www.olyfed.com/home/affordable-home-loan/

A local community bank offering first-time homebuyer and construction classes, special affordable loan programs, and more.

O BEE Credit Union

Phone: (360) 943-0740

<https://www.obee.com/Borrow/Mortgages/>

Credit Union offering first-time homebuyer classes, special loan programs, down payment assistance, and more.



More Information about Community land Trusts

Community land trusts (CLTs) have been around for less than 50 years, although their roots are much older. Precursors to the modern-day CLT can be found in the Garden Cities of England, the Gramdan Movement of India, and the moshav communities of Israel, as well as in many of the single tax colonies and planned, leased-land communities created in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century.

The nonprofit organization generally credited with being the first CLT, New Communities, Inc., was founded in southwest Georgia in 1969, a product of the Southern Civil Rights Movement. A decade later, only a handful of CLTs were operational in the United States, all of them in rural areas. The first urban CLT did not appear until 1980. Another 20 years passed before the number, variety, and dispersion of CLTs had reached the point where it was fair to speak of a CLT “movement.” Today, there are over 260 CLTs in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The model has begun spreading to other countries as well, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, and France.

For more information, we recommend this page at our CLT network partner, Grounded Solutions:

[Groundedsolutions.org/strengthening-neighborhoods/community-land-trusts/](https://groundedsolutions.org/strengthening-neighborhoods/community-land-trusts/)





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