A GUIDE FOR CAPITAL REGION BUYERS

DPA

DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE IS REAL MONEY

Most buyers find out too late.

The state and local programs available in the Capital Region, how they stack, the deadlines that cost buyers money, and the strings attached.



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START HERE

THE MONEY IS THERE. TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

Every year, Capital Region buyers **leave thousands of dollars on the table**. Not because they didn't qualify, but because nobody told them about the programs, or they found out after a deadline had passed.

Down payment assistance can cover part or all of your down payment and closing costs. Some programs are **forgiven** after a set time. Some have **no income limit**. And many can be **combined**.

I've been helping families into homes since 1993, first as a Realtor and now as a mortgage lender. Read this, then call me **before you write an offer**. The order you do things in matters more than anything else.

Brian

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WHAT DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE IS

Help with your down payment and closing costs, in four forms.

Down payment assistance, or DPA, is money from a state agency, city or nonprofit that helps you **cover the cash needed to buy**. It's paired with a regular first mortgage like FHA, conventional, VA or USDA.

GRANTS

Money you **don't repay**, as long as you meet the program's rules.

FORGIVABLE LOANS

A second loan that's **forgiven** over time if you stay in the home. SONYMA DPAL works this way.

DEFERRED LOANS

A second loan with **no monthly payment**, repaid when you sell or refinance.

LOW-RATE SECONDS

A small second loan with a **low monthly payment**.

GOOD TO KNOW: Each program sets its own rules. The same buyer may qualify for one program and not another, which is why it pays to look at all of them.

WHO DPA FITS

More buyers qualify than you'd expect.

USUALLY A GOOD FIT

- You have steady income but limited savings
- You haven't owned a home in the last 3 years
- Your income is within program limits, or the program has none
- You'll live in the home as your primary residence
- You're buying in a city with its own program
- You're willing to take a homebuyer class

KNOW GOING IN

- Most programs have **income and price limits**
- **Homebuyer education** is often required
- Some programs must be applied for **before you sign a contract**
- Selling or refinancing early may mean **repayment**
- Funding can **run out** mid-year
- You can't get cash back at closing

REAL TALK: "First-time buyer" usually means you haven't owned a home in the last three years. If you owned one years ago, you may still qualify.

SONYMA STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

New York State's own homebuyer programs.

The **State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA)** offers first mortgages with competitive rates for income-eligible buyers, plus down payment assistance that can be added on top.

PROGRAM	AMOUNT	TERMS
SONYMA DPAL	Up to **$15,000**: 3% of the price or $3,000, whichever is more	0% interest, no payments, forgiven after 10 years
SONYMA DPAL PLUS	Up to **$30,000**, sized to the gap in your deal	0% interest, no payments, forgiven after 10 years

STATEWIDE

Available anywhere in the Capital Region.

PAIRED LOANS

Used with a SONYMA first mortgage, including FHA and conventional options.

VETERANS

SONYMA also has a program with added benefits for veterans.

GOOD TO KNOW: SONYMA amounts and rules are current as of October 2026. SONYMA updates its programs regularly, so I'll confirm what's available when you apply.

LOCAL CITY PROGRAMS

Extra help for buying in specific cities.

Several Capital Region cities offer their own assistance, often on top of SONYMA. These programs are smaller and have their own deadlines, so **talk to me early**.

CHOOSE ALBANY

Up to **$8,500**, or 5% of the price, for homes in the City of Albany. **No income limit.**

ALBANY HAP

Need-based help in the City of Albany for buyers under **80% of area median income**. Needs a complete file 45 days before closing.

TROY HIP

Grants through TRIP, based on income. **You must apply before you sign a purchase contract.**

FAMILY GIFT FUNDS

Not a program, but it stacks with all of them. On FHA, gifts can cover the entire down payment.

BUYING SOMEWHERE ELSE?

Other cities, counties and nonprofits in our area run programs too, and they open and close throughout the year. Tell me where you're looking, and I'll check what's currently funded.

STACKING PROGRAMS: AN EXAMPLE

Two programs can cover more than the down payment.

Here's how assistance might add up for a buyer purchasing a **$250,000 home in the City of Albany** with an FHA loan. Your price and eligibility will be different.

Purchase price	**$250,000**
FHA minimum down payment (3.5%)	**$8,750**
SONYMA DPAL (3% of price)	**$7,500**
Choose Albany (capped at $8,500)	**$8,500**
Total assistance	**$16,000**
LEFT OVER TOWARD CLOSING COSTS	**$7,250**

EXAMPLE ONLY. NOT EVERY PROGRAM CAN BE COMBINED, AND ELIGIBILITY VARIES.

ORDER MATTERS

Some programs must be approved before others. I'll map the sequence.

SELLER CREDITS

Seller help can cover remaining costs, within loan limits.

NO CASH BACK

Assistance can't exceed what you need to close.

DEADLINES & TIMING

Where most buyers lose money they qualified for.

1 **BEFORE YOU START SHOPPING**

Get pre-approved and find out which programs fit. Start a homebuyer education class if one is required.

2 **BEFORE YOU SIGN A CONTRACT**

Apply for any program that requires it, like **Troy HIP**. Once you've signed, it may be too late.

3 **WHEN YOU WRITE THE OFFER**

Allow enough time before closing. **Albany HAP** needs a complete file 45 days before closing, so a 30-day close won't work.

