

# *Resolution*

Resolution No. 26-110

By: Councilman Wolsky

## **A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE REHABILITATION MANUAL IN THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST CALDWELL**

For the Meeting of March 17 in the Year of 2026

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST CALDWELL, ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of West Caldwell (the "Township") is constitutionally obligated under the Mount Laurel doctrine to provide a realistic opportunity for the construction of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fair Housing Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et seq., as amended by P.L. 2024, c.2 (the "Amended Fair Housing Act"), establishes procedures for municipalities to obtain judicial review and compliance certification of their affordable housing obligations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township timely filed a Resolution of Participation in the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program and a Fourth Round Declaratory Judgment action in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, seeking a determination of its Fourth Round affordable housing obligations and continued protection from exclusionary zoning litigation; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of its Fourth Round affordable housing requirements, the Township is required to adopt an updated Rehabilitation Manual; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township has prepared an updated Rehabilitation Manual that is consistent with the applicable statutes and regulations; and

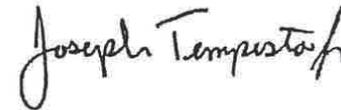
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Governing Body of the Township of West Caldwell, County of Essex, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The Township of West Caldwell ("Township") does hereby adopt the Rehabilitation Manual attached hereto as Exhibit A.
2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption according to law.

It is hereby certified that at a regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Township of West Caldwell, New Jersey being held on March 17, 2026, the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Township Clerk

The foregoing Resolution, having been duly presented to me on March 18, 2026, I hereby **approve** the same.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mayor



MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING BODY	RECORDED VOTE			
	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
KATHY L. CANALE	X			
JOSEPH CECERE	X			
STEPHEN WOLSKY	X			
MICHAEL DOCTEROFF	X			
MICHAEL CRUDELE	X			
ROBERT SCHOTT	X			
MAYOR TEMPESTA (IF TIE)				

# Home Improvement Program

## Policies and Procedures Manual

# *Township of West Caldwell*

## *New Jersey*

*Created January 25, 2021*

*Amended March 9, 2026 for Fourth Round Regulations*

*Subject to Change*

Prepared by:



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# Home Improvement Program

## *Policies & Procedures Manual*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to establish policies, guidelines and procedures which will govern the Home Improvement Program (HIP). The HIP was created by the Township to assist properties occupied by very low, low and moderate-income households to correct all existing interior and exterior health, safety and code violations in conformity with the standards of the New Jersey State Housing Code, N.J.A.C. 5:28 and the Rehabilitation Subcode, N.J.A.C. 5:23-6. The HIP is guided by Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (UHAC) promulgated by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency at N.J.A.C. 5:80-26 *et seq.*, the amended Fair Housing Act at N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 *et seq.*, the Fair Housing Act Regulations promulgated by the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Planning Services (“LPS”) at N.J.A.C. 5:99 *et seq.*, and statutorily upheld existing regulations of the former Council on Affordable Housing (“COAH”) at N.J.A.C. 5:93 and 5:97. and is subject to all laws, regulations, ordinances, and codes of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Municipality. The Municipality contracted with Community Grants, Planning & Housing LLC (CGP&H), a private consulting firm specializing in the implementation of publicly-funded housing rehabilitation programs, to manage and administer the HIP.

This manual reflects changes to UHAC that went into effect in December 2025. These UHAC changes impact every aspect of the Administration of affordable units from income qualification to deed restrictions and there are many outstanding questions about the applicability of the rules and how to implement the regulations. Future changes to the manual will be required after the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) launches its educational program for Administrative Agents. In addition, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) has indicated that they will be publishing an updated “Understanding UHAC” manual that will provide additional clarification to Administrative Agents on the updated regulations. This manual does not include all provisions of UHAC, and UHAC is a companion document to this manual.

The Program’s funding source will be municipal affordable housing trust funds. If the funding source changes, the manual will be updated to reflect the change as well as changes to regulation requirements, if any.

### **A. Fair Housing and Equal Housing Opportunities**

It is unlawful to discriminate against any person making application to participate in the housing rehabilitation/home improvement programs or rent a unit with regard to race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, familial status, disability, nationality, sex, gender identity or expression or source of lawful income used for mortgage or rental payments. For more information on discrimination or if anyone feels they are a victim of discrimination, please contact the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights at 1-866-405-3050 or via their website at <https://www.njoag.gov/about/divisions-and-offices/division-on-civil-rights-home>.



Fair Housing and Equal Housing Opportunities apply to both owner and tenant applications.

## **II. ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS**

### **A. Program Area**

The HIP is a Township wide program currently aimed at scattered site housing rehabilitation of housing occupied by very low, low and moderate-income households throughout the Township of West Caldwell.

### **B. Categories of Participants**

Both owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units are eligible to receive funding for rehabilitation provided that the occupants of the units are determined to be income eligible, the units are determined to be substandard and are for primary residency only. Owners of rental properties do not have to be income eligible households. If a structure contains two or more units and an owner, who is not income eligible, occupies one unit, funding may be provided for the rehabilitation of the rest of the units if income-eligible households occupy those units. Rents must be affordable to low- or moderate-income households.

For housing units which received past affordable housing state credit, the following rules for repeat assistance shall apply.

- An owner of a previously rehabbed unit may apply for current rehab assistance if the unit was rehabbed in a prior Round and the affordability period has expired.
- An owner of an existing affordable deed restricted ownership unit with an active deed restriction that is currently meeting a Round 1, Round 2 or Round 3 credit may apply for current rehab assistance for the municipality to obtain a Round 4 present need credit, unless the affordable housing deed restriction receives a new affordable housing credit during Round 4 due to extended controls.

