

TOWN OF AMHERST HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM PROCEDURES OUTLINE

1. When funding is available, the owner is mailed an application to complete and return to the Community Development office on time else be removed from the waiting list.
2. Verification of income, ownership, housing debt standing, etc. is completed.
3. The building inspector examines the property for necessary and eligible repairs including paint failure. Interior and exterior photos may be taken for historic review.
4. If the repairs will disturb painted surfaces or if there is peeling paint, lead paint testing must be done on the whole property. The program pays for the testing. ***If lead paint hazards are found, they must be addressed first even if not part of requested repairs.***
5. The building inspector prepares the "Work Write-Up" of approved work. ***No additions will be accepted once the scope is finalized*** (except for unforeseen emergencies and change orders necessary to complete the approved scope). ***Emergency and lead hazard repairs must be completed first; refusal to comply will terminate participation.***
6. The owner solicits at least two comparable estimates per requested repair using the bid package's "Work Write-Up" provided by program staff within about four months.
7. The owner submits bids for program staff to review and states preferred contractor(s). The selected bid(s) must be within 10% of the lowest bid(s).
8. Program staff draft contract between owner and contractor for both parties to sign. **Do NOT sign contracts or begin work without permission from program staff to do so.**
9. The participating owner and any other owners listed on the deed sign a note & mortgage.
10. After proper paperwork is signed, a "Notice and Order to Proceed" will be issued to the Contractor. **Payment will NOT be made for any work begun prior to the issuance of a "proceed order" or outside the scope of the contract.**
11. Contractor obtains permits and begins work based on their and owner's schedules.
12. The building inspector makes inspections during the time the Contractor is working. Partial payments can be made for completed work on multi-part projects.
13. The building inspector makes inspection to verify when the work is completed and checks if the owner is reasonably satisfied. The owner and building inspector authorize payment. ***If the contractor correctly fulfilled the terms of contract, payment should be authorized in a timely manner else the owner risks a mechanic's lien or lawsuit.***
14. The owner is given any guarantees or warranties by the contractor.
15. The final check to the contractor is issued by the Town and the loan is filed.

WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHAT NOT TO EXPECT FROM THE HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Items that the Homeowner Completes In the Housing Rehabilitation Program

The program will help homeowners during the home improvement process, but homeowners are responsible for making the choices and completing the items listed below.

1. Homeowners help inspect their house and point out problems.
2. Homeowners sign a homeowner/contract agreement with the contractor.
3. Homeowners inspect and approve work performed by their contractors.
4. Homeowners request and approve payments made to their contractors.
5. Homeowners work with contractors to settle disagreements during the job.
6. Homeowners call/write their contractors to ask them to correct problems covered by contractor warranties during the first year after the job has been completed.

What Homeowners Should Understand Before Participating in the Housing Rehabilitation Program

1. Not all the work that homeowners want done can always be done.
2. Repairs will correct one or two problems but might not solve all problems. Resolved problems may reappear years later due to weathering or changed environmental conditions.
3. Don't expect your house to be completely new when work is done. Don't expect all floors, walls, ceilings, doors, windows, etc. to be completely plumb, level and square.
4. Frequently homeowners will hire small construction companies because they are able to do more work for limited funds than larger, more expensive construction firms.
5. Sometimes it can be stressful living in a house while a contractor is doing work.
6. Very few times in life is anyone completely satisfied with things they buy or have repaired. Buying a house or having a house repaired is no different.
7. Houses built over 50 years ago and/or houses identified individually or within a state or national register eligible district in the 2017 Intensive level Survey of Historic Resources are subject to a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review. Interior and exterior photos of the property may be required. Restrictions may be placed on repairs if they are found to have an impact on SHPO designated historic features.
8. The program is *NOT* a contractor, does *NOT* recommend contractors, and *CANNOT* guarantee homeowners will be satisfied with the work done by their contractors. The program *CANNOT* guarantee any or all presented problems will be completely resolved.