4 **UNDER CONTRACT**

Send documents quickly. Program reviews add steps to the normal mortgage process.

5 **CLOSING**

Assistance is applied at closing. You'll sign separate documents for each program.

REAL TALK: The money is there. What costs people is the order they do things in. Call me before you write the offer, not after.

COMMON MISTAKES THAT COST MONEY

Every one of these has cost a real buyer real money.

1 SIGNING FIRST
Some programs won't accept you once you have a contract.

2 CLOSING TOO FAST
A short closing date can rule out programs that need more time.

3 ASSUMING YOU EARN TOO MUCH
Some limits are higher than people think, and some programs have none.

4 SKIPPING THE CLASS
No education certificate, no assistance. Start it early.

5 WAITING UNTIL FUNDS RUN OUT
Local programs can pause mid-year when the money's gone.

6 BUYING OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARY
City programs only apply inside city limits. Check the address.

7 OVER THE PRICE LIMIT
A higher offer can push you past a program's price cap.

8 NOT ASKING AT ALL
The biggest mistake. Many buyers never hear about these programs.

INCOME & PRICE LIMITS

The numbers that decide which programs you can use.

Most assistance programs cap the **household income** you can earn and the **purchase price** of the home. The limits depend on the program, the county and your household size.

SONYMA	Capital Region income limit is **$98,480** for a 1–2 person household, higher for larger households. Purchase price limits also apply.
ALBANY HAP & TROY HIP	Based on area median income. Albany HAP is for households under **80% of AMI**.
CHOOSE ALBANY	**No income limit.** The home must be in the City of Albany.

WHO COUNTS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?

Programs define household income differently. Some count only the buyers on the loan. Others count every adult living in the home. I'll check how each program counts yours.

GOOD TO KNOW: Limits shown are current as of October 2026 and change each year. I'll confirm the numbers for your county and household size.

THE STRINGS ATTACHED

Assistance is a great deal. Know the rules that come with it.

LIVE IN THE HOME

The home must stay your **primary residence**. Moving out and renting it can trigger repayment.

FORGIVENESS PERIOD

Forgivable loans like DPAL are forgiven only after the full period, **10 years** for DPAL.

SELLING OR REFINANCING

Selling or refinancing before the period ends may mean repaying some or all of the assistance.

RECAPTURE TAX

Some SONYMA first mortgages carry a federal **recapture tax** if you sell within 9 years with a gain and higher income. It's rare, but ask.

REAL TALK: For most buyers who plan to stay a while, these rules are easy to live with. If you think you'll move in a few years, tell me. It changes which programs make sense.

12 · GET ORGANIZED

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

Have these ready, and the process moves a lot faster.

- [ ] Pay stubs covering the last 30 days
- [ ] W-2s and tax returns, last 2–3 years
- [ ] Income documents for all household members
- [ ] Bank statements, last 2 months, all pages
- [ ] Homebuyer education certificate
- [ ] Gift letter and proof of transfer, if applicable
- [ ] Government-issued photo ID
- [ ] Proof you haven't owned a home in 3 years, if asked
- [ ] Signed program applications
- [ ] Address of the home you're considering

Every program is a little different. I'll give you the exact list for your scenario before you gather anything.



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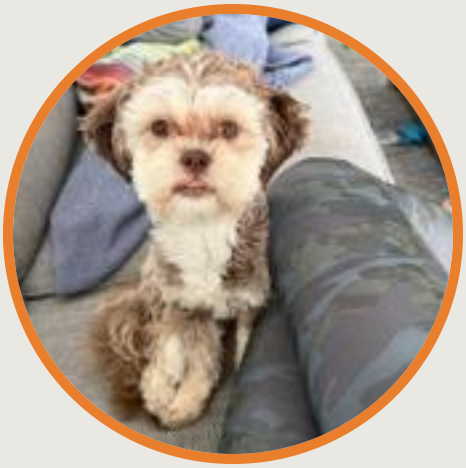
BOOK 15 MINUTES

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

This guide is for educational purposes only and is not a loan commitment or guarantee of approval. All loans are subject to credit, income, asset and property approval; not all applicants will qualify. Down payment assistance is subject to program eligibility, income and purchase price limits, homebuyer education requirements and funding availability. Program amounts, terms and deadlines are set by each administrator (NYS HCR/SONYMA, Albany Community Development Agency, TRIP and others), are current as of October 2026, and may change or pause without notice. Not all programs can be combined. SONYMA DPAL is a 0% deferred second loan forgiven after 10 years; repayment may be required if you sell, refinance or move out before then. Assistance cannot result in cash back to the borrower at closing. Examples are illustrations only and are not a rate quote or Loan Estimate. © 2026 New American Funding, LLC. NMLS #6606 (nmlsconsumeraccess.org). 1 MacArthur Place, Suite 800, Santa Ana, CA 92707 · newamericanfunding.com · (800) 450-2010. Licensed Mortgage Banker, NYS Department of Financial Services. Equal Housing Lender. October 2026.

PENNY'S CORNER

A few words from our Chief Belly-Rub Officer.



PENNY SAYS

CHIEF BELLY-RUB OFFICER

This is the one Dad gets loud about. There's real money out there, and people miss it because they find out too late. Call him before you write the offer. Seriously. Before.

Worst case, the answer is no and you still get to pet me. That's a pretty good worst case.

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Tips, updates and plenty of Penny.

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