- For housing units which the municipality receives an affordable housing credit in Round 4 in any category are not eligible for additional assistance from the municipality's housing rehabilitation program during Round 4.
- Essentially, a municipality cannot double credits on a unit within the same affordable housing Round.

### **C. Income Limits**

Household income is defined as the combined annual income of all family members over 18 years of age including wages, Social Security, disability insurance, unemployment insurance, pensions, dividend/interest income, alimony, etc. Each unit's total household gross income must fall within the State's affordable income limits based on family size. Maximum income limits are provided annually by NJHMFA for each of the six Affordable Housing regions. The income limits used for this program are the applicable regional income limits for the region in which the Municipality is located. Current income limits are available at <https://nj.gov/dca/hmfa/about/uhac>.

### **D. Application Selection**

If homeowner intake demand exceeds the number of openings, applications will be prioritized based on the reported income of the household as a percentage of the maximum allowable income for households of that size. This will give priority to the lowest income applicants and assist the municipality in reaching its goal of providing assistance to a minimum of 50% of the properties comprising of low income households. Otherwise, the Program will process new applicants added to the waiting list/applicant pool on a first-come, first served basis, to qualified applicants. If there is a waiting list, priority will be given to homeowners with less than \$300,000 in liquid assets. Assets in federally recognized retirement accounts do not apply to the liquid asset limit. The HIP will establish the waiting list from the program marketing efforts identified in Section IX of this manual.

## **III. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

### **A. Eligible Improvements**

The purpose of the program is to bring substandard housing up to code. In order to qualify for participation in the program, the condition of each home must be certifiable as being "substandard" as defined in N.J.A.C. 5:93-1.3.

In other words, at least one of the following major systems must be in need of replacement or substantial repair:

- Roof
- Plumbing (including wells)
- Heating
- Electrical
- Sanitary plumbing (including septic systems)
- Load bearing structural systems
- Weatherization (building insulation for attic, exterior walls and crawl space, siding to improve energy efficiency, replacement storm windows and storm doors and replacement windows and doors)

The related work may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Lead paint remediation
- Interior trim work
- Interior and/or exterior doors
- Interior and/or exterior hardware
- Interior stair repair
- Exterior step repair or replacement
- Porch repair
- Wall surface repair
- Painting
- Exterior rain carrying system repair

## **B. Ineligible Improvements**

Work not eligible for program funding includes but is not limited to luxury improvements (improvements which are upgrades/higher than mid-grade and/or strictly cosmetic), carpets, additions, conversions (basement, garage, porch, attic, etc.), repairs to structures separate from the living units (detached garage, shed, barn, etc.), furnishings, pools, landscaping, solar panels and generators. If determined unsafe, stoves may be replaced. The replacement or repair of other appliances is prohibited.

Rehabilitation work performed by property owners shall not be funded under this program.

## **C. Rehabilitation Standards**

Funds are to be used for work and repairs required to make the unit standard and abate all interior and exterior violations of the New Jersey State Housing Code, N.J.A.C. 5:28 and the Rehabilitation Subcode, N.J.A.C. 5:23-6, and Chapter 15 of the Township's local property

maintenance code (of which the more restrictive requirements will apply), conserve energy and remove health and/or safety hazards; and any other work or repairs, including finishing and painting, which are directly related to the above listed objectives. For projects that require construction permits, the rehabilitated unit shall be considered complete at the date of final approval pursuant to the Uniform Construction Code.

Municipal rehabilitation investment for hard costs shall average at least \$10,000 per unit, and include the rehabilitation of at least one major system, as previously defined under eligible improvements.

#### **D. Certifications of Substandard/Standard**

The Program Building Inspector will inspect the property to determine which systems, if any, are substandard in accordance with sub-section A above and issue a Certification of Substandard. Upon program construction completion, all code deficiencies noted in the inspection report must be corrected and rehabilitated units must be in compliance with the standards proscribed in sub-section C above upon issuance of a municipal certificate of completion/approval.

## **IV. FUNDING TERMS FOR OWNER OCCUPIED AND INVESTOR OWNED UNITS**

Funding will be provided on the following terms:

*Continued on next page*

**A. Terms and Conditions for Owner Occupied Units**

Table 1 Owner-Occupied Single Family Home Terms & Conditions

<b>Owner-Occupied Single Family Unit Terms and Conditions of Loan</b>	
<b>Minimum Loan Amount</b>	The municipality may rehabilitate substandard units that require less than \$10,000 of work, provided the municipal rehabilitation activity shall average at least \$10,000 per unit.
<b>Maximum Loan Amount</b>	\$20,000 per unit
<b>Interest Rate</b>	0% (No monthly payments)
<b>Payment Terms:</b>	100% forgivable if homeowner maintains occupancy and title during the 10-year period. Original Principal is due if house is sold and/or title/occupancy changes years 1 through 10 except for <i>Exceptions to Loan Repayment Terms</i> section below.
<b>Mechanism for Securing Loan</b>	Mortgage and Mortgage Note recorded against property

If the owner decides to sell the property, transfer title, or if the owner should die before the terms of the lien expire, the owner, heirs, executors or legal representatives must repay 100% of the original loan per the schedule above upon a title change. Rental of house is allowable under certain conditions subject to approval by the Administrative Agent.

Exceptions to Loan Repayment Terms above during the lien period:

1. If the loan transfers due to inheritance by a Class A beneficiary who will take occupancy upon death of Program mortgagee/Borrower and assume the lien (income eligibility not a requirement); or if by inheritance by a qualified income eligible non-Class A beneficiary, or
2. If the house is sold at an affordable price pursuant to UHAC to someone who can be qualified as income eligible, takes occupancy and agrees to assume the program lien, or
3. If the house is sold at an affordable price pursuant to UHAC to an investor who assumes the lien and also signs a deed restriction for the remaining duration of the affordability period to rent the dwelling at the affordability controls restricted rental rate and according to the affirmative marketing requirements for re-rentals. When this occurs, the Township’s Administrative Agent will be responsible for monitoring compliance over that unit.

