

CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

Housing & Property Services Apprenticeship



Ark Housing logo: QUALITY HOMES, Ark HOUSING, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Making A Positive Difference By
Empowering People And Communities

If you require this information booklet in an alternative format please contact Martin Muprhy, Housing & Customer Services Manager at martin.murphy@arkhousing.co.uk or on 02890 752310.

A Message from the Housing & Customer Services Manager

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining Ark Housing Association as our new Housing & Property Services Apprentice.

We have accomplished great things as a registered Housing Association by taking brave strategic decisions to further our social purpose. We are now one of the fastest growing social housing providers across the UK and Ireland, and through our ongoing investment in new homes and services, we continue to reach many more people in need and have a greater positive impact within the communities we operate.

As the Housing & Property Services Apprentice, you will gain valuable hands-on experience working within the housing and property services teams at Ark Housing, while also working towards recognised qualifications through college attendance and coursework, including the OCN NI Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice (Northern Ireland) and the CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice.

Reporting to the Housing & Customer Services Manager, you will work closely with both internal staff and tenants and stakeholders to ensure adherence across all housing and property services activity, while supporting the organisation's strategic objectives.

If you feel you are the right person for this role and wish to join a progressive and forward-thinking organisation that makes a lasting difference to people, then we would love to hear from you.

In return, you will be supported by an excellent and highly professional staff team and Board, all committed to delivering Ark Housing's vision.

I look forward to receiving your application.

MARTIN MURPHY
HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER

About Ark Housing Association

Ark Housing Association is a registered Housing Association with the Department for Communities and Financial Conduct Authority and is an independent not for profit organisation under the Industrial & Provident Society Act (NI) 1969. We are also registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

We were established in 1987 as Down and Connor Housing Association to provide social and affordable homes for people in housing need. In 1999 the organisation was renamed Ark Housing Association to reflect our history and growing ambition.

We are based in Belfast but operate across all district council areas and we build, manage, and maintain homes to meet the needs of a wide range of demographics. In addition to providing homes for general needs families, we also provide a range of accommodation and support services to enable people to manage and sustain their tenancies and live independently. All permanent allocations of our homes are made in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme for Northern Ireland which is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

We operate several successful partnerships with specialist agencies and statutory bodies. These include Threshold N.I; Inspire Wellbeing; Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; Southeastern Health and Social Care Trust; Supporting People and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. We also manage a floating support homeless service for families threatened with or experiencing homelessness.

Our new build developments are funded through a combination of private finance with capital funding grants received from the Department for Communities and we are also revenue funded for some specialist services through the Supporting People Programme.

We currently manage approximately 911 homes, have an active development programme with over 300 more currently on site, and we aim to have up to 1,300 homes in management by March 2027. We currently employ 41 permanent and temporary staff across a range of scheme and office-based roles.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

At Ark Housing Association we pride ourselves on being an innovative and progressive organisation. We nurture open and honest internal and external relationships, and we value partnership, collaboration, and professional development. We empower and trust our people to deliver and in return we actively support them through a myriad of forward-thinking policies and practises.

Our vision is:

“Making a positive difference by empowering people and communities”.

Our mission is:

“In partnership, provide quality homes and support services to meet housing need and contribute to the wellbeing of communities”.

Our core values are:

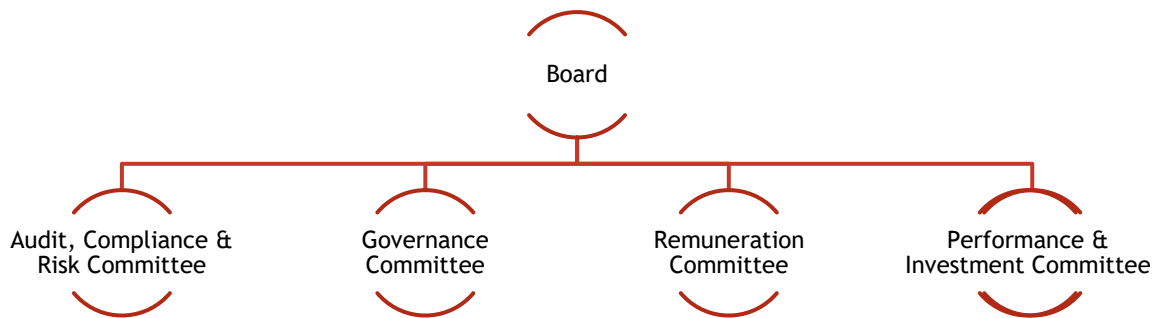
| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Progressive | <i>Forward thinking, supporting change and transformational</i> |
| Respect | <i>Treat everyone with dignity and esteem</i> |
| Integrity | <i>Maintain the highest professional and personal standards</i> |
| Diversity and Equality | <i>Value diversity and equality in everything we do</i> |
| Excellence | <i>Strive to deliver the highest standards of quality and customer care.</i> |

