

Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Conforming Bill
Relating to the Florida Hometown Hero Program

BILL

2025

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Florida Hometown Hero Program;
3 amending s. 420.5096, F.S.; prioritizing eligible
4 applicants; providing an effective date.

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6 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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8 Section 1. Section 420.5096, Florida Statutes, is amended
9 to read:

10 420.5096 Florida Hometown Hero Program.—

11 (1) The Legislature finds that individual homeownership is
12 vital to building long-term housing and financial security. With
13 rising home prices, down payment and closing costs are often
14 significant barriers to homeownership for working Floridians.
15 Each person in Florida's hometown workforce is essential to
16 creating thriving communities, and the Legislature finds that
17 the ability of Floridians to reside within the communities in
18 which they work is of great importance. Therefore, the
19 Legislature finds that providing assistance to homebuyers in
20 this state by reducing the amount of down payment and closing
21 costs is a necessary step toward expanding access to
22 homeownership and achieving safe, decent, and affordable housing
23 for all Floridians.

24 (2) The Florida Hometown Hero Program is created to assist
25 Florida's hometown workforce in attaining homeownership by
26 providing financial assistance to residents to purchase a home
27 as their primary residence. Under the program, a borrower may

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28 apply to the corporation for a loan to reduce the amount of the
29 down payment and closing costs paid by the borrower by a minimum
30 of \$10,000 and up to 5 percent of the first mortgage loan, not
31 exceeding \$35,000. Loans must be made available at a zero
32 percent interest rate and must be made available for the term of
33 the first mortgage. The balance of any loan is due at closing if
34 the property is sold, refinanced, rented, or transferred, unless
35 otherwise approved by the corporation.

36 (3) For loans made available pursuant to s.
37 420.507(23)(a)1. or 2., the corporation may underwrite and make
38 those mortgage loans through the program to persons or families
39 who have household incomes that do not exceed 150 percent of the
40 state median income or local median income, whichever is
41 greater. A borrower must be seeking to purchase a home as a
42 primary residence; must be a first-time homebuyer and a Florida
43 resident; and must be employed full-time by a Florida-based
44 employer. The borrower must provide documentation of full-time
45 employment or full-time status for self-employed individuals.
46 The requirement to be a first-time homebuyer does not apply to a
47 borrower who is an active duty servicemember of a branch of the
48 armed forces or the Florida National Guard, as defined in s.
49 250.01, or a veteran.

50 (4) In addition to the requirements in subsection (3),
51 between July 1 and December 31 of each year, eligibility to
52 apply for financial assistance through the Florida Hometown Hero
53 Program shall be limited to those employed in Florida as
54 teachers, first responders, United States uniformed

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55 servicemembers, Florida National Guard servicemembers, and
56 Florida State Guard servicemembers. A list of eligible
57 occupations shall be created, approved, and published by the
58 corporation for each fiscal year that funding for the Florida
59 Hometown Hero Program is made available by the Legislature in
60 the General Appropriations Act.

61 (45) Loans made under the Florida Hometown Hero Program may
62 be used for the purchase of manufactured homes, as defined in s.
63 320.01(2)(b), which were constructed after July 13, 1994; which
64 are permanently affixed to real property in this state, whether
65 owned or leased by the borrower; and which are titled and
66 financed as tangible personal property or as real property.

67 (56) This program is intended to be evergreen, and
68 repayments for loans made under this program shall be retained
69 within the program to make additional loans.

70 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.