2026 UNLOCKDPA MICHIGAN

CLEARING THE WAY TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

A Statewide Down Payment Assistance Inventory

UNLOCKDPA MICHIGAN:
CLEARING THE WAY TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

A 2026 STATEWIDE DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE INVENTORY

Authors
Krysta Pate
Douglas Procunier

Released: June 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ownership Initiative
Krysta Pate
Douglas Procunier
Michelle L. West

Rocket Community Fund
Beth Sorce
Briana Mason
Rob Frappier
Kaitlyn Coy
Lauren Meir

Brand Partner
SHATTER

Thank you to the research interview participants who provided their valuable expertise and insights to inform this report.

Recommended citation: Pate, K., Procunier, D. (2026, June). "UnlockDPA Michigan: Clearing the Way to Homeownership - A 2026 Statewide Down Payment Assistance Inventory." The Ownership Initiative. Retrieved from https://www.ownershipinitiative.com/unlockdpa-programs#report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE STUDY

UnlockDPA is a statewide initiative spearheaded by The Ownership Initiative, powered by Rocket Community Fund, committed to achieving 100% deployment of down payment assistance by strengthening systems and addressing barriers that affect access for Michigan families.

The UnlockDPA study was developed to better understand how down payment assistance (DPA) functions across the state of Michigan. While DPA is widely recognized as one of the most effective tools for expanding access to homeownership, particularly for first-time buyers and low-moderate income households, there is limited visibility into how these programs operate collectively as a system. This study was designed to move beyond individual program analysis and instead examine the broader ecosystem of down payment assistance.

By documenting the current landscape, identifying opportunities to improve transparency, and enhance coordination, this study aims to support a more efficient and fully utilized DPA ecosystem.

Join the Unlock DPA effort and learn more by visiting our website at **www.ownershipinitiative.com/unlockdpa**.

ABOUT THE OWNERSHIP INITIATIVE

The Ownership Initiative (TOI) is a community impact consulting firm that specializes in the design, launch, and sustainability of programs that expand access to homeownership, small business growth, and economic mobility. TOI works at the intersection of public policy, financial systems, and community development, supporting government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and financial institutions in creating programs that are both impactful and operationally viable.

The firm brings deep experience in housing and capital access initiatives, with a particular focus on programs that serve low-to-moderate income and underserved communities. TOI has supported the design and launch of more than 30 programs that have collectively deployed over $230 million in capital. This work includes significant contributions to the Detroit housing ecosystem, most notably the creation and launch of the City of Detroit $25,000 Down Payment Assistance program, which supported 794 homeowners within its first two years.

ABOUT ROCKET COMMUNITY FUND

Prosperity starts with stability. Stability starts at home. Rocket Community Fund mission is to help families achieve stable homeownership so they can lead more prosperous lives. Through philanthropic investments, Rocket Community Fund helps families:

- Protect and preserve their existing homes, or become new homeowners
- Connect to digital opportunity and quality jobs to support lasting stability.

Rocket Community Fund’s mission is powered by passionate Rocket® team members who volunteer and raise funds to support Rocket Community Fund’s partners.

WHY THIS STUDY MATTERS NOW

The Michigan housing market has undergone significant shifts in recent years. Rising home prices, elevated interest rates, and persistent income gaps have made it increasingly difficult for many households to achieve homeownership.

These challenges are particularly pronounced for those who often fall outside traditional financial support thresholds but still face significant affordability barriers. At the same time, substantial investments have been made by public, private, and philanthropic stakeholders to expand the availability of down payment assistance. Despite these efforts, early indicators from this research suggest that increased funding has not necessarily translated into consistent access.

Instead, the system has grown more complex, requiring both homebuyers and professionals to navigate a fragmented and often opaque landscape in order to identify viable opportunities where program information is dispersed across several sources, eligibility requirements are inconsistently communicated, and application pathways are walled off by sales processes.

Therefore, this study responds to a critical question:

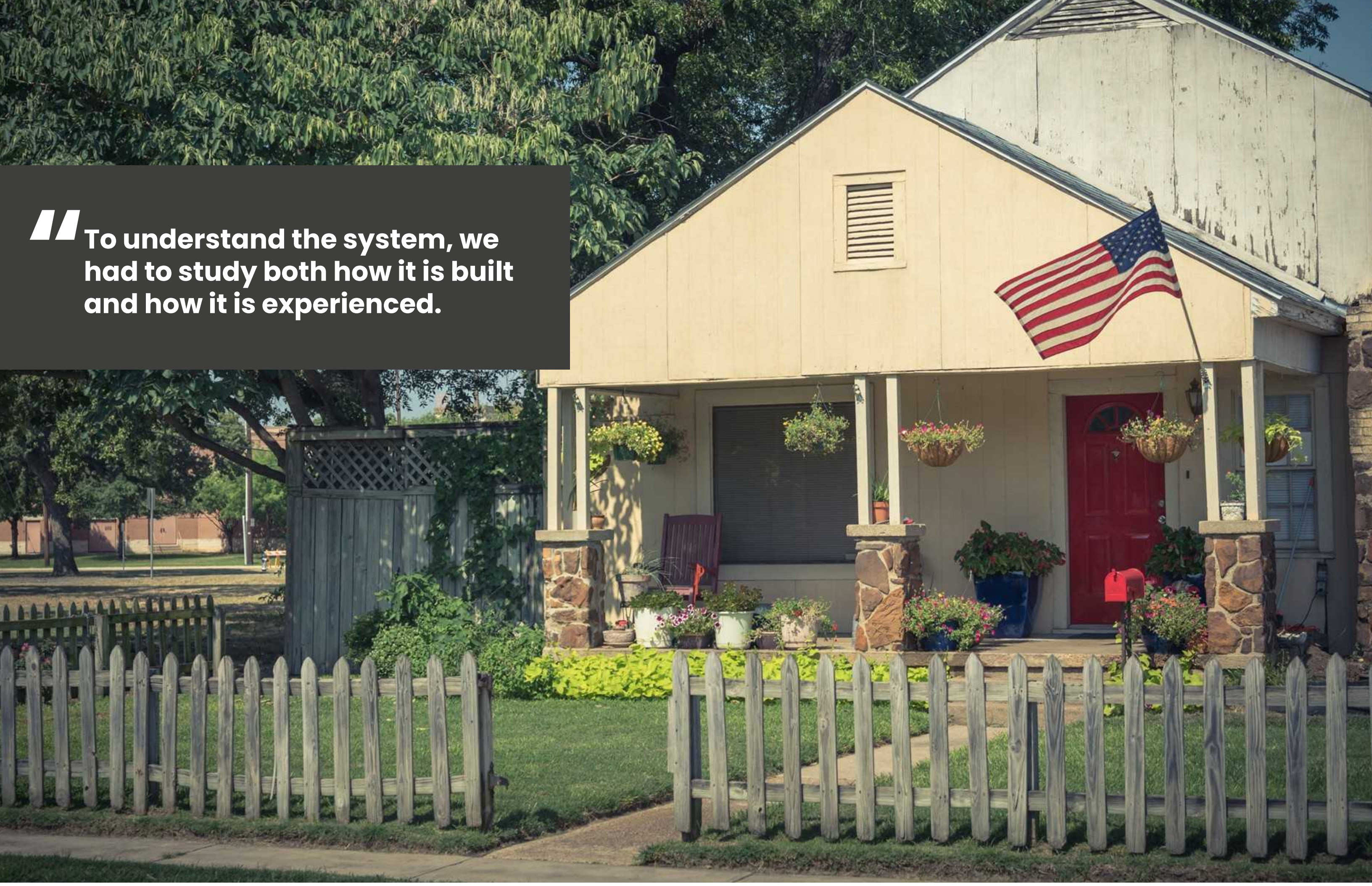
If funding exists, how can we make sure it reaches the people it was designed to support?

