



## **FIRE/EMS DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Common Council of the City of Whitewater adopted **Policy \_\_\_\_ in [month/year]** to strengthen recruitment and retention within the Fire/EMS Department. The purpose of the Policy is to support the City's ability to attract and retain highly qualified Fire and EMS personnel by creating competitive programs and resources that enhance long-term service commitment. This initiative addresses ongoing workforce challenges in public safety and reinforces the City's dedication to maintaining high-quality emergency services for the community. The program is administered by the City of Whitewater and supported by the Fire/EMS leadership team.

### **Program Features:**

- Loan to support purchase of single-family home for use as borrower's primary residence.
- Loan is 0% interest.
- Repayment of the loan is deferred until the home is sold, is no longer the borrower's primary residence or the borrower is no longer a full-time employee of the City of Whitewater.
- The maximum amount allowed for a second mortgage through the program is \$25,000 and may be applied to lender-required down payment.
- This program can be combined with other down payment assistance programs.

### **Borrower Requirements:**

- Be mortgage ready and able to secure affordable superior mortgage loan from a bank, credit union, USDA Rural Development or other conventional lender.
- Land contract purchase does not qualify.
- The first mortgage used to purchase a home must be a fixed rate mortgage. The City of Whitewater will not provide a second mortgage for a house purchase transaction that does not have a fixed rate mortgage.
- To be eligible for down payment assistance, applicants must be a full-time employee with the City for a minimum of 3 months.

### **Property Requirements:**

- Home must be move-in ready and meet Housing Quality Standards at the time of purchase.
- Must be fee simple title at purchase.
- Homes that qualify for down payment assistance can be stick built, modular, new manufactured or condominium on a permanent foundation. A home on a rented or leased lot does not qualify.
- Home must be within Whitewater city limits.



### **Down Payment Assistance Loan Forgiveness:**

Partial to Full Forgiveness of the Down Payment Assistance Loan is available through the employee responding to Fire and EMS All Calls when not on shift. Call response percentages will be calculated using the Department's official call-tracking system. Forgiveness amounts will be applied annually and credited toward the principal balance of the loan on a Calendar year basis.

- Employees who respond to between 10% and 25% of All-Calls in a calendar year shall have \$2,500 of the outstanding loan balance forgiven for that year.
- Employees who respond to 25% or more of All-Calls in a calendar year shall have \$5,000 of the outstanding loan balance forgiven for that year.
- Partial years will be calculated on a prorated basis based on the number of months remaining in the year when the Down Payment Assistance Loan is granted, or when the employee leaves employment or the home is no longer the employee's primary home.

### **Application Process:**

Applicants must first select a home and have mortgage loan approval in place as specified above. The applicant should then complete the Program's Application Form and submit it to the **Finance Department** for review. Following Staff review, the application will be referred to the Finance Committee for approval. If approved, **City Attorney** staff will prepare the Down Payment Assistance Agreement and Mortgage, attend the residential real estate closing to present the down payment check and obtain signatures on program documents, and record the mortgage with the appropriate County Register of Deeds where the residence is located.