



LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE STUDY: ONSLow COUNTY – ABONDONED MANUFACTURED HOMES PROGRAM

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Onslow County's Dilapidated Home Demolition Assistance Program has been in effect since 2007. The DHDAP's primary goal is to assist a citizen in demolishing and removing decrepit manufactured homes in a safe and efficient manner. The DHDAP is tied to the county's solid waste management ordinance, which specifically addresses abandoned manufactured homes within its jurisdiction. Onslow County employs four zoning and environmental enforcement officers who enforce the ordinance and cite citizens with notices of violation. Manufactured homes can also be cited for nuisance conditions and health hazards, which the solid waste ordinance defines.

The owner of the abandoned manufactured home is typically the responsible party, but when the home owner cannot be found, the underlying property owner is held responsible. If the owner indicates they cannot afford removal costs, they are told of the DHDAP. As of now, the DHDAP is a cost-sharing program, where the county pays anywhere from 70-100% of removal costs and the owner in most cases pays between 10-30% of the costs. The copayment must be made up front. The average participant has been making a 10% copayment while a few participants receive 100% assistance (assistance is determined by the homeowner's family income as a percentage of median family income). Currently the Onslow Board of Commissioners is the DHDAP's source of funding. In FY 2008-2009 \$70,000 was appropriated for the program. For FY 2009-2010 a \$50 manufactured home disposal fee will be placed on all new mobile home set-up permits. With an estimated number of 300 permits issued, about \$15,000 in revenue will go toward DHDAP funding.

Onslow County hires contractors to remove its abandoned mobile homes. The DHDAP uses an informal bidding process. Typically four to five contractors are on hand to bid on each home and the county typically alternates between them. This has worked well in Onslow County for both the contractors and the county. The county also feels it helps the local economy using the bid process, as over the last two years the DHDAP has given work to at least nine or ten different contractors.

The estimated amount of time to remove a manufactured home can vary greatly. If the home's owner is required to make a co-payment up front, they are given 45 days to do so. Also, since Onslow County allows multiple manufactured homes to be removed from one lot, extensive asbestos surveying is required. If friable asbestos is found, asbestos abatement is required which can take up to a month. Overall it takes 2-3 ½ months to remove a structure under the DHDAP. Two months is the short end, where the applicant receives 100% financial aid, asbestos surveying is not required, and only one structure is removed from the lot. The contractor is given 60 days to remove a structure. Many times the contractor goes over the allotted time, but is allowed to finish without penalty.

All manufactured homes in the DHDAP are demolished on site. Recycling is not required during removal. However, contractors are allowed to strip the scrap metal from the home and sell it to junkyards for cash. Onslow County allows contractors to do this since they are in turn able to bid a lower price on jobs as a result.

Costs of removing a single-wide manufactured home in the DHDAP can range between \$1,800 and \$2,000. A double-wide typically costs \$3,000. These costs include demolition costs, permits and tipping fees, but does not take into account asbestos surveying. Asbestos has been the DHDAP's biggest stumbling block, as abatement is very expensive. When two or more manufactured homes are to be removed on one plot of land, the N.C. Health Hazards Control Unit requires asbestos surveying and that a pre-demolition certification form be completed by the contractor and sent to the unit before demolition can occur. Another stumbling block is avoiding legal liability. For instance, if the DHDAP applicant owns the manufactured home but not the underlying real property, Onslow County requires a hold harmless agreement to prevent the county from being liable. Also, it is essential to work with credible and diligent contractors. Onslow County will only hire a contractor if they carry the proper general liability and workers compensation insurance.

**How many units removed since DHDAP began*