WHAT THIS STUDY REVEALS

The findings of this research point to a consistent and critical conclusion:
The structure of the ecosystem is the primary barrier to DPA access, which can prevent funding from getting to where it needs to go.

Rather than operating as a coordinated network of resources, the Michigan DPA ecosystem functions as a collection of disconnected programs, each with its own rules, processes, and access points. This fragmentation creates friction throughout the homebuying journey.

The structure of the ecosystem is the primary barrier to DPA access, which can prevent funding from getting to where it needs to go.



> "To understand the system, we had to study both how it is built and how it is experienced.

UNDERSTANDING THE ECOSYSTEM

SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

The UnlockDPA study employed a mixed-methods research approach to develop a comprehensive understanding of how down payment assistance (DPA) functions across the state of Michigan. Recognizing that DPA operates within a fragmented and highly localized ecosystem, this study combined qualitative and quantitative methods to capture both the structural design of programs and the lived experiences of stakeholders navigating them.

The analysis reflects data collected and reviewed between January 1, 2026 – April 30, 2026, incorporating both current program offerings and recent stakeholder experiences. The study prioritizes present-day program accessibility and utilization while also considering recent trends in housing market conditions and lending practices that influence DPA deployment.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

This study utilized three primary data collection methods: literature review, stakeholder surveys, and in-depth interviews.

The literature review focused on publicly available program materials, policy documents, housing reports, and institutional resources to establish a baseline understanding of the DPA landscape. This included reviewing program guidelines, eligibility criteria, funding structures, and administrative processes across a wide range of providers.

To complement this, surveys were offered to a diverse group of stakeholders, including lenders, housing counselors, nonprofit organizations, and program administrators. The survey instrument was designed to capture standardized insights related to program accessibility, utilization challenges, and operational barriers.

In addition, the research team conducted a series of structured and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders across the DPA ecosystem. These interviews provided deeper qualitative insight into how programs function in practice, including friction points that are not visible through published materials alone. Interview invitations encouraged candid participation and all responses were anonymized and aggregated in the reporting of findings.

01 LITERATURE REVIEW

Public program materials, policy documents, reports, eligibility criteria and administrativeprocesses.

02 STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

Standardized insights from lenders, housing counselors, nonprofits and administrators.

03 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Structured and semi-structured interviews to identify practical friction points.

SOURCES REVIEWED

The study reviewed a broad range of sources to understand both the supply and delivery of DPA. These sources included state and local housing agency websites, lender program guides, nonprofit program descriptions, and secondary research reports related to homeownership and housing access. In total, the research team evaluated 1,039 potential sources of DPA capital and program offerings to assess availability, structure, and accessibility. Sources of assistance across multiple sectors, including:

- State and local government programs
- Mortgage lenders and financial institutions
- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)
- Employers offering housing benefits
- Digital platforms and emerging program models

Given the highly localized nature of DPA, geographic sampling was applied. Michigan has more than 1,700 municipalities, making it difficult and time consuming to review every single one for potential DPA programs. In 2022, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) established 15 partnership regions, each consisting of 1-15 counties. This study took those regions and focused on reviewing the thirty largest municipalities (by population) within each region. This approach ensured geographic diversity while maintaining a manageable and representative sample of the state housing ecosystem.

DEFINITION OF DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

For the purposes of this study, down payment assistance (DPA) was defined broadly to include multiple forms of financial support that reduce the upfront cost of homeownership. These include:

- Grants: Non-repayable funds provided to eligible borrowers.
- Forgivable loans: Loans that are forgiven over time if the borrower meets specific requirements, such as maintaining occupancy for a defined period.
- Deferred loans: Loans that do not require repayment until a triggering event, such as sale, refinance, or loan maturity.
- Matched savings programs: Programs that match a participant savings to be used toward down payment or closing costs.
- Employer-assisted housing programs: Financial assistance provided by employers to support employees in purchasing a home.

This definition reflects the full spectrum of tools used to support homebuyers and allows for a more comprehensive assessment of how assistance is structured and delivered.

LIMITATIONS

As with any statewide study of this scale, there are important limitations to consider.

First, the Michigan housing ecosystem is highly decentralized, with more than 1,700 municipalities and many independent program administrators. Because this study applied a structured geographic sampling methodology, it may not capture every local program or variation in implementation.

Second, the number of active lenders participating in DPA programs across the state is substantial and constantly evolving. While the study engaged a representative sample of lenders through surveys and interviews, it does not reflect the full universe of lender activity.

Third, nonprofit organizations outside of CDFIs were not systematically included in this phase of the research. According to nonprofitlocator.org, Michigan has over 44,000 nonprofit organizations with widely varying missions, service areas, and program offerings, many of which may not provide down payment assistance. Including the full nonprofit sector would have significantly expanded the scope of the study beyond what was feasible for this phase. However, this represents a clear opportunity for future research, as some nonprofits may offer complementary or emerging forms of assistance that warrant further exploration.