When a trustee of a trust deed ownership of a single-family property is the applicant occupant of the property, the owner-occupied category terms apply.

## B. Terms and Conditions for Owner-Occupied Multi-Family Rental Units

Table 2 Owner-Occupied Multi-Family Home Terms & Conditions

<b>Owner-Occupied Multi-Family Including Tenant Unit(s) Terms and Conditions of Loan</b>	
<b>Minimum Loan Amount</b>	The municipality may rehabilitate substandard units that require less than \$10,000 of work, provided the municipal rehabilitation activity shall average at least \$10,000 per unit.
<b>Maximum Loan Amount</b>	\$20,000 per unit
<b>Interest Rate</b>	0% (No monthly payments)
<b>Payment Terms</b>	100% forgivable if homeowner maintains occupancy and title during the 10 year period. Original Principal is due if not in compliance with affordability controls. Rental restrictions transfer with property. See Restrictions below.
<b>Mechanism for Securing Loan</b>	Mortgage, Mortgage Note and Deed Restriction recorded on property

The assisted housing unit(s) must be occupied by and affordable to a household that is certified as an income eligible household as per either the latest Income Limits by Region, or in compliance with the municipality's Settlement Agreement and Court Order, whichever is applicable.

The owner will execute a Mortgage, Mortgage Note, and Deed Restriction, the latter which guarantees the continued availability of the rental unit to low or moderate-income households for the terms of the ten-year deed restricted affordability period. The affordability terms for the rental units do not expire even if the owner sells the property, transfers title to the property, or dies within the ten-year program deed restricted affordability period.

Moreover, if Program funds were expended on the owner-occupied unit, and the homeowner sells, transfers title, dies or is not in compliance during the ten-year deed restricted affordability period, unless ownership is transferred to another low or moderate-income homeowner, any Program funds expended on work done on the owner's individual unit along with a pro-rata portion of the shared improvements must be fully repaid to the Township and used to rehabilitate another housing unit.

**Additionally, for rental units in a multi-family owner-occupied home:**

For tenant units, the maximum permitted rent is pursuant to UHAC and subject to annual adjustment. If a unit is vacant upon initial rental subsequent to rehabilitation, or if a renter-occupied unit is re-rented prior to the end of controls on affordability, the Deed Restriction shall require the unit to be rented to a low- or moderate- income household at an affordable rental price and will be affirmatively marketed by the Township designated Administrative Agent, in accordance with the Township of West Caldwell Affordable Housing Affirmative Marketing Plan. Landlords are responsible to pay income certification fees and affirmative marketing cost for re-rentals.

For information regarding future rental increases: Please refer to Section VIII of this manual.

When a trustee of a trust deed ownership of a multi-family property is the applicant occupant of the property, the multi-family category terms apply.

**C. Terms and Conditions for Investor-Owned Rental Units**

Table 3 Investor-Owned Terms &amp; Conditions

<b>Investor-Owned Units Terms and Conditions of Loan</b>	
<b>Minimum Loan Amount</b>	The municipality may rehabilitate substandard units that require less than \$10,000 of work, provided the municipal rehabilitation activity shall average at least \$10,000 per unit.
<b>Maximum Loan Amount</b>	\$20,000 per rental unit
<b>Interest Rate</b>	0% (No monthly payments)
<b>Payment Terms</b>	Owner pays 25% of rehab cost at construction agreement signing. 75% balance forgiven if in compliance with rental restrictions. The 25% rehab cost is waived for non-profit corporation rentals, if any. Rental restrictions transfer with property. See restrictions below.
<b>Mechanism for Securing Loan</b>	Mortgage, Mortgage Note and Deed Restriction recorded against property

The ten-year affordability controls against the property will be recorded in a Deed Restriction. The property owner agrees to abide by the rental affordability controls for the life of the Deed Restriction. Additionally, the following conditions apply:

The assisted housing unit(s) must be occupied by and affordable to a household that is certified as an income eligible household as per either the latest Income Limits by Region, or in compliance with the municipality's Settlement Agreement and Court Order, whichever is applicable and as designated by unit in the Deed Restriction. The maximum permitted rent is determined by the Township's Administrative Agent and is pursuant to UHAC and subject to annual adjustment.

Throughout the ten year affordability controls, if a rental unit is vacant upon initial rental subsequent to rehabilitation, or if a renter-occupied unit is re-rented prior to the end of controls on affordability, the Deed Restriction shall require the unit to be rented to a low- or moderate-income household(as designated by unit in the Deed Restriction) at an affordable price and will be affirmatively marketed in accordance with the Township of West Caldwell Affordable Housing Affirmative Marketing Plan by the Township's current Administrative Agent at the rates and terms defined within that Agreement. Landlords are responsible to pay income certification fees and affirmative marketing costs for re-rentals.

The owner will execute a Mortgage, Mortgage Note and Deed Restriction, the latter which will guarantee the continued availability of the unit to income eligible households for the terms of the ten-year lien affordability period.

Throughout the ten-year deed restrictive period, the affordability terms do not expire even if the owner sells the property, transfers title to the property, dies, or rents to other than low or moderate-income renters, before the terms of the lien expire.

Life estate deed ownership falls under the investor category. Additionally, when a trustee of a trust deed ownership is not the applicant occupant of the property, the investor terms apply.

Group Homes are ineligible because they are not separate units.

