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## The U.S. City Offering \$50,000 To Move There

By **Giulia Carbonaro** | Published March 26, 2025 | *Newsweek*

Pawnee City, Nebraska, a small rural community about 90 minutes from Lincoln and Omaha, is offering \$50,000 in down payment assistance to encourage new residents to relocate.

This incentive is part of a broader strategy called **Vision 2030**, aiming to revitalize the town by constructing **25 new single-family homes** on city-owned lots. These homes feature modern layouts and are priced at approximately **\$325,000**, significantly higher than the area's median sale price of **\$100,000**.

The **\$50,000** incentive is funded through the proceeds from two previously built homes using a **\$650,000 grant** from the **Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund**.

### Reversing Population Decline

Pawnee City had a population of **930 in 2023**, down from **944 in 2022**, and the initiative is a response to the town's steady decline over the past few decades. While the COVID-19 pandemic briefly increased interest in rural living, the trend has reversed again.

Still, city leaders hope that the incentive—and a high quality of life—will draw in new families, retirees, and remote workers.

“We think housing is the secret sauce for small rural communities to grow,” said Steve Glenn, chairman of the Economic Development Council for the Pawnee City Chamber of Commerce. “People can work from anywhere now. It comes down to quality of life—and Pawnee City has that.”

### Community Features

The town offers:

- Affordable cost of living

- Excellent schools and a hospital
- Parks, trails, and pickleball courts
- Daycare and vibrant community events

Construction began in **December 2024**, with the first homes expected to be ready by **July 2025**.

### **Who Qualifies?**

The \$50,000 down payment program is **not universal**—income limits apply. Applicants must qualify for a **first mortgage** and fall within the program's income guidelines. The city reported **over 50 families** have already expressed interest in relocating.