Finally, where quantitative data was limited or unavailable, this study relies in part on qualitative stakeholder-reported information, which may vary based on individual experience and perspective.

Despite these limitations, the combination of quantitative review and qualitative insight provides a strong foundation for understanding systemic patterns and identifying opportunities to improve access and utilization across the Michigan DPA ecosystem.

THE FINDINGS

The UnlockDPA study began with a fundamental question: If funding exists, how can we make sure it reaches the people it was designed to support?

To answer this, the research team conducted a comprehensive review of the DPA landscape across Michigan, analyzing 1,039 potential sources of down payment assistance.

Despite this broad landscape, the study identified 71 programs, of which only 16 were determined to be active based on publicly available information. This progression highlights a critical disconnect theory , but it is not consistently visible or accessible in a way that allows homebuyers to benefit from it.

To better understand these patterns, the findings are organized into four key barriers that define the current DPA ecosystem.

1000+
SOURCES REVIEWED

71
PROGRAMS FOUND

THE SYSTEM IS LOCKED. WE HAVE THE KEY.

Our research reveals four systemic barriers that limit access to down payment assistance and prevent full utilization of available resources:

1 **THE DIGITAL DEADBOLT**
RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY BARRIER

2 **PITCH-TO-PLAY**
TRANSPARENCY & INCENTIVE REALITIES

3 **GATED ENTRY**
STRUCTURAL FRICTION & EXCLUSION

4 **WASTE & RETURN**
UTILIZATION & REFORM OPPORTUNITY

1

THE DIGITAL DEADBOLT

RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY BARRIER

Access to down payment assistance information should not require extensive research or advanced digital literacy. The current ecosystem favors tech-savvy professionals, leaving many homebuyers effectively locked out before they even begin.

THE REALITY

Down payment assistance exists across Michigan but finding it is a challenge. Information is scattered across websites, buried in PDFs, or only available through direct outreach. There is no single, reliable, unencumbered entry point for homebuyers to understand what is available to them.

WHAT WE FOUND

DPA is unevenly distributed across the ecosystem. This distribution underscores a key insight: while traditional housing and lending institutions play a role in delivering DPA, participation is inconsistent, and meaningful pockets of assistance exist in less visible or non-traditional channels. At the same time, entire segments of the ecosystem such as employers and digital banks remain largely untapped.

- 1,039 Data points reviewed and categorized by source:
  - Lenders: 224 reviewed -> 31 programs identified
  - Municipalities: 416 reviewed -> 22 programs identified
  - CDFIs: 81 reviewed -> 2 programs identified
  - Employers: 237 reviewed -> 1 program identified
  - Digital Banks: 66 reviewed -> 0 programs identified
  - Other Sources: 15 reviewed -> 15 programs identified
  - No single category had higher than a 14% participation rate.

- 71 Programs found, distributed by geography:
  - 20 statewide programs
  - 16 county-level programs
  - 18 city-level programs
  - 17 programs limited to specific census tracts

Beyond availability, the research also examined how programs are structured and communicated. The findings revealed significant gaps in transparency and accessibility:

- 52% state that they require some form of pre-purchase education
- 48% are restricted to a specific lender or lender(s)
- 46% are targeted at first-time homebuyers
- 25% disclose minimum credit score requirements
- 24% clearly indicate that they are active
- 3% disclose maximum debt-to-income (DTI) ratios

48%

Of programs are restricted to a specific lender

24%

Of programs disclose minimum credit score requirements

22%

Of programs report openly that they are active

3%

Of programs disclose maximum DTI ratio

WHAT THIS MEANS

The DPA ecosystem is fragmented because it is incon sistent in how programs are defined, structured, and communicated. Programs operate across multiple geographic levels and provider types, each with its own eligibility criteria, requirements, and processes. As a result, industry professionals are often required to piece together information that is not readily accessible or standardized.

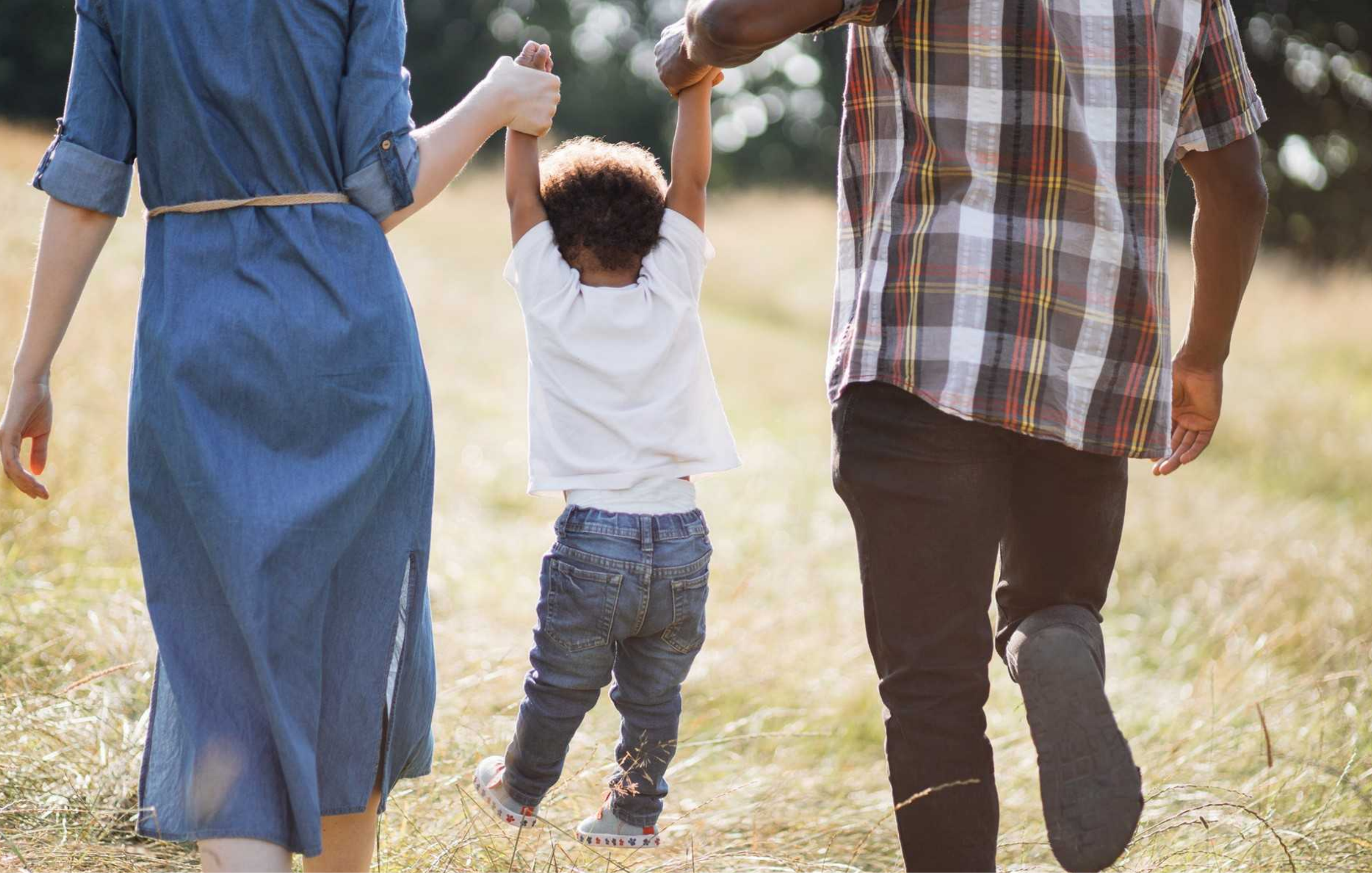
For homebuyers, this creates a system that is difficult to interpret. Even basic questions, such as “Do I qualify?” or “Where do I start?” require navigating multiple sources, each offering incomplete or unclear information.