#### **D. Use of Recaptured Program Funds**

All recaptured funds will be deposited into a West Caldwell Township affordable housing trust fund in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:93-8.15.

## V. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

### A. Application/Interview

For each prospective applicant, this process starts with a homeowner either submitting an online preliminary application or the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist pre-qualifies the interested homeowner by phone, whichever is the homeowner's preference. The information is entered in the program applicant pool/waiting list. If the homeowner passes the preliminary criteria review, program information, guidelines, and an application package will be mailed or emailed to the applicant when their name is reached in the program's waiting list. Each prospective applicant is to complete the application and return it to the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist, along with the required verification documents. Upon receipt of the completed application package, a case file will be opened for the applicant and a case file number will be assigned to the unit. The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will be available via a direct phone line to assist applicants during this and all other phases of the process. Additionally, as needed, a Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will be available for face to face prescheduled appointments. Once a case is assigned a number, the cases are processed in the order of receipt of completed applications.

### B. Eligibility Certification

To be eligible for assistance, households in each unit to be assisted must be determined to be income eligible. The Program staff shall determine household income in accordance with the procedure for calculating annual income at the time of household application, stipulated at 24 CFR 5.609, as it was in effect on December 20, 2024, and described in Chapter 5 of HUD [page=2782] Handbook 4350.3: Occupancy Requirements of Subsidized Multifamily Housing Programs, which is available at:

[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/administration/hudclips/handbooks/hsg/4350.3](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/administration/hudclips/handbooks/hsg/4350.3).

In the future, the Program Staff shall accept household income determinations made within the previous 180 days by another administrative agent that has successfully completed DCA's Education Program. This is not applicable at this time because the Education Program has not been made available and therefore no Administrative Agents have successfully completed the program.

### C. Other Eligibility Requirements

Applicant to submit the following in the application package:

- Copy of current Homeowner's insurance declarations page (not the policy or receipt);
- Proof of flood insurance, if property is located in a flood zone;

- Copy of recorded deed to the property to be assisted;
- If deed co-holder resides at another location, provide proof of same (driver's license, etc);
- If widow or widower, copy of spouse's Death Certificate;
- Proof that all mortgage payments and, when applicable, Homeowner Association (HOA) Fees are paid current;
- Copy of any and all other liens recorded against the property;
- Personal identification (a copy of any of the following: Driver's License, Passport, Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, Adoption Papers, Alien Registration Card, etc.); and
- Original of signed Eligibility Release form.

Properties for sale are ineligible for program assistance as well as any property the homeowner plans to sell within the next two years.

#### **D. Requirements of Property Taxes and Municipal Utilities Accounts Paid Current**

All applicants' property tax and municipal water accounts must be paid current. The Program reserves the right to make an exception to the requirement of paid up municipal accounts. Individual files will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Upon approval by the appropriate municipal officials and the Program, a Special Needs Eligibility Requirements Waiver may be issued.

#### **E. Sufficient Equity and Carrying Cost**

Additionally, to be determined eligible, there must be sufficient equity in the home to cover the program lien. In other words, the market value of the house must be greater than the total of the existing liens and anticipated program lien combined. For the sake of this rule, the market value of the home will be calculated using the municipality's assessed value divided by the equalization ratio. All existing property liens (mortgage, home equity loan, etc.) are then deducted from the calculated house value to determine the current property equity. The Township may consider a Special Needs Waiver approved by the municipality on a case-by-case basis for limited equity, but not for negative equity. Additionally, the applicant's income shall be sufficient to meet the carrying costs of the unit or the homeowner is to demonstrate how the unit's carrying costs are funded. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Upon approval by the appropriate municipal officials and the Program, a Special Needs Eligibility Requirements Waiver may be issued.

#### **F. House Conditions:**

All areas of the house must be readily accessible, uncluttered, and clean. This is in anticipation of the Program Inspector and contractors needs of proper and sanitary access for inspections and construction work progress.

If there are any repairs or renovations currently being undertaken on the home by others or the homeowner or done within the last few years that require or required municipal permits, the work must be completed and the permits closed out prior to the homeowner applying to the Program.

### **G. Eligibility Scenarios of Multi-Family Structures**

Several possibilities exist concerning the determination of eligibility in a multi-family structure.

**Scenario 1.** The Program Administrator determines that the owner is income eligible and the renters in each unit are income eligible. In this case, all of the units are eligible for rehabilitation.

**Scenario 2.** The Program Administrator determines that the owner is income eligible, but the renters are not. In this case, only the landlord's unit is eligible for rehabilitation. If a home improvement is undertaken which affects all the units in the house (e.g., replacement of a roof), the HIP will only cover a prorated percentage of the cost. For example, in a two-family home with units of approximately equal size, only 50% of the cost of roof replacement will be covered. Where units differ by more than 10% in size, the proration should be based on percentage of square footage within each unit compared to the total interior square footage of all other units in the structure. Shared common areas should not be counted in the denominator for the pro rata calculation.

**Scenario 3.** The Program Administrator determines that the owner is not income eligible, but the renters are. In this case, the rental units are eligible for rehab, but the owner's is not. If a rehab activity is undertaken which affects all of the units in the house (e.g., replacement of roof), the HIP will only cover a prorated percentage of the cost. For example, in a four-family home, only 75% of the cost of roof replacement would be covered. Where units differ in size, the proration is based on percentage of square footage.

If any of the conditions above apply to a particular applicant's case, CGP&H sends a letter that explicitly identifies which of the units is eligible for rehabilitation, as well as specifies any applicable percentage of the hard costs of rehabilitation between the Program and the homeowner. The homeowner's monetary contribution is to be paid prior to the start of construction at the preconstruction conference in the form of a money order or certified check made payable to the contractor. The payment is held by the Program until the work is satisfactorily completed, at which time the Program will release the payment to the contractor.

