

# Habitat for Humanity Fact Sheet

## What is Habitat for Humanity International?

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world, and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat invites people of all backgrounds, races and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need.

Habitat has built more than 250,000 houses around the world, providing more than 1 million people in more than 3,000 communities with safe, decent, affordable shelter. HFHI was founded in 1976 by Millard Fuller along with his wife, Linda.

## How does it work?

Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit and financed with affordable loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build still more Habitat houses.



**Collegiate Challenge volunteers trim vinyl siding.**

Habitat is not a giveaway program. In addition to a down payment and the monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor — sweat equity — into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

## What does a Habitat house cost?

Throughout the world, the cost of houses varies from as little as \$800 in some developing countries to an average of nearly \$60,000 in the United States. Habitat houses are affordable for low-income families because there is no profit included in the sale price. Mortgage length varies from seven to 30 years.

## What are Habitat affiliates?

Habitat for Humanity's work is accomplished at the community level by affiliates — independent, locally run, nonprofit organizations. Each affiliate coordinates all aspects of Habitat home building in its local area — fund raising, building site selection, partner family selection and support, house construction, and mortgage servicing.

Habitat for Humanity International's operational headquarters, located in Americus, Georgia, USA, and its administrative headquarters, located in Atlanta, Georgia, provide information, training and a variety of other support services to Habitat affiliates worldwide.

All Habitat affiliates are asked to “tithes” — to give 10 percent of their contributions to fund house-building work in other nations. Tithing provides much-needed funds for international building, and it also gives affiliates the opportunity to demonstrate the spirit of Christian partnership. In 2001, U.S. affiliates tithed \$9.04 million to support Habitat's work overseas. Some affiliates in developing countries also receive funding grants from Habitat for Humanity International.

## Where does Habitat for Humanity operate?

Habitat is a worldwide, grassroots movement. Habitat has a presence in more than 90 countries, including all 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Use our affiliate search to find Habitat affiliates in your area.

**How are the partner families selected?**

Families in need of decent shelter apply to local Habitat affiliates. The affiliate's family selection committee chooses homeowners based on their level of need, their willingness to become partners in the program and their ability to repay the loan. Every affiliate follows a nondiscriminatory policy of family selection. Neither race nor religion is a factor in choosing the families who receive Habitat houses.

If your family, or a family you know, is in need of decent, affordable housing, contact the Habitat affiliate nearest you. If you're not sure where a local Habitat affiliate might be, use our search engine to find the names and phone numbers of affiliates in your area, or contact the Habitat Help Line at (800) 422-4828, Ext. 2551 or 2552. Your local affiliate can give you information on the availability, size, costs and sweat-equity requirements for Habitat houses in your area, as well as information on the application process.

**How are donations distributed and used?**

Donations, whether to a local Habitat affiliate or to HFHI, are used as designated by the donor. Gifts received by HFHI that are designated to a specific affiliate or building project are forwarded to that affiliate or project. Undesignated gifts are used where most needed and for administrative expenses. HFHI's most recent audited financial statement is available online.

**Who controls and manages Habitat for Humanity International?**

An ecumenical, international board of directors determines policy and oversees and guides the mission of Habitat for Humanity International. Board members are dedicated volunteers who are deeply concerned about the problems of poverty housing around the world.

The HFHI headquarters office operates with an administrative staff, assisted by a core group of professional and support employees and supplemented by volunteers. Each Habitat for Humanity affiliate is managed by its own local volunteer board.

**How does Habitat work with the government?**

Habitat for Humanity International welcomes partnerships with governments that include accepting funds and other resources to help provide houses for God's children in need, provided these partnerships do not limit our ability to demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus Christ, and further provided that affiliates do not become dependent on or controlled by government funds or other funding sources. Local Habitat for Humanity affiliates or Habitat for Humanity International may adopt more specific guidelines as deemed necessary to avoid such dependence or control.

**How does a Habitat for Humanity affiliate get started?**

Habitat affiliates start when concerned citizens of diverse backgrounds come together to address the problem of poverty housing in their community. These volunteers research the community's affordable housing needs and resources, and evaluate the potential success of Habitat's self-help model in their community. The group then applies to HFHI to become an official Habitat affiliate.

If you are interested in eliminating poverty housing in your community, please contact HFHI headquarters for information on establishing a Habitat affiliate. Persons calling from inside the United States can call (800) HABITAT or (800) 422-4828. Those calling from outside the United States may contact HFHI headquarters at 01-229-924-6935.

**How can I become a volunteer?**

To volunteer where you live, use our contact information to locate your local affiliate.

**How can I get more information?**

Habitat for Humanity International  
121 Habitat Street  
Americus, GA 31709-3498  
1-800-422-4828

[www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)