The complexity is further compounded by program requirements such as homebuyer education, which is mandated in nearly half of all programs. While education is intended to support informed decision-making, it also introduces an additional step in an already unclear process.

WHY IT MATTERS

When access to information is this fragmented, homebuyers are forced to rely on external guidance or abandon the process altogether. This creates inequitable access, where those with support systems or professional connections are more likely to benefit from DPA, while others are left behind.

> **“DPA is not just difficult to find—it is designed to be found by those who already know where to look.**



2

PITCH-TO-PLAY

TRANSPARENCY & INCENTIVE REALITIES

Critical eligibility guidelines are kept out of public view, hidden behind contact forms that often lead directly into high-pressure sales conversations rather than transparent information sharing. Homebuyers are unable to determine eligibility on their own, forcing them into premature sales conversations that limit their ability to make informed decisions at their own pace.

THE REALITY

While some basic details about down payment assistance (DPA) programs are publicly available, the information needed to make informed decisions is often incomplete or withheld. Homebuyers can typically find some high-level details, but this information rarely tells the full story.

WHAT WE FOUND

Of 71 programs found:

- 16 confirmed active
- 51 with unclear funding availability despite active websites
- 4 confirmed inactive

Basic program details are widely available, including:

- Approved uses of funds
- Geographic eligibility
- Income limits
- Maximum DPA amounts per household

In-depth program information is not transparently shared and often requires:

- Submitting personal information
- Contacting a provider directly via phone
- Completing intake or sales inquiry forms
- Beginning the application process

Program funding and operational roles are often unclear:

- In some cases, only the administrator is named
- In some cases, the provider and funder appear to be the same
- In many cases, the underlying source of funds is not disclosed

WHAT THIS MEANS

Information about down payment assistance is largely shaped by who has access to it. In practice, DPA administrators professionals within the housing ecosystem often serve as the primary holders of information that is not readily available to the public.

As a result, homebuyers are typically given just enough information to know that assistance exists, but not enough to independently determine whether they qualify or how to access it. To move forward, they are often required to engage directly with lenders or program administrators. This shifts the experience away from transparent, self-guided exploration and toward a process that depends on interaction. In many cases, these interactions are embedded within lead generation systems or sales pipelines, rather than neutral, educational access points.

Uncertainty around funding availability further complicates the experience. While a small number of programs can be confirmed as active, many others maintain a public presence without clearly indicating whether funds are currently available. This leaves homebuyers navigating a landscape of ambiguity where they could end up investing time and effort into programs without knowing if they can ultimately provide support.

> **"Homebuyers shouldn't need to 'opt in' to access the full picture.**

WHY IT MATTERS

When the availability of critical information is sales driven, homebuyers cannot make informed, independent decisions. This creates an imbalance of power within the process and introduces friction at the earliest stages of the homeownership journey.

3

GATED ENTRY

STRUCTURAL FRICTION & EXCLUSION

Most DPA programs are restricted to specific lenders or limited geographic areas, which reduces flexibility and makes it difficult to layer or combine multiple sources of assistance. This limits homebuyer options by forcing them into narrower loan choices or locations, often preventing them from combining assistance sources and ultimately reducing how much support they can access to make a purchase feasible.

THE REALITY

Even when homebuyers are able to identify down payment assistance (DPA) programs, accessing them is not straightforward. Program eligibility, application requirements, and qualification criteria are often unclear, inconsistently disclosed, or dependent on navigating institution-specific processes.

WHAT WE FOUND

Eligibility transparency varies significantly by provider type:

- Government programs are more likely to disclose eligibility requirements
- Private sources often do not clearly publish criteria

Lender-based programs frequently tie eligibility to internal priorities:

- Many lenders align DPA access with their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) assessment areas which limits geographic access and restricts who can qualify

Key qualification criteria remain largely undisclosed :

- Only 25% of programs disclose minimum credit score requirements
- Only 3% disclose maximum debt-to-income (DTI) ratios

WHAT THIS MEANS

Access to down payment assistance is not standardized. Instead, it is highly conditional and often unintentionally controlled at the point of entry. Rather than offering a clear, consistent pathway, the system varies widely by provider—each with its own eligibility criteria, application steps, and access points. This fragmentation makes the process difficult to navigate without guidance and nearly impossible to compare details across programs.

Homebuyers are not only responsible for identifying available DPA programs, but also for navigating inconsistent and often unclear entry points to access them. Even when programs are found, the path to qualification remains ambiguous. Borrowers frequently lack clarity on whether they meet eligibility requirements, what documentation is needed, or how to initiate the application process without directly engaging a provider.