Our Governance & Senior Executive Structure

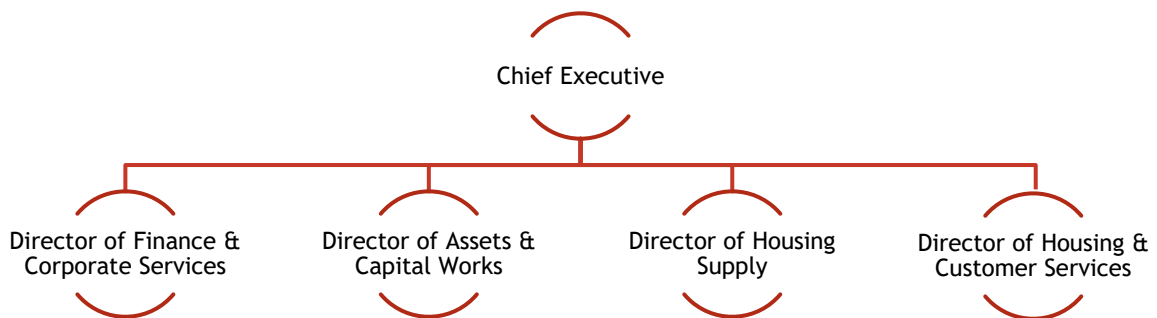
Ark Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Board and its Committees whose role is to lead, direct, and control the work of the Association. The Board ensures the delivery of the organisation's agreed strategic objectives and corporate plans within the framework of statutory and regulatory compliance.

The Board is supported by the Senior Executive Team who is led by the Chief Executive.

