



Buying a House to Renovate from the Cuyahoga Land Bank Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for submitting a Property Purchaser Application to the Cuyahoga Land Bank. Please take a few minutes to review the information listed below as it will help guide you through the home buying process.

- 1. What is the Deed in Escrow program?** In this program, the buyer agrees to renovate a property as required by the Land Bank and the city where the home is located within 120 - 180 days. The home must pass inspections with the Land Bank *and* the city before the title can be transferred to the purchaser. If a buyer purchases a home as an Owner Occupant, the property will have a three-year deed restriction that prevents the buyer from transferring the property during this period.
- 2. How can I find out what renovations are required by the Land Bank?** The Land Bank provides buyers with a RENOVATION SPECIFICATION. This document lists the renovations that are required by the Land Bank, along with an estimate of the costs. *Links to the Renovation Specification for properties listed for sale can be found on the Land Bank's website underneath the photo of the property.* If the buyer disagrees with the Land Bank's estimated renovation cost, the buyer is able to meet with a Land Bank inspector and make the case as to how the renovation work can be done less expensively. All changes to the renovation specification must be approved by the Senior Housing Construction Manager. If the Senior Housing Construction Manager agrees with the buyer's requested changes, the Land Bank *may* agree to lower the renovation estimate.
- 3. If I purchase a property in a city with Point-of-Sale laws/ordinances, will I have to deposit funds into an escrow account for the outstanding violations?** No, you will not have to deposit funds, however you will still need to correct all Point-of-Sale violations and pass an inspection with the city.
- 4. When can I see the property I'm interested in?** Land Bank staff will contact you once a review of your application is completed. This takes approximately 7 to 14 business days. If you are an eligible buyer, staff will have a Land Bank inspector call you to schedule a showing of the property you are interested in.
- 5. What makes a buyer eligible for the Deed in Escrow Program?** A buyer must meet the requirements listed in the Land Bank's *Property Transfer Policy*, outlined below:
 - Not own any real property that is in material violation of state and/or local codes or has a history of code violations.
 - Not own any real property that has a history of being a site for criminal activity during the purchaser's ownership.
 - Not own any real property that is tax delinquent.
 - Not have lost any title or had any foreclosure filings against any properties within the past three years.
 - Use property consistent with current zoning requirements of the respective municipality.
 - Comply with all fair housing and market regulations.
 - Reside in Cuyahoga County or designate a local agent authorized to accept notice on behalf of the purchaser if non-Cuyahoga resident.



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6. **How do I schedule a showing?** You are strongly encouraged to review the property information that is available on the Land Bank's website and carefully select properties that you are seriously interested in. ***If you are interested in viewing a property, you must contact staff at the Land Bank office. Land Bank inspectors cannot schedule showings for you.*** In addition, once you are at a property with a Land Bank inspector, the inspector is not authorized to show you any additional properties. If you want to view additional properties, you must call the Land Bank office at 216-698-4278 or email: sales@cuyahogalandbank.org
7. **What happens at a property showing?** Print a copy of the Renovation Specification and bring it with you to your appointment. You will be able to discuss any renovation questions you have with the inspector that is showing you the property. If you will be working with a contractor on the renovation project, you may wish to bring him with you so he can see the property firsthand. ***CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER LAND BANK PROPERTIES.***
8. **Can I use my own contractors?** You may choose your own contractors to complete the required renovations.
9. **How many properties can I buy?** Generally, first time buyers are limited to one property purchase at a time.
10. **How do I make an offer on a property I've viewed?**
 - Completed Deed In Escrow Bid Form
 - Signed Renovation Specification.
 - Financial documentation covering your offer, the renovation costs, closing costs, and a 10% renovation reserve. This includes: Bank Statements, Personal or Business Loans, and Lines of Credit. Pre-Approval for a Mortgage will NOT be reviewed as the Land Bank does NOT accept mortgages on Land Bank properties.
 - **Acceptance of the offer is contingent upon scheduling and completing a Second Showing at the property with a Land Bank representative to review the renovation specification in detail and negotiate any changes to the specifications. PLEASE NOTE: All changes must be approved by the Senior Housing Construction Manager.**

The documents can be faxed to 216-698-8972 (Attn: SALES) or emailed to sales@cuyahogalandbank.org. ***INCOMPLETE OFFERS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED.***

11. **How much should I offer?** You should make your best offer upfront. ***Land Bank staff and its inspectors cannot advise you as to how much you should offer on a property.***
12. **When will I know if my offer has been accepted?** Depending on the status of the property being bid on, the Land Bank may hold your bid for up to 45 days, or at our discretion, while the property is being offered as "***Renovation Opportunity – For Sale***" on our website. Additional time may be necessary to review completed bids after the 45-day window has passed.
13. **What happens if my offer is accepted?** Land Bank staff will notify you if your offer has been accepted. The transaction will then proceed as follows:



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- If you are applying as an Owner Occupant and using the Renovation Assistance, the Land Bank will make available a renovation grant of up to \$15,000. This grant will be disbursed directly to the purchaser once the Cuyahoga Land Bank conducts a final inspection and verifies that all work has been completed and meets Cuyahoga Land Bank Housing Quality Standards. Purchasers must also adhere to all Deed-in-Escrow program and Purchase Agreement requirements including, but not limited to the pulling and closing of all required permits, in order to receive the grant disbursement.
- Set up a time to meet in-person and review the **Purchaser Guidelines and Expectations**, along with an in-depth review of the **Sales/Purchase Agreement** and the relevant **Renovation Specifications**.
- Land Bank staff will then email you and the title company a copy of the executed purchase agreement.
- Once the title company confirms receipt of funds, Land Bank staff will contact you to sign a "Work Authorization Form." This form authorizes the purchaser to act as an agent of the Land Bank in order to pull permits. Once you submit proof that a general building permit has been pulled, Land Bank staff will contact you to sign a "Notice to Proceed". The Proceed Order will authorize you to start work on the property.
WORK CANNOT BEGIN WITHOUT A NOTICE TO PROCEED.

14. How are utilities handled while I'm renovating the property? You must have the gas and electric services put into your name ***within 48 hours of signing the Proceed Order***. Water service will stay in the Land Bank's name while you are renovating the property. When you are ready to have the water turned on, you will need to contact Land Bank staff and they will work with the Division of Water to have service turned on. At closing, you will receive a bill for the water you used from the date it was turned on.

15. Will I owe taxes when I take title to the property? No. The Land Bank is exempt from property taxes; therefore, no taxes are due on the property while you are renovating it. Taxes will begin to accrue on the property when the title transfers to you. You may contact the County Fiscal Office at 216-443-7010 if you have questions regarding future taxes.

16. When can I move in? No one may occupy the property in any way ***until the title transfers to you***.

17. When can I take title to the property? For the title to transfer to you, several things must occur:

- You must provide the Land Bank with copies of closed permits for any permit that is required.
- If a permit is not required for certain mechanicals (HVAC, electric, and plumbing), you must provide a written certification from a ***licensed contractor***, indicating that they have examined the applicable system, and the system is safe and operable. ***A copy of the contractor's license must be included.***
- You must provide a copy of the Certificate of Occupancy/final inspection report from the city where the property is located.
- You must provide copies of monthly gas and electric bills, or if there are outstanding bills still in the Land Bank's name, you must pay those before the title can transfer.
- Once this information has been provided to the Land Bank, a Land Bank inspector will conduct a final close-out inspection.
- When you pass the final inspection, the Land Bank will let the title company know that the transaction can close.