This challenge is compounded by limited transparency around key financial thresholds. Credit score and debt-to-income ratio are among the most common determinants of approval, yet these criteria are rarely disclosed upfront. As a result, homebuyers are left without the information needed to accurately assess their readiness which reduces the likelihood of successful program utilization.

> **"Finding a program doesn't mean a homebuyer can successfully access the available capital.**

WHY IT MATTERS

When entry into the system is unclear or restricted, homebuyers face increased uncertainty, delays, and potential disengagement. Many may never complete the process because the pathway to access is too complex or opaque. At the same time, programs may struggle to reach qualified participants, reinforcing a cycle where assistance exists but remains unimpactful.

4

WASTE & RETURN

UTILIZATION & REFORM OPPORTUNITY

Allocated down payment assistance can sit undeployed while eligible families go without. In the absence of publicly available utilization data and active program verification, homebuyers often face delays or are unable to complete a home purchase.

THE REALITY

Despite the presence of funding and program infrastructure, down payment assistance (DPA) may not be reaching its full potential because it is often unclear whether programs are actively deployable from a basic research perspective.

WHAT WE FOUND

Utilization rate data is largely unavailable

- Public-facing information does not indicate how much DPA is actually being deployed
- There is little visibility into whether programs are meeting demand or leaving funds unused

“Availability” is often unclear or misleading

- The sources that state that DPA is “available” often do not indicate whether funds are currently accessible
- Program information is rarely date-stamped, making it difficult to determine whether details are current or outdated

Structural limitations reduce effective use of funds

- 48% of programs require the use of a specific lender, limiting the ability to stack or combine multiple sources of DPA
- These restrictions reduce flexibility and overall financial impact for borrowers

Operational burdens impact utilization

- DPA-related paperwork and entity requirements can create challenges near closing
- These complexities may discourage lenders, agents, and other professionals from fully utilizing available programs

WHAT THIS MEANS

The DPA ecosystem is not currently structured for efficient execution. Programs remain difficult to find, difficult to track, and difficult to trust in real time. While many programs exist on paper, the absence of clear indicators of availability prevents them from being consistently integrated into the homebuying journey.

Even when programs are identified, significant barriers to entry can limit their use and prevent full deployment of available funds. A lack of transparency around utilization further compounds this issue, creating a critical blind spot within the ecosystem. Without clear, accessible data on how much assistance is being used (or left unused) stakeholders are unable to accurately assess program effectiveness or identify opportunities for improvement.

At the same time, outdated or unclear information about program availability introduces avoidable uncertainty. Homebuyers and industry professionals may spend valuable time pursuing programs that are no longer funded or accessible, leading to inefficiencies, delays, and frustration.

Finally, structural and operational constraints continue to restrict utilization. Limitations on lender participation reduce the ability to layer multiple funding sources, while administrative complexity can discourage professionals from incorporating DPA into transactions. Together, these challenges prevent the ecosystem from functioning at its full potential and limit its overall impact.

> **"Available does not mean accessible. Accessible does not mean utilized.**

WHY IT MATTERS

When DPA is not fully utilized, the impact is lost across the system.

- Homebuyers miss critical opportunities to access affordable homeownership
- Professionals may avoid using DPA due to complexity or uncertainty
- Program administrators are unable to deploy funds at their intended scale

This results in a cycle where resources are allocated but not fully realized which reinforces the gap between potential and impact.

Ultimately, achieving full utilization of DPA will require not only increasing awareness, but improving how programs are structured, communicated, and executed within the real-world dynamics of the homebuying process.

THE IMPLICATIONS

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE DPA ECOSYSTEM IS NOT ADDRESSED

The findings of the UnlockDPA study point to a critical conclusion: down payment assistance cannot be solved program by program. The barriers identified in this study are ecosystem-level barriers, meaning they are created by the way information, eligibility, funding, and access points are spread across multiple institutions without shared standards or coordination. If these challenges are not addressed as an ecosystem, Michigan risks continuing a cycle where DPA exists, but may not fully reach the households it was designed to serve.

Without action, programs may remain active on paper but difficult to confirm in practice. Homebuyers may continue to hear that DPA is “available” without being able to determine whether funds are currently accessible, whether they qualify, or what steps are required to apply. Professionals may continue to spend excessive time searching for programs, verifying details, and navigating fragmented information. As a result, DPA may be underused not because of lack of demand, but because the system itself makes access too difficult.

This has consequences for the entire homeownership pipeline. Eligible buyers may delay purchasing, reduce their buying power, or exit the process altogether. Lenders and housing professionals may avoid using DPA because it adds uncertainty, paperwork, or risk near closing. Program administrators may struggle to deploy funds at the scale intended. Over time, this weakens the impact of DPA as a homeownership tool and limits its ability to close affordability gaps across Michigan.

HOW THESE FINDINGS IMPACT ECOSYSTEM EXPERIENCE

PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE

It is not easy for professionals to find and understand DPA programs in a consistent, reliable way. Professionals can find some programs, but understanding whether those programs are active, usable, and appropriate for a specific borrower often requires additional research, follow-up, and interpretation.

For professionals, the current DPA ecosystem is difficult to navigate even with industry experience. Housing counselors, lenders, real estate professionals, nonprofit staff, and program administrators often have to piece together information from scattered websites, PDFs, program pages, phone calls, contact forms, and personal networks. The research found that basic information may be available, but the details needed to confidently guide a buyer are often missing.

Professionals may be able to locate a program name or maximum assistance amount but still struggle to confirm whether the program is active, whether funds are available, whether a specific lender is required, what credit score or DTI thresholds apply, and what documentation is needed. This creates a burden on verification. Instead of relying on clear, standardized public information, professionals must spend time calling providers, submitting inquiries, waiting for responses, or interpreting incomplete information.

This is especially problematic because DPA often needs to be used within the timing of a real estate transaction. If a professional cannot quickly confirm program eligibility or funding availability, they may avoid recommending the program altogether. The risk of introducing delays near closing can discourage use, even when assistance could benefit the buyer. In this way, the system could unintentionally push professionals away from fully utilizing DPA.