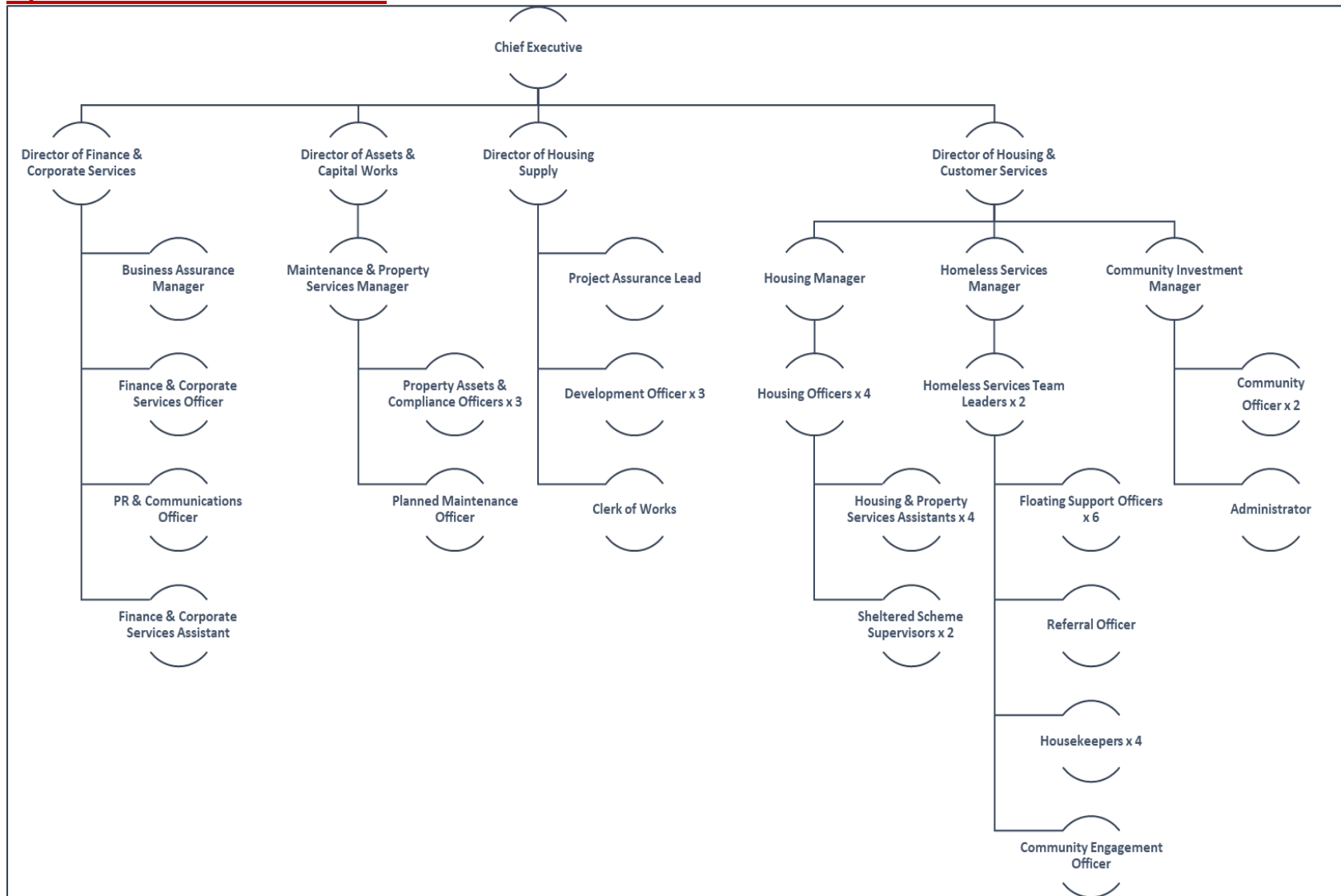
Board & Committee Structure



Senior Executive Team Structure



Operational Staff Structure



About The Role

The Housing & Property Services Apprentice Programme offers an excellent first step towards building a rewarding career in the Social Housing sector. As part of this opportunity, you will gain valuable hands-on experience while also working towards recognised qualifications through college attendance and coursework, including the OCN NI Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice (Northern Ireland) and the CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice

CORE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

In this role, you will build valuable experience across a range of key service areas, giving you a broad insight into the Social Housing sector, including:

- **Repairs & Maintenance**
- **Rent Accounting**
- **Housing Allocations, Transfers & Exchanges**
- **General Property, Neighbourhood & Tenancy Services**
- **Tenant Participation**

Qualifications, Skills & Experience

Applicants must satisfy the following essential criteria:

- Five GCSE's (including Grade C or above in English, Maths and ICT or equivalent qualifications)
- Excellent level of IT literacy: MS Office
- Have excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Be willing to learn and able to take on instructions
- Have excellent organisational skills
- Be able to work within a team and work on own initiative
- Be able to work to tight deadlines in a pressured environment

Benefits & Main Terms & Conditions of Employment

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Contract: | 2 Years Fixed Term (Please note that successful completion of the course could potentially lead to the opportunity for a permanent role, subject to Funding) |
| Hours: | 37 Per Week, Monday & Friday. Due to the nature of the role, you will on occasion be required to work outside normal office hours. |
| Remuneration: | £25,065.23 |
| Pension: | NILGOSC contributory pension scheme (Employer contribution is currently 15.5%). |
| Annual Leave: | 22 days annual leave moving to 27 after 5 years' service and 32 days after 10 years' service. |
| Statutory Leave: | 13 customary holidays per annum. |
| Occupational Sick Pay: | Up to 1 month equivalent to normal rate of pay (full pay) and 1 month equivalent of pay at 50% (half pay) with a maximum of 3 months full pay and 3 months half pay. (Depending on length of service). |
| Other Benefits: | A range of excellent work and family friendly policies. |
| Private Health Insurance | |
| | Access to Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme. |
| | EV Charging Facilities at Head Office with on-site Car Parking. |

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Housing & Property Services Apprentice (2-year fixed term)
LOCATION: Ark Housing Head Office, Belfast
RESPONSIBLE TO: Housing and Customer Services Manager

PURPOSE:

The Housing & Property Services Apprentice Programme offers an excellent first step towards building a rewarding career in the Social Housing sector. As part of this opportunity, you will gain valuable hands-on experience while also working towards recognised qualifications through college attendance and coursework, including the OCN NI Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice (Northern Ireland) and the CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice

As part of this role, you will gain experience and firsthand knowledge in the following areas:

Provision of Customer Services & Administrative Support

As part of this role, you will work alongside the Customer Solutions, Housing and Assets Teams in:

