

Help getting a home

Emmanuel Kleinbooie takes a look at the different state housing subsidies that are available

SUBSIDY schemes are at the centre of the government's efforts to provide housing. People can apply for subsidies as an individual or as parties in a housing project.

They will need the following documents:

- Their identity document and that of their spouse, or a permanent resident permit if not South African;

- Proof of income;
- Purchase and sale agreements; and

- Proof of marital status or dependents.

You may qualify for a subsidy if:

- You are a South African citizen or a permanent resident;

- You are married or living with a long-term partner or have dependents;
- Neither you nor your spouse owns or have ever owned property;

- Neither you nor spouse have ever received assistance from the government to buy a property;

- Your monthly household income is R3 500 or less;

- You have capacity to contract; and

- You are disabled.

TYPES OF SUBSIDIES

Individual subsidy

An individual subsidy is for people who want to buy an existing house or stand on private purchase and sale agreement basis.

The individual subsidy must be for a home outside an existing project.

Project-linked subsidy

It is given to a qualifying individual to buy property on a government-approved project.

An applicant must pay an amount of R2 479 to the Municipality, unless exempted by the minister.

Consolidated subsidy

This is an additional subsidy scheme for people who received a serviced site before 1994. The subsidy is for making improvements to buildings.

A contribution of R2 479 is

required if you want to use a contractor.

Institutional subsidy

This is for individuals and parties on a purely rented or rent-to-buy basis. Municipalities commonly act as an intermediary.

Transitional subsidy

These provide temporary relief for destitute people, such as orphans, for a specified duration.

Rural housing subsidy

People who live in areas that fall under the authority of an amakhosi may apply for this subsidy. The chief of the area must grant a

'Permission to Occupy' a piece of land before a subsidy can be approved.

The rural subsidy can be used for other rural community development apart from building houses. This includes sanitation, roads and storm water drains, for buying building materials, to lay water pipes, and to upgrade existing houses.

A contribution is required if the total monthly income of the applicant exceeds R3 500. Anyone earning less than this gets a full subsidy.

The rural subsidy is only accessible through an implementation agent such as a municipality, developers, non-governmental organisations and community based organisations.

The Provincial Housing Department has to approve the implementation agent before a rural subsidy is allocated.

When municipalities act as an implementation agent of a rural subsidy scheme, their role is to:

- Help with the project application and approval;

- Control the subsidy applications and help people fill in the forms;

- Manages subsidy payments;

- Helps people to plan housing projects; and

- Assists people to apply for housing finance.

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THE GIFT OF LIFE



KRISHEN Indarjit, of the City's Environmental Health Department, donates a pint of blood this week at the Grove End clinic, in Phoenix. June is Blood Donor Month and the City's Health Department and the South African National Blood Service has made an urgent appeal for donors to help ease the national blood shortage. To donate you must weigh more than 50kg, lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, and be between the ages of 16-65

Picture: ROMITA HANUMAN

Aids training for healers

THEMBA KHUMALO

THE City's Health Department and the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine have launched a project to equip traditional healers with skills to better handle HIV/Aids patients.

It's seen as a way to bridge the gap between Western and traditional medicine.

Dumisani Msomi, a Senior Quality Assurance Officer with the City's Health Department, said: "We train healers to identify opportunistic infections, how to promote voluntary counselling and testing, and how anti-retrovirals work."

They also learn about home-based care, patient

referral and record keeping.

Msomi said research showed that four-fifths of the community consults traditional healers as well as clinics. "It was necessary that there should be collaboration between the two health service providers," he said.

Project leader, Prof Nceba Gqaleni of the school of medicine, said: "We have been getting a positive response from traditional healers."

"This was made easy by the long working history between the Municipality and the healers. This has elevated the initiative to a high level," he said.

Also involved in the project are the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health and the

eThekweni Traditional Health Practitioners' Council.

The training is funded by the US government.

Msomi said they hoped to cover all of KwaZulu-Natal, with eThekweni pioneering the project.

Training

So far, most of the healers have been trained in eThekweni, but some training has taken place in the iLembe and uMgungundlovu districts, said Msomi.

Trainees are identified and informed of the project by the Traditional Health Practitioners' Council.

They are then registered and enrolled for training.

Msomi said they were con-

fidant the initiative would yield positive results.

"We are sure the traditional healers who have attended our programme know which conditions to treat with umuthi (traditional herbs) and which conditions need to be referred for immediate biomedical service attention," he said.

Traditional practitioner Tholakele Ngubo, who was a trainee on the project, said: "The relationship between traditional healers and Western practices will now grow and help a lot of people."

"This is because of the information and training we got. The skills we have attained will go a long way to helping our people," she said.

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Forum focuses on environment

ROMITA HANUMAN

THE Electricity Department shared a host of energy saving tips at a forum last week to mark World Environment Day.

The event, organised by the eThekweni Health Department and held at the Exhibition Centre, was attended by representatives of national and local government, and business.

The theme was "CO₂ - Kick the habit towards a low-cost economy", and climate change was a hot topic.

Speakers gave presentations on projects

being run to help tackle climate change.

Roy Wienand, an Electricity Department official, spoke about the department's programme to encourage the use of energy-efficient fluorescent light bulbs; he called on consumers to turn off air-conditioners when not in use; and not to leave appliances and computers on stand-by mode.

A number of speakers stressed the importance of taking action now to reduce the effects of global warming.

Cllr Skhumbuzo Ndaba said climate change had

become "the greatest threat to the global environment".

He said the City had a number of initiatives in place to curb climate change, including the Municipal Climate Protection Programme.

Threats

The first two phases included putting climate change into eThekweni's Integrated Development Plan, mitigating threats to health and water, implementing emergency response measures, and protecting natural areas.

Phase three, which is now

underway, involves an energy strategy and other management programmes.

Nkoniseni Ramavhona, of the national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, warned of the growing threat from climate change.

"By 2020, 75-250 million Africans are projected to be exposed to water stress and human health will experience further negative impacts," he said.

"There will be increases of specific diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea and there will be a loss of tourism," said Ramavhona.

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