The experience is also uneven. Some professionals may have strong relationships with lenders, municipalities, CDFIs, or housing agencies and can access information more easily and quickly. Others may not. This means DPA knowledge can become concentrated among insiders, rather than functioning as a transparent public resource.

HOMEBUYER PERSPECTIVE

It is not easy for the public to find and understand DPA programs. While some basic program information is available, the public-facing system does not provide enough clear, complete, and current information for most residents to confidently identify programs, compare options, and understand next steps without professional support.

For prospective homebuyers, the experience is even more difficult. The current system assumes a level of digital literacy, research capacity, financial knowledge, and persistence that many buyers may not have. A buyer trying to find DPA on their own may encounter dozens of disconnected sources, incomplete program descriptions, outdated pages, or contact forms that require them to submit information before they fully understand the program or process.

This creates confusion at the very beginning of the homeownership journey. A resident may not know whether they should start with a lender, a municipality, a housing counselor, a nonprofit, or a state agency. They may find a program but are unable to determine if it applies to their city, county, census tract, income level, credit profile, or homebuyer status. They may also be unable to tell whether the program is still funded or currently accepting applicants.

The lack of transparent eligibility information is especially harmful. Credit scores and debt-to-income ratios are common barriers to mortgage readiness, yet most programs do not publicly disclose these requirements. As a result, residents may enter conversations without knowing whether they are likely to qualify. This can lead to frustration or discouragement, especially for buyers who are already uncertain about the mortgage process.

The “pitch-to-play” dynamic also affects resident trust. When residents must call, submit forms, or engage with providers before receiving full information, they may feel pushed into a sales process before they are ready. Instead of feeling educated and empowered, they may feel that access to assistance depends on who they talk to, how much they already know, or whether they are connected to the right professional. the buyer. In this way, the system could unintentionally push professionals away from fully utilizing DPA.

The experience is also uneven. Some professionals may have strong relationships with lenders, municipalities, CDFIs, or housing agencies and can access information more easily and quickly. Others may not. This means DPA knowledge can become concentrated among insiders, rather than functioning as a transparent public resource.

THE BROADER RISK: DPA BECOMES AVAILABLE IN NAME, BUT NOT IN PRACTICE

If the ecosystem is not improved, DPA will continue to be available in name but inconsistent in practice. The issue is not simply whether programs exist. The issue is whether homebuyers and professionals can find them, trust them, understand them, and use them in time to support a real home purchase.

When information is fragmented, eligibility is unclear, lender access is restricted, and program utilization data is unavailable, the ecosystem cannot fully measure or maximize impact. This creates a system where assistance is technically present, but practically difficult to deploy.

The long-term risk is that Michigan leaves homeownership opportunity on the table. Families who could have purchased with assistance may remain renters. Buyers who could have used DPA to reduce upfront costs may take on greater financial strain. Programs designed to expand access may appear underutilized, not because they are unnecessary, but because the system around them is too difficult to navigate.

THE ACTIONABLE SOLUTION

UNLOCKING DPA REQUIRES COLLECTIVE ACTION

FROM UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM TO BUILDING THE SOLUTION

The findings of this study make clear what is at stake. Without action, the Michigan down payment assistance ecosystem will continue to operate where resources exist, however, it will remain difficult to access where opportunity is present but not fully realized.

At the same time, these findings point to something equally important: the path forward is achievable through collaboration. The barriers identified throughout this report are the result of how the system is currently structured. With intentional coordination, shared standards, and collective commitment, they can be addressed.

This moment presents a clear inflection point. We know that down payment assistance is valuable in creating affordability. The new question is whether the ecosystem supporting DPA is designed to deliver on its promise and if it must adapt to realize its full potential.

> **"The same system that created these barriers can be redesigned to remove them. Building the infrastructure for a transparent, accessible system.**

For the ecosystem to move from fragmented access to full utilization, the solution must be as coordinated as the problem.

This is why The Ownership Initiative, powered by Rocket Community Fund, is launching the UnlockDPA Statewide Task Force designed to serve as a cross-sector coalition that brings together key stakeholders to collectively address the four systemic barriers identified in this study. Additionally, the Task Force will strive to achieve the following three critical collaborative functions:

1

Create Transparency Through Shared Data and Tools

The Task Force will work collaboratively to build and maintain a statewide, publicly accessible DPA infrastructure, including:

- A Statewide Library of DPA Programs
  - Standardized, searchable, and publicly available
- A Statewide Product Matrix
  - Clear comparison of program features, eligibility, and requirements
- A Public-Facing UnlockDPA Website
  - Designed for both professionals and residents
  - Focused on simple search, clear program details, and direct pathways to apply or connect to a professional resource

2

Track and Improve Utilization Over Time

The Task Force will support the development of a quarterly DPA utilization tracking framework, allowing stakeholders to:

- Monitor how much assistance is being deployed
- Identify gaps in access across regions and populations
- Measure progress toward full utilization

This creates a foundation for accountability, continuous improvement, and data-driven decision-making.

3

Fill System Gaps in Utilization Through Coordinated Action

The Task Force will identify and address utilization gaps in the ecosystem by aligning efforts across stakeholders and developing shared solutions that improve access at scale.

THE CONCLUSION

FROM FRAGMENTED ACCESS TO FULL UTILIZATION.

Unlocking the full potential of DPA requires a shift in approach: from isolated programs to a coordinated ecosystem. This means improving transparency, tracking utilization, identifying gaps, and continuously improving how the system functions.

The establishment of the UnlockDPA Statewide Task Force represents a critical step in this direction. By bringing together stakeholders across sectors, the Task Force provides a mechanism to align efforts, build shared infrastructure, and move toward a more transparent, efficient, and accessible system.

The opportunity is significant. Michigan has the resources, the programs, and the demand needed to expand access to homeownership. What is needed now is alignment across the ecosystem.