- The handling of all incoming customer enquiries across all communications channels (e.g. in person; telephone; email; text; web; chatbot; other) to provide an efficient and efficient service / resolution at first point of contact.
- Understanding the importance of ensuring that all information and correspondence, regardless of the service area, are managed and recorded in accordance with the Association's Data Protection and Call handling Policies and Procedures;
- Fostering positive relationships with customers through the call handling process, ensuring that all matters are followed up swiftly and efficiently, and that all communications are provided in a professional and accurate manner.
- Recording all enquiries and associated outcomes reached (within the Association's customer information platform), and to keep the relevant officer(s) apprised where matters require their attention for follow-up.
- Managing generic office servicing requirements and facilities as requested e.g. booking conferences attendees; setting up meeting rooms; ordering office furniture, stationary and other supplies; managing office equipment; office consumable supplies; and raising ICT support tickets.
 - Managing and maintaining stationary room;
 - Managing incoming & outgoing post;
 - Receiving visitors / maintaining the reception area;

Key Experience

In this role, you will build valuable experience across a range of key service areas, giving you a broad insight into the Social Housing sector, including:

- **Repairs & Maintenance**
- **Rent Accounting**
- **Housing Allocations, Transfers & Exchanges**
- **General Property, Neighbourhood & Tenancy Services**

Repairs & Maintenance

- Responding to all first-time and follow-up reports of disrepair, and where required, raise works orders for completion, ensuring the timely and accurate logging of same;
- Keeping the customer informed as to the nature of the work agreed for completion including the designated timescales, and where required, (particularly where emergency or urgent works are instructed) maintaining regular contact with the customer throughout the repair process for the purposes of scheduling appointments, monitoring progress, and mitigating risk;
- Maintaining regular contact with the appointed contractor throughout the repair process (particularly where emergency or urgent works are instructed) and to ensure that the Association's repair handling records system is maintained as required;
- Referring technically complex or cost prohibitive jobs (those which fall outside the scope of delegated authorities) to the assets officer for approval prior to raising orders;
- Undertaking contractor enquiries at the request of the relevant maintenance officers in respect to jobs overdue and outstanding;

Rent Accounting:

- Handling rent account enquires, ensuring the accuracy of information provided;
- Referring technically complex rent account enquiries to the relevant Housing Officer as required;
- Keeping the customer informed as to the current standing of their rent account, including any ongoing matters in respect to the same, and to provide advice and information as necessary in respect to financial support and assistance;
- Assisting the Housing Services Team in a range of administrative duties, including, but not limited to the issuing of letters and surveys; the issuing of bulk communications; the inputting of data; and the maintenance and management of a range of internal monitors and registers.

Housing Allocations, Transfers & Exchanges:

- Handling incoming enquires in respect to housing allocation offers, transfers, and exchanges, and to always provide general advice and information to enquirers in relation to the same ensuring accuracy of information. This includes information in respect to the general application process, the general working of the common

selection scheme, and the general procedures in respect to mutual exchanges and transfers.

- Assisting the Housing Services Team in a range of administrative duties, including, but not limited to the issuing of letters and surveys; the issuing of bulk communications; the inputting of data; and the maintenance and management of a range of internal monitors and registers.

General Property, Neighbourhood, & Tenancy Services:

- Handling incoming general enquires in respect to property, neighbourhood, and tenancy services, and to provide general advice and information to enquirers in relation to the same always ensuring the timeliness and accuracy of information.
- Assisting the Housing Services Team in a range of general administrative duties, including, but not limited to the issuing of letters and surveys; the issuing of bulk communications; the inputting of data; and the maintenance and management of a range of internal monitors and registers;

Tenant Participation:

- Talking to tenants and listening to their views and ideas.
- Supporting activities that encourage tenants to get involved.
- Assisting with gathering and recording feedback.
- Learning how tenant feedback is used to improve services and communities.

Representational Role

- Attending conference events, seminars, meetings, and training sessions as required;
- Ensuring the provision of effective communications both internally and externally with our partners and other agencies and organisations;
- Undertaking all duties in such a way as to enhance and protect the reputation and public profile of the Association.

Quality Assurance

- Being proactive and innovative to ensure that systems are effective, and proactively seek ways to improve both your own and the team's standard of customer service delivery;
- Actively engage in on-going learning and development, to ensure sufficient knowledge to excel in your duties.

Any other Duties

This list is not exhaustive and only highlights key areas and tasks associated with this post. It cannot be prescriptive, and it is a requirement of this position that there exist high levels of flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of the organisational and service demands. You shall therefore be required to positively respond to such demands and ensure that the commitment, innovation, flexibility, and delivery of high-quality services remain paramount.

