

PHFA offers guidance for disaster victims, housing providers

PHFA Executive Director Brian Hudson has appealed to landlords across the Commonwealth to offer temporary housing and vacant apartments to households displaced by recent hurricanes in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Vacancy information may be registered with the National Emergency Resource Registry at www.swern.gov.

HUD, USDA's Rural Housing Service, and other related federal agencies have agreed to waive certain program regulations affecting Section 8, HOME, CDBGs, Emergency Shelter Grants, Section 221(d)(4), and Section 236. For additional information, check the HUD's resource page, www.hud.gov/Katrina/index.cfm.

In order to help expand the availability of housing for disaster victims and their families, the IRS has relaxed certain low-income housing tax credit rules that prevent owners of tax-credit units from providing apartments to disaster victims who do not qualify as low-income or as "non-transient" renters. IRS Notice 2005-69 has details.

PHFA PennHOMES-financed property owners may also waive certain income and occupancy restrictions for affected displaced families. The Agency asks that owners of PennHOMES or tax-credit properties advise PHFA of vacancies by e-mailing Lisa Case at lcase@phfa.org. Instructions and forms for using the waiver process are available on www.phfa.org.

Owners or property managers participating in any PHFA multifamily housing program should update current listings on the Pennsylvania Affordable Apartment Locator at www.phfa.org/pal/mgmt. Because the recent crises have underscored the immense value of the Apartment Locator to identify resources that can help provide emergency housing assistance in the Commonwealth, the Agency is also asking that non-PHFA developments likewise be listed. E-mail Frank Bobak, fbobak@phfa.org for instructions on how to proceed.

Plan now to exhibit, present information at 2006 Housing Services Conference

PHFA will host its next annual Housing Services Conference on June 19, 20, and 21, 2006, at the Harrisburg Hilton and Towers. Organizations and businesses wishing to be sponsors or exhibitors for the event will find information at www.phfa.org/rfp (Check 2006 Vendors information). For \$200, exhibitors receive a cost-effective opportunity to display their goods and services to 400 housing service directors, property owners, and management companies. The Agency is also seeking presenters with expertise in such topics as services for families or seniors, management practices, maintenance issues, disability issues, diversity, legal matters, behavioral health, self-sufficiency, health care, youth programs, technology, recreation and leisure, and population-specific issues. A presenters request for proposals form can also be found on the Web site.

Banking Department Web site offers fraud prevention advice

The Pennsylvania Department of Banking has unveiled a new, easy-to-use Web site that provides consumers with instant notification when action is taken against a financial service provider, including actions involving predatory lending. The Web address is www.banking.state.pa.us.

"Volume cap" applications being accepted by PHFA

PHFA is now accepting applications for "volume cap" allocations from multifamily development sponsors wanting to use tax-exempt financing. Check www.phfa.org/rfp/2006TaxExempt.pdf.

HEMAP prevents foreclosure

For nearly 22 years the Homeowners' Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program has helped Commonwealth families avoid foreclosure. As of September 2005, HEMAP has invested \$363,700,000 to save 35,000 homes. More than \$198,000,000 of this amount has come from repayments from program recipients, 16,330 of whom have completely repaid their HEMAP loans.

Mature Section 8 developments to be examined at NLHA conference

The National Leased Housing Association will hold its annual seminar on Wednesday, November 9, 2005, in Washington, DC. Issues affecting the ownership and management of mature project-based Section 8 subsidized developments will be examined. Topics include: refinancing opportunities; a HUD multifamily housing update; acquisition and conversion; and, the 2530 automation process. For additional information, contact NLHA, 1818 N Street NW, #405, Washington, DC 20036. Phone 202.785.8888 or fax 202.785.2008.

Federal tax credits available for residential improvements

A personal federal tax credit of up to \$500 will be available for certain energy improvements made to principal residences after 2005 and before the end of 2008. A 10 percent credit can be taken for expenditures on items such as roofs, doors, windows, and insulation, and a 100 percent credit can be applied to expenditures on certain heat pumps, furnaces, boilers, air conditioning units, and air circulating fans. A separate new personal tax credit may be claimed against 30 percent of expenditures for qualifying solar water heating equipment, photo voltaic properties, and fuel-cell property. Restrictions apply to all the credits. Details will be available in IRS publications.

Section 202 program, preservation meeting scheduled

PHFA will sponsor an informational meeting covering changes to the HUD Section 202 program and preservation opportunities on Wednesday, October 26. Nonprofits, sponsors, owners, investors, and others interested in these issues may benefit from attending. The Harrisburg Hilton Hotel is the site. Contact Brian Shull, bshull@phfa.org, to learn more.

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