#### ***Investor Properties:***

The Program Administrator determines the tenant income for eligibility. The owner's income is not applicable for eligibility review because the owner does not occupy the property getting

repair assistance via the Program. Instead, the owner of an investment property pays a set required direct contribution toward construction cost rather than the above prorated portion for owner-occupied multiple family properties. Refer to Section IV-C.

#### **H. Eligibility Certification**

After the Program Administrator has determined that the household is income eligible and meets all other eligible requirements, the Program Manager will complete and sign the Eligibility Certification. This certification is valid for 180 days starting from date of eligibility certification. A Construction Agreement must be signed within this time period. If not, the Program Administrator must reevaluate the household's eligibility.

After the household is certified as income eligible, the Homeowner/Program Agreement will be executed between the owner and the program.

If an applicant is determined ineligible, for any reason, the Program will issue a Notice of Ineligibility explaining the reason for the ineligibility determination and case termination.

#### **I. Housing Inspection/Substandard Certification/Work Write Up/Cost Estimate**

The Program Inspector will perform a comprehensive inspection to determine what work items are necessary to bring the home up to code, as identified in section III C. Photos will be taken at the comprehensive inspection to document existing conditions. As a result of the comprehensive inspection, the Program Inspector will prepare a work write-up and cost estimate. All repairs needed to bring the home up to code will be identified. To the extent that the budget may permit, home weatherization will also be included. This work write-up will include a breakdown of each work item by category and by location in the house. The work write-up will contain information as to the scope of work and specifics on materials such as type, quantity and cost. A total cost estimate will be calculated for each housing unit. Improvements approved under the Program shall be based on the cost of mid-grade fixtures and materials. No upgrades from this standard shall be allowed. Only eligible rehab work will be funded by the Program. In the event that not all items can be accomplished due to program funding caps, the Program Inspector will establish a priority repair system which addresses the code violations before the non-code violations. The HIP's policy is to create Work Write-Ups and Cost Estimates that fall within the HIP funding caps. In unusual hardship cases and when the cost to correct all code violations exceeds the program funding limit, the HIP will seek the homeowner's monetary contribution. If the homeowner is unable to contribute funds or obtain funds from another funding source, the Program will not be able to proceed with the scope of work.

For houses built prior to 1978, refer to Section VII Lead Base Paint (LBP).

## **J. Contractor Selection**

The homeowner, with the approval of the Program Inspector, will select the contractor. The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will provide the homeowner with a copy of the work write up and the Program Contractor List. The homeowner will complete the Work Write-Up Review Form indicating review and approval of the work write-up and advising of any contractors currently on the Program Contractor List that the homeowner does not wish to have notified of the availability of the bid package. If the homeowner wishes to solicit a bid from a contractor not currently on the Program Contractor List, the homeowner will provide the contractor's name, address and telephone number on the Work Write-Up Review Form. Any contractors that have not been previously qualified are eligible to participate but must submit their qualifications as well as their bid in the bid package.

The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will notify at least three (3) currently active contractors that a bid package for the property is available. Each contractor must contact the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist to obtain a full bid package and the contractor must submit a bid to the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist by the submission deadline (usually within three (3) weeks of the date of the bid notification letter). All submitted bids will be opened and recorded by the Program Administrator at a meeting open to all interested parties.

The submitted bids will be reviewed by the homeowner and the Program Inspector. Generally, the lowest responsible bid from a qualified contractor will be chosen. If the homeowner selects a higher bid, he/she must pay the difference between the chosen and the lowest responsible bid.

The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will email the following documentation to the Township:

- Bid Tabulation sheet of all bids received
- Awarded contractor's bid including completed Contractor Award Checklist
- For each contractor's first award in a calendar year, will also include awarded contractor Business Registration Certificate (BRC) and W-9.

Contractor award is passed via a Resolution by Township Council. The Township will provide the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist with a copy of the Resolution for placement in the case file.

## **K. Pre-Construction Conference/Contract Signing**

The Program Inspector will conduct a pre-construction conference with the homeowner and contractor. Prior to the pre-construction conference the homeowner will be provided with copies of the loan documents and the Construction Agreement and the contractor will be provided with

a copy of the Construction Agreement for review. At the time of the pre-construction conference, the scope of work will once again be reviewed. The homeowner and contractor responsibilities will also be reviewed, as well as the Program's construction procedures and program limitations. The homeowner and contractor will each sign the Construction Agreement and receive copies. The homeowner will sign and receive copies of the Mortgage and Mortgage Note in the amount of the HIP subsidy. For rental properties, the property owner will also sign the Deed Restriction.

If the homeowner is providing any funds for the rehabilitation of his/her home, those funds must be provided at the time of the pre-construction conference in the form of a certified check or money order made payable to the contractor. The check will be held by the Program and will be applied towards the contractor's first progress payment.

The contractor will be provided with information regarding the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (4a.USC 483 1 (b)). The homeowner will be advised of the hazards of lead base paint in houses built prior to 1978 and provided with the EPA booklet Renovate Right. Both contractor and homeowner will each sign the respective Certifications. Additionally, for houses built prior to 1978, Section VII Lead Base Paint (LBP) applies.

Following the pre-construction conference, the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will provide the Township with a copy of the Construction Agreement which includes an itemized price list of the work.

It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure all required permits are applied for prior to the start of construction and, if applicable, at the time of any change orders.

The construction permitting process is handled by the municipality's Construction office.