Join the Unlock DPA effort and learn more by visiting our website at

www.ownershipinitiative.com/unlockdpa

REFERENCES

Bank Branch Locator. Banks in Michigan. 2026. https://www.bankbranchlocator.com/michigan-banks.html

Bruene, Jim. Top 66 Online Digital Banks for U.S. Consumers. Fintech Labs. Nov 2023. https://fintechlabs.com/top_online_digital_banks_for-_us_consumers/

Community Development Financial Institutions Fund. Searchable Awards Database. https://www.cdfifund.gov/awards/state-awards?1766949459=

Fannie Mae. Down Payment Assistance Tool. 2026. https://yourhome.fanniemae.com/calculators-tools/down-payment-assistance-tool

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Affordable Mortgage Lending Guide, Part II: State Housing Finance Agencies. Oct 2021. https://www.fdic.gov/resources/bankers/affordable-mortgage-lending-center/guide/part-2-docs/down-payment.pdf

Freddie Mac. DPA One by Freddie Mac. 2026. https://dpaone.freddiemac.com/

MI CDFI Coalition. Find a CDFI Coalition Lender. 2023. https://micdfi.org/cdfi-search-results/

Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Major Employers in Michigan. 2026. . . . . https://www.michiganbusiness.org/why-michigan/major-employers/

Michigan State Housing Development Authority. Statewide Housing Plan.2026. https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/developers/statewide-housing-plan

Nonprofit Locator. Nonprofits in Michigan. 2014-2026. https://nonprofitlocator.org/organizations/mi/

Opportunity Finance Network. CDFI Locator. 2026. https://www.ofn.org/cdfi-locator/

US Bank Locations. Michigan Banks List. 2026. https://www.usbanklocations.com/michigan-bank-list.htm

Wikipedia. List of Michigan companies. Nov 2025. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Michigan_companies#Companies_based_in_Michigan

Wikipedia. List of municipalities in Michigan. 2026. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_municipalities_in_Michigan

DPA PROGAM APPENDIX

Program Name	URL	Provider Name	Provider Type	MSHDA Region
Flagstar Gift Program	https://www.flagstar.com/personal/borrow/home-loans/community-loans.html	Flagstar Bank	Lender	A, B, F, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O
Pathway DPA	https://www.apmortgage.com/pathway-dpa	American Pacific Mortgage Corporation dba Preferred Rate	Lender	All
Energy-Integrated Mortgage Program	https://www.arcasa.io/	Arcasa	Other: Energy Company	All
Chenoa Fund Down Payment Assistance	https://chenoafund.org/homebuyer/programs/	CBC Mortgage Agency	Lender	All
HomeFundIt	https://www.cmgfi.com/homefundit	CMG Mortgage, Inc. dba CMG Financial, dba Bank CMG	Lender	All
IDD Housing Access Pilot Program	https://communityhousingnetwork.org/idd-housing-access-pilot-program/	Community Housing Network	CDFI	All
CCM Smart Start	https://crosscountrymortgage.com/mortgage/loans/down-payment-assistance/	Cross Country Mortgage	Lender	All
Homeward Edge Program	https://www.fairway.com/mortgage-loan-products/affordable-housing	Fairway Independent Mortgage	Lender	All
Very Low-Income Purchase (VLIP) LLPA credit	https://singlefamily.fanniemae.com/originating-underwriting/mortgage-products/homeready-mortgage	Fannie Mae	Other: Govern ment Agency	All
Launch	https://www.fhlbi.com/services/community-programs/launch/	Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis (FHLBI)	Lender	All
HomeBoost Down Payment Assistance	https://www.fhlbi.com/services/community-programs/homeboost-down-payment-assistance-/	Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis (FHLBI)	Lender	All
First-Time Homebuyer Program	https://www.myfpcu.com/first-time-homebuyer-program	Financial Plus Credit Union	Lender	All
MyPath2Own	https://www.guildmortgage.com/mortgage-loans/mypath2own/	Guild Mortgage	Lender	All
Promise of Home (1% Down?)	https://www.guildmortgage.com/mortgage-loans/1-percent-down/	Guild Mortgage	Lender	All

Mortgage Ready Program	https://www.independentbank.com/greenpath -program-independent-bank	Independent Bank	Lender	All
National FHA 100+ Down Payment Assistance Program	https://www.kindlending.com/loan -options	Kind Lending, LLC	Lender	All
Extra Credit Program	https://mercbank.com/mortgage-purchase	Mercantile Bank	Lender	All
MI 10K DPA Loan	https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/pathway -to-housing/mi-10k -dpa-loan	Michigan State Housing Development Authority	Other: Government Agency	All
MSHDA First - Generation DPA	https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/pathway -to-housing/firstgendpa	Michigan State Housing Development Authority	Other: Government Agency	All
House2Home	https://www.nhfloan.org/programs.html	National Homebuyers Fund, Inc.	Nonprofit	All
ONE+ Loan Program	https://www.northpointe.com/home -lending/loan-options/0down/oneplus -program/	Northpointe Bank	Lender	All
ONE+ Loan Program	https://www.rocketmortgage.com/home -loans/one-plus	Rocket Mortgage	Lender	All
Sault Tribe Housing Authority Down Payment Assistance Program	https://www.saulttribehousing.com/service_program(s)/homeownership/down_payment_assistance.php	Sault Tribe Housing Authority	Other: Tribal Organization	B, C
Bay Mills Down Payment Assistance Program	https://www.baymills.org/_files/ugd/869f65_b5cb545dd4704b66a530738190f300e7.pdf	Bay Mills Housing Authority	Other: Housing Authority	C
NAHASDA Down Payment Assistance Program	https://www.gtbindians.org/housing_dept.asp	The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Housing Department	Other: Tribal Organization	D
RAO Down Payment Assistance Program	https://www.gtbindians.org/housing_dept.asp	The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Housing Department	Other: Tribal Organization	D
Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency (NMCAA) Down Payment Assistance Program	https://nmcaa.net/down -payment-assistance/	NMCAA	Nonprofit	D, E