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

E: Essential D: Desirable

| REQUIRED CRITERIA FOR POST | | E | D |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. | Five GCSE's (including Grade C or above in English, Maths and ICT or equivalent qualifications) | ✓ | |
| 2. | Hold a full current driving license or have access to a form of transport that enables you to meet the requirements of the post in full including with reasonable travel timescales | | ✓ |
| SKILLS & ABILITIES (may be tested at interview) | | | |
| 3. | Be IT literate with a good understanding of Microsoft Office packages | ✓ | |
| 4. | Have excellent verbal and written communication skills | ✓ | |
| 5. | Be willing to learn and able to take on instructions | ✓ | |
| 6. | Have excellent organisational skills | ✓ | |
| 7. | Be able to work within a team and work on own initiative | ✓ | |
| 8. | Be able to work to tight deadlines in a pressured environment | ✓ | |

We reserve the right to enhance criteria to facilitate short listing.

Selection Timetable

The closing date for completed applications is **12noon on Friday 26th June 2026**. Applications should be sent by email to: recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk

Responses will only be accepted on the relevant application form. **Please note that CVs will not be accepted.**

The shortlisting process is envisaged to take place week commencing 29th June 2026 with successful applicants invited for an informal interview week commencing 27th July 2026 (subject to confirmation). Further details will be provided for those candidates invited to participate in this stage of the process.

In the event that a candidate is invited to interview but is unavailable on the proposed date and time due to reasons beyond their control, the panel may endeavour to accommodate an alternative arrangement subject to their own availability, although this may not be possible and is not guaranteed unless an adjustment is required in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Demonstration of Competencies

Candidates will be required to demonstrate during the selection and assessment process that they satisfy the core requirements of the post as set out in the job description and person specification.

Guidance Notes on Completing Your Application Form

It is important that you read these notes carefully before you complete the application form.

Job Description and Personnel Specification

The Job Description and Personnel Specification will assist you in deciding whether you meet the minimum essential criteria for this position. Please remember that the Association reserves the right to increase the criteria used for the short listing of candidates to be selected for interview without further notification.

You should use the job description and personnel specification to help you consider your relevant experience, qualifications, skills and abilities and ensure that you outline how you meet those requirements when completing the relevant section of the application.

Short Listing Candidates

Candidates will be selected solely on the information provided in the application form therefore you should ensure that you answer all sections fully and address all essential and desirable criteria where possible.

Confidential Equality Monitoring Form

To comply with our obligations under Equal Opportunities and Fair Employment legislation we are required to monitor our recruitment exercises in order to ensure

that our recruitment policies and procedures are effective. All applicants are therefore required to complete the Equal Opportunities Form associated with this application.

You should ensure that you complete the Equality Form and return it in a separate envelope addressed to the Equality Officer and marked Private & Confidential or by email along with your completed application form to: recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk

We will not use data from our equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the selection process.

Supporting Documents

Documentary evidence will be required if you are shortlisted to attend for interview. This will include photographic identification e.g. passport, driving license or other form of acceptable ID.

Copies of your educational qualifications, professional membership and any other documents required to support your application will also be required. You may bring these documents to the office with you on the day of your interview and staff will arrange to copy them for you. Please note that all documents provided must be original.

Disclosure of Criminal Records

All applicants must complete this section of the form fully and where criminal convictions are disclosed details must be provided of the offence(s) of which the applicant has been convicted and any relevant details relating to the offences.

You should note that Ark Housing are required to carry out checks on all people being considered for employment with the Association through the Access NI scheme.

Data Protection

All information provided by applicants will be used solely for the purposes for which it is required in this recruitment exercise and will not be disclosed to others except where we are obliged to do so in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations.

Equality of Opportunity

Ark Housing is an Equal Opportunities Employer, and we welcome applications from all sections of our community. Arrangements can be made for those applicants who require additional support or assistance because of a disability or other consideration which may hinder them in this application process. If you require such assistance, please contact John McVey at this office on Tel: 028 90 752310 or Email: recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk.

General Points

The application form, if completed by hand, should be completed in **black ink** and must be legible. If submitted by post, please make sure that you leave plenty of time for your application to be received by the closing date & time. Please remember that **late applications will not be accepted**.

Ensure that you have signed and dated the application form. Electronic signatories are acceptable on emailed applications.

Do not send any supporting documentation with this application form. We may ask for such documents if your application is successful, and you are shortlisted for interview.

Please ensure that you have the permission of your nominated referees to act on your behalf and that they agree to provide you with a reference.

Canvassing on behalf of your application will disqualify your application.