#### **L. Initiate Township Voucher**

Upon contractor award decision, the Township will provide the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist with a blanket purchase order to create two purchase orders for each case for the contractor to sign at the pre-construction conference at time of contract signing. The contractor's signed purchase orders will be held by the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist until construction progress is sufficient to submit to the municipality.

The Township voucher will be separated into two potential payments. The Program staff will match the payment request up with the Township voucher issued at the pre-construction conference and adjust the payment amount as per the inspection results. Ultimately upon construction completion, the payments will equal the full voucher amount plus or minus any change orders.

For each contractor's first award in a calendar year, the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will provide the municipal applicable staff with the awarded contractor Business Registration Certificate (BRC) and W-9 form.

### **M. Progress Inspections**

The Program Inspector will make the necessary inspections of the progress of property improvements. Inspections are necessary to ensure that the ongoing improvements coincide with the scope of work outlined in the work write-up. It is the contractor's responsibility to notify the Program Inspector when a minimum of 40% of the total contract work is completed. The Program Inspector will schedule the inspection with the homeowner, at which time the Program Inspector will also obtain verbal confirmation from the homeowner that the work is ready for inspection.

If work passes the satisfactory progress inspection, the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will follow the procedures spelled out in Section V *Payment Structure and Process* to process a contractor's progress payment request.

The Program Inspector will notify the contractor and the homeowner in writing of any work deficiencies discovered during the progress inspection. Work deficiencies must be corrected prior to the contractor's request for the next inspection.

For houses built prior to 1978, a work item marked EPA RRP Rule cannot be paid for until the contractor provides a post renovation report to the Program. Refer to Section VII Lead Base Paint (LBP) for the EPA regulation.

### **N. Change Orders**

If it is determined during rehabilitation that a change from the original work write-up is required, a Program Change Order Authorization form must be completed and approved by the homeowner, the contractor, the Program and the Township.

The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will forward the executed change order to the Township for approval via Resolution by Township Council. If the change order work discovery is urgent, such as during roof tear off and cannot wait until the next Council meeting, it will be submitted for Township's preliminary special needs approval prior to Resolution at upcoming Council meeting.

The contractor will be notified by the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist of the results, and no change order work should be undertaken by the contractor until he has received a copy of the fully executed Change Order Authorization or the contractor risks non-payment for the change order work.

## O. Final Inspection

Prior to requesting a final inspection, it is the contractor's responsibility to:

- Properly close out all the permits and to provide proof of closed out permits to the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist via the municipal Certificate of Approval;
- Deliver to the homeowner a complete release of all liens arising out of the Construction Agreement, a receipt in full covering all labor, materials and equipment for which a lien could be filed or a bond satisfactory to the owner indemnifying owner against any lien; and;
- Provide the homeowner with all applicable warranties for items installed and work completed during the course of the rehabilitation.

Once the contractor has provided the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist with all required job closeout forms, the contractor will be responsible to request the Program's final inspection. The Program Inspector will schedule the final inspection with the homeowner, at which time the Program Inspector will also obtain verbal confirmation from the homeowner that the rehabilitation work has been completed and is ready for inspection. The Program Inspector will then conduct a final inspection to certify that the required property improvements are complete. The homeowner will be present during the final inspection and the contractor will be present if there are issues to resolve.

Construction progress on work line items will be inspected and considered for payment. If the work passes satisfactory final inspection, the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will follow the procedures spelled out in Section V *Payment Structure and Process* to process the contractor's final payment request.

For houses built prior to 1978, a work item marked EPA RRP Rule cannot be paid for until the contractor provides a post renovation report to the program. Refer to Section VII Lead Base Paint (LBP) for the EPA regulation.

If the Program Inspector identifies any work deficiencies during the final inspection, the Program Inspector will notify the contractor and the homeowner of the deficiencies in writing and the value of said deficiencies will be deducted from the final payment request. Work deficiencies discovered during the final inspection will require the Program Inspector to conduct a subsequent inspection upon contractor's correction of deficiencies. The Rehabilitation Program reserves the right to hold the contractor responsible to pay the cost of any additional inspections beyond the final inspection at a rate of \$350 per inspection for prematurely requesting the final inspection with the work not 100% completely done in a workman-like manner. Additional inspections are

those in excess of the one progress inspection and the final inspection which are needed to inspect corrected deficiencies. The contractor must issue the failed final inspection penalty payment directly to CGP&H via a check prior to the Program Inspector scheduling and repeating the final inspection process. CGP&H will notify the municipality each time a penalty is levied.

The Program lien period will commence upon satisfactory completion of the final inspection. Photographs will be taken of the rehabilitated housing unit by the Program Inspector at the time of the satisfactory final inspection.

#### **P. Payment Structure and Process**

The Township will issue all payments, which will be made according to the following schedule:

One progress payment (representing a minimum of 40% of total contract work completed) will be paid. Upon completion of one hundred percent (100%) of the rehabilitation work, the contractor is eligible for final payment of the contract price.

Upon a satisfactory program inspection, and confirmation from the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist that all contractor's documents have been submitted according to program procedures, the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will submit to the Township:

- Program's Request for Payment form with Owner's and Program's written approval
- The Township voucher signed by the contractor and adjusted to match the current payment amount
- Copy of change order, if one occurred

The Township retains the right to make payments to the contractor without homeowner approval should the homeowner become unavailable to sign the Program contractor payment form due to illness, absence or unjustified refusal to sign. In such instance, the Program shall make reasonable attempts to contact the homeowner. If such efforts are not successful within a two-week period from the final inspection date, the Program shall advise the Township, provide documentation of efforts to obtain homeowner approval, and may authorize contractor payment without homeowner sign-off, to not hold up payment rightfully due to the contractor.