Homebuyer Assistance Fund	https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/media/i3ujgljl/ccp -900-35-homebuyer-assistance-fund.pdf	City of Grand Rapids	Municipality	F
Muskegon Homebuyer's Assistance Program	https://muskegon-mi.gov/city-services/development-services/community-neighborhood-services/applications-for-grants-and-programs/	City of Muskegon	Municipality	F
ICCF IDA Program	https://iccf.org/programs/ida/	Inner City Christian Federation Community Homes	Nonprofit	F
America's Home Grant Program	https://promotions.bankofamerica.com/homeloans/downpaymentcenter?subCampCode=78905	Bank of America	Lender	F, H, I K, L, M, N, O
ONB DPA	https://www.oldnational.com/personal/home-loans/down-payment-assistance-program/	Old National Bank	Lender	F, K
Employer - Assisted Housing DPA	https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/developers/employer-assisted-housing	Covenant Health Care	Employer	G
Urban Pioneer+ Down Payment Assistance Program	https://porthuron.org/government/departments/planning_department/community_development.php	City of Port Huron	Municipality	H
GCMPC Down Payment Assistance Program	https://gcmpc.org/down-payment-assistance/	Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission	Municipality	H
Genesee County Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	https://gcmpc.org/neighborhood-stabilization-program/	Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission	Municipality	H
Down Payment Grant	https://promotions.bankofamerica.com/homeloans/downpaymentcenter?subCampCode=78905	Bank of America	Lender	H, K, L, M, N, O
Homeownership Opportunity Assistance Program (HOAP)	https://cityofeastlansing.com/DocumentCenter/View/10985/CAHP-Presentation-12820-PDF	Capital Area Housing Partnership	Nonprofit	I
City of East Lansing Employee Homeownership Program	https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/2181/Current-Housing-Assistance-Programs	East Lansing - Community Development	Municipality	I
Ingham County DPA Program	https://ingham.org/departments_and_officials/treasurer/ingham_county_down_payment_assistance_program.php	Ingham County	Municipality	I

Lansing Down Payment Assistance	https://www.lansingmi.gov/296/Community -Development -Office	Lansing - Economic Development & Planning	Municipality	I
Calhoun County Homebuyer Program	https://www.independentbank.com/calhouncountytreasurer	Calhoun County Treasurer	Municipality	J
BCPS Housing Incentive Program	https://www.battlecreekmi.gov/642/BCPS -Housing -Incentive -Program	City of Battle Creek	Municipality	J
Kalamazoo County Homebuyer Program	https://www.independentbank.com/kalamazoocountytreasurer	Kalamazoo County Treasurer	Municipality	J
Jackson 100 Homes	https://www.cityofjackson.org/1313/100 -Homes -Program	City of Jackson	Municipality	K
Oakland County Homebuyer Program	https://www.independentbank.com/oaklandcounty	Oakland County Treasurer	Municipality	L
Pontiac Down Payment Assistance	https://nationalfaith.org/dpa/pontiac/	Pontiac (admin is National Faith)	Municipality	L
RepGen HORT Pilot 3.0 Grant	https://reparationgeneration.org/hort3/	Reparation Generation	Nonprofit	L, M, N, O
National Faith Down Payment Assistance Programs	https://nationalfaith.org/our -services/down -payment-assistance -program/	National Faith Homebuyers	CDFI	L,M,N,O
AGAP	https://oakland -housing.org/agap-program/	Oakland Housing	Nonprofit	L,N,O
City of Warren Direct Homebuyer Assistance Program	https://www.cityofwarren.org/wp -content/uploads/2024/07/HOME -Policies -and-Procedures -As -of-July-2024.pdf	City of Warren	Municipality	M
NSP Program	https://www.dearbornheightsmi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1038/NSP -Brochure -April -2012 -PDF	City of Dearborn Heights	Municipality	N
Lincoln Park First Time Homebuyers Program	https://www.citylp.com/DocumentCenter/View/431/Lincoln -Park -HOME -Investment -Partnership -Policies -and-Procedures -PDF?bidId=	City of Lincoln Park	Municipality	N
Taylor Down Payment Assistance	https://www.cityoftaylor.com/1479/Down -Payment -Assistance	City of Taylor	Municipality	N
Westland Homebuyer Assistance Program	https://cityofwestland.com/216/Community -Development -Programs	City of Westland Housing & Community Development	Municipality	N
Livonia Down Payment Assistance Program	https://www.livonia.gov/295/Housing	Livonia Housing Commission	Municipality	N

Wayne County First Time Homebuyers Program / HOME	https://www.waynecountymi.gov/Government/Departments/Economic-Development/What-We-Do/Community-Development/HOME-Program	Wayne County Department of Economic Development	Municipality	N, O
Detroit Down Payment Assistance Program	https://detroitmi.gov/departments/housing-and-revitalization-department/homebuyers/detroit-down-payment-assistance-program/apply-now	City of Detroit	Municipality	O
Tobias Harris Homeownership Initiative	https://www.thhidetroit.com/	Homium	Lender	O
Faith In Girls (FIG) Homebuying Program	https://www.faithingirls.org/homebuyer-readiness	Through Wayne Metro	Nonprofit	O
CMG Community One Grant	https://www.cmgfi.com/	CMG Mortgage, Inc. dba CMG Financial, dba Bank CMG	Lender	unknown
Fifth Third DPA	https://www.53.com/content/fifth-third/en/personal-banking/borrowing-basics/down-payment-assistance-resources.html	Fifth Third Bank	Lender	unknown
Genisys Down Payment Assistance Program	https://www.genisyscu.org/personal/loans/mortgages/purchase/down-payment-assistance-program	Genisys Credit Union	Lender	unknown
Horizon Bank Down Payment Assistance	https://www.horizonbank.com/about-us/community-outreach/affordable-loan-options	Horizon Bank	Lender	unknown
Home for Good	https://virtualhealthfairportal.com/-ohiohealth/resources/huntingtonbank/Home%20for%20Good%20-%20benefits%20for%20first-time%20buyers%20and%20existing%20homeowners%20-%20Brian%20Scarpino%20614-331-2249.pdf	Huntington National Bank	Lender	unknown
Chase Homebuyer Grant	https://www.chase.com/personal/mortgage/affordablelending	JPMorganChase Bank	Lender	unknown
First-Time Conventional Financing Homebuyer Program	https://www.mfcu.net/mortgage	Members First Credit Union	Lender	unknown
Pathway to Homeownership Program	https://www.newamericanfunding.com/buy-a-home/pathway-to-homeownership/	New American Funding	Lender	unknown
Community Heroes Credit	https://www.cfcu.org/mortgages	Orsa Credit Union (Formerly Community Financial CU)	Lender	unknown
PNC Grant	https://www.pnc.com/en/personal-banking/borrowing/home-lending/mortgage-loans/down-payment-assistance.html#legal	PNC Bank	Lender	unknown
Low to Moderate Income Borrower Grant	https://www.pnc.com/en/personal-banking/borrowing/home-lending/mortgage-loans/down-payment-assistance.html#legal	PNC Bank	Lender	unknown