The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist is to submit the contractor payment request to the Chief Financial Officer and, if acceptable, the payment request will be placed on the upcoming Bill List agenda. The Township will forward to the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist a copy of the executed payment to the contractor for case file records.

Upon job completion, the combined Township payments will total the Construction Agreement, including all applicable change order(s) if any, and minus owner contribution, if any. The combined Township payments will also match the final Township Voucher amount. Progress and final payments will be made payable to the contractor.

#### **Q. Standard Certification**

A Certificate of Approval issued by the municipal construction official at the time the contractor closes out the rehabilitation construction permits, will confirm the scope of rehabilitation work has been completed and that the housing unit is now up to code standard. The contractor is to provide the Certificate of Approval to the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist when requesting the final inspection. The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will ensure that a copy of the Certificate of Approval is placed in the case file.

#### **R. Record Mortgage Documentation**

At construction completion, the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will forward the executed mortgage to the Township's Attorney for recording. The Township will immediately file the mortgage with the County Clerk. For rental properties, the Deed Restriction will also be recorded.

#### **S. File Closing**

The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will close the homeowner's file after the final payment is made and the mortgage, and when applicable, Deed Restriction is/are returned from the County with recorded date, book and page.

The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will send the homeowner a case closeout letter explaining the warranty period, importance of program documents for personal record keeping, explaining the homeowner's responsibility to continue to maintain the home, providing the homeowner with a home maintenance checklist as guidance, thanking the owner for program participation, and encouraging him/her to recommend the program to other households in the community and, when applicable, reminding owner of the affordable housing rental requirements listed in the program lien documents and deed restriction.

#### **T. Requests for Subordination**

West Caldwell may agree to subordination of its lien if the mortgage company supplies an appraisal showing that the new loan plus the balance(s) on all unpaid loans (including the value of the rehabilitation assistance) does not exceed ninety-five (95%) of the appraised value of the unit. If the homeowner is simply refinancing their primary mortgage to a lower interest rate and not "cashing out" any equity, West Caldwell will subordinate up to 100% of the appraised value.

The fee to process program loan subordination requests will be paid by the homeowner directly to the Program Administrator in accordance with the fee set forth in the program administration contract.

## VI. CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS AND RECRUITMENT

### A. Marketing

The Program will coordinate with the Township to advertise the availability of construction work on the Township's website and display a contractor outreach poster and handouts in the municipal building, including the local construction office. The contractor outreach material will be posted on CGP&H's [www.hip.cgph.net](http://www.hip.cgph.net) website and via CGP&H's HIP social media.

If determined needed, additional outreach may include CGP&H outreach to home improvement contractors registered with Consumer Affairs who are geographically near or in the municipality, outreach via the local newspapers and through the posting of community notices, and advertising the availability of construction work by posting information at local building supply dealers.

All interested contractors will have the opportunity to apply for inclusion on the Program Contractor List, which will be made available for the homeowner's use in selecting rehabilitation contractors. The contractor outreach material will also be posted on CGP&H's website.

### B. Contractor Qualifications

To qualify, contractors must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Contractors must carry at least \$1,000,000 in general liability insurance. The Contractor shall carry full workmen's compensation coverage including Employer's Liability limits of at least \$500,000 and statutory state coverage for all his/her employees and those of his/her subcontractors engaged in program rehab work. The Contractor must provide the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist with a certificate of insurance naming the Program as Certificate Holder, and naming the Municipality and CGP&H as additional insureds at time of Program job award; and
- At least three favorable references on the successful completion of similar work; and
- The Contractor's State Business Registration Certificate; and
- Current Consumer Affairs Home Improvement Contractor license; and

- Applicable lead certifications for contractors working on houses built prior to 1978. As identified in the scope of work, the contractor must comply with the EPA Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule regarding certification; and
- If claiming prior experience with local, state or federally funding housing rehabilitation programs, a record of satisfactory performance in a neighborhood rehabilitation program or other federal/state programs; and
- Appropriate licenses; e.g. plumbing, electrical.

Contractors must also complete a Contractor Qualification Form. The contractor's qualifications will be reviewed and the references cited will be checked by the Program Inspector before the contractor is awarded a job.

## VII. Lead Based Paint (LBP):

For houses built prior to 1978, contractors must comply with the Environmental Protection Agency Renovation, Repair and Painting Rules (40 CFR Part 745) when any work item is marked with (EPA-RRP Rule) in the work specifications. The requirements are spelled out in the General Conditions of the work specifications

## VIII. Rental Procedures:

Rental units are subject to Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (UHAC) promulgated by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency at N.J.A.C.5:80-26 et seq, the amended Fair Housing Act at N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et seq., the Fair Housing Act Regulations promulgated by the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Planning Services ("LPS") once the rental units are rehabilitated. In addition to the mortgage and mortgage note, the controls on affordability shall be in the form of a deed restriction.

- If a unit is vacant, upon initial rental subsequent to rehabilitation, or if a renter-occupied unit is re-rented prior to the end of controls on affordability, the deed restriction shall require the unit be rented to an income eligible household at an affordable rent and affirmatively marketed pursuant to UHAC.
- If a unit is renter-occupied, upon completion of the rehabilitation, the maximum rate of rent shall be the lesser of the current rent or the maximum permitted rent pursuant to UHAC.

The municipality's Administrative Agent will administer the rental affordability controls during the 10-year affordability period for each rental property assisted. Landlords are responsible to pay income certification fees for re-rentals.

## IX. MARKETING STRATEGY

In coordination with the Township, the Program Administrator will employ a variety of proven strategies to advertise the program within West Caldwell to establish the Program's applicant pool/waiting list. The marketing strategy/plan possibilities include but are not limited to:

- Creation and distribution of Program homeowner outreach posters, flyers and handouts
- Place Program outreach material on the Township's website and, of available, social media
- Place Program outreach material on CGP&H's website and social media
- Municipal E-newsletter and paper newsletter (if available)
- Appending announcements and/or flyers to other municipal mailings as they become available (tax, etc.) or direct mailing, if approved by the municipality
- Municipal email blasts and Twitter communication (if available)
- Program marketing will be distributed to local community organizations and major employers including religious organizations, civic groups, senior group, ethnic organizations, etc.
- Free local cable TV advertising (when available)
- Periodic Press releases
- Program group presentations to community organizations or at the Township Municipal Building to prospective homeowners and even to local contractors
- Paid newspaper advertisements (last resort) when deemed necessary and appropriate

The order of method used will be analyzed to implement the most effective combination of strategies. Extensive marketing efforts are essential for all successful housing rehabilitation programs to meet their productivity objectives.

Available rental units assisted via the HIP will be affirmatively marketed in accordance with the Township of West Caldwell Affordable Housing Affirmative Marketing Plan.

## X. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS AND CLIENT FILES

### A. Programmatic Recording

The Program files will include:

- The policies and procedures manual, which will also be updated when applicable.
- An applicant pool will be maintained by the Program staff to track intake of the people interested in the program and the corresponding outgoing application invites.
- A rehabilitation log will be maintained by the Program staff that depicts the status of all applications in progress.

### B. Participant Record Keeping

The Program will be responsible for ensuring that individual files for each unit are established, maintained and then submitted to the municipality upon completion. Each completed file will contain a minimum of the following:

- Checklist
- Application form
- Tenant Application form (Rental Units Only) including rental lease
- Proof of ownership
- Income verification (for all households)
- Proof of currency of property tax and water/sewer accounts
- Proof of homeowner extended coverage/hazard insurance (Declaration Page)
- Proof that the municipal lien plus the total of other liens does not exceed the market value of the unit.
- Certification of Eligible Household or Notice of Ineligible Household (whichever is applicable)
- Homeowner/Program Agreement
- Certificate of Substandard
- Work Specifications/Cost Estimate aka Work Write-Up
- Bid Notice
- Contractor bids
- Bid Tabulation
- Construction Agreement
- Mortgage and Mortgage Note, and for rental properties, Deed Restriction
- Notice of Right of Rescission
- Homeowner Confirmation of Receipt of EPA Lead Information Pamphlet

- Contractor Confirmation of Receipt of Lead Paint Notice
- Copies of all required permits
- Change orders, if any
- Work progress and final inspection reports
- Copies of contractor payment documentation
- Photographs (Before and After)
- Close-out documents
- Certification of Approval

### **C. State Reporting**

For each unit the following information must be retained to be reported annually:

- Street Address
- Block/Lot/Unit Number
- Owner/Renter
- Income: Low/Mod
- Final Inspection Date
- Funds expended on Hard Costs
- Funds Recaptured
- Major Systems Repaired
- Unit Below Code & Raised to Code
- Effective date of affordability controls
- Length of Affordability Controls (yrs.)
- Date Affordability Controls removed
- Reason for removal of Affordability Controls

The Program Administrator will provide each completed unit's data for annual monitoring.

### **D. Financial Recordkeeping**

Financial recordkeeping is the responsibility of the Municipal Housing Liaison, with assistance from the Administrative Agent, as may be requested from time to time.

## **XI. HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND APPEALS PROCESS**

The Program staff is skilled in effectively achieving resolution of homeowner/contractor disputes, in a fair and documented manner.

However, on the rare occasion if a homeowner or contractor decides to dispute a Program staff decision, the Program will refer the matter to the Township for further resolution. It is recommended the Township forms a Housing Advisory Committee to mediate and resolve the differences. Homeowners or contractors involved in a dispute will be instructed to submit their concerns in writing. The homeowner or contractor may request a hearing conducted by the Housing Advisory Committee. All Housing Advisory Committee decisions are final. The Housing Advisory Committee formation may occur when the first need arises.

## **XII. CONCLUSION**

If the procedures described in this manual are followed, the Township of West Caldwell's Home Improvement Program should operate smoothly and effectively. Where it is found that a new procedure will eliminate a recurring problem, that procedure may be incorporated into the program operation. In addition, this manual may be periodically revised to reflect changes in local, state and federal policies and regulations relative to the Home Improvement Program.

## APPENDIX A - LIST OF PROGRAM FORMS

- Application Transmittal Letter
- Program Information Handout
- Application for Assistance- Homeowner
- Application for Assistance- Landlord (Investor)
- Application for Assistance- Tenant
- Eligibility Release Form
- Checklist
- Special Needs Waiver (Eligibility Requirements)
- Special Needs Waiver (Exceed Program Limit)
- Certification of Eligible Household
- Eligibility Determination Form
- Notification of Eligibility
- Notification of Ineligibility
- Homeowner/Program Agreement
- Certificate of Substandard
- Certificate of Substandard – Emergency Situation
- Letter: forward work write-up and contractor list to homeowner
- Work Write-Up Review form
- Request for Rehabilitation Bid
- Affidavit of Contractor
- Subcontractor Bid Sheet
- Bid Tabulation/Contractor Selection
- Construction Agreement
- Mortgage
- Mortgage Note – single family, multi family, investor versions
- Notice of Right of Rescission
- COAH Deed Restriction (when applicable)
- Homeowner Confirmation of Receipt of EPA Lead Information Pamphlet
- Contractor Confirmation of Receipt of Lead Paint Notice
- Notice to Proceed
- Contractor's Request for Final Inspection
- Change Order Authorization
- Certificate and Release
- Closeout Statement