



PHFA publishes Homeownership Choice Program RFPs

Requests for proposals for this year's Homeownership Choice Programs are now on the PHFA Web site at www.phfa.org/about/news/rfp.aspx. The deadline for submitting proposals is 2:00 p.m., Friday, August 4, 2006. Total funding is \$10,000,000 for all three HCP components: the Homeownership Construction Initiative; the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative; and, the Mixed Use Facility Financing Initiative.

Special financing available for energy saving home improvements

The Keystone Home Energy Loan Program offers fast, simple, preferred-rate financing to consumers for ENERGYSTAR and other qualifying improvements through approved contractors. A 7.99 percent unsecured rate is available for a number of improvements to cooling and heating systems, doors, windows, insulation, and alternate systems. Loans of \$1,000 to \$10,000 require no home equity for eligibility. Check out the Keystone HELP Web site for more information at www.keystonehelp.com/index.php.

Reinventing Older Communities conference to be held in April

The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia will host a conference April 5–7 at the Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn's Landing that focuses on revitalizing older cities and towns. *Reinventing Older Communities* will address issues relating to the arts, brownfields, displacement, the environment, eminent domain, foreclosures, health, homelessness, schools, transportation, zoning, and rural concerns. Speakers and presenters of national renown will offer their insights on various topics relating to the field. Conference information and registration materials are available at www.philadelphiafed.org/ccca/conferences.html.

PHFA offers Employer Assisted Housing Initiative

The Agency's Employer Assisted Housing Initiative helps workers better afford the cost of shelter near their place of employment. Many core community employees such as public safety personnel, health care providers, entry level employees, and unskilled laborers can benefit from the program, and stretch their homebuying dollars if their employers participate in the program.

By helping employers address a key business concern—the cost of recruiting and retaining good employees—the program can have a positive effect on turnover rates, as well. Monetary inducements to help defray workers' closing costs and downpayment expenses have proven beneficial in reducing absenteeism and tardiness, lowering commuting times and stress, and generally enhancing employee morale.

Employers who participate in the PHFA program can offer their workers the lowest available Agency rates, reduced fees, and free homebuyer education. In some cases, employees may also be eligible for closing cost assistance. For more information, contact PHFA's Business Development Officer, Dona Stewart, at dstewart@phfa.org, or 717.780.3908.

Mark calendars now for next year's Housing Forum

April 25–27, 2007, are the scheduled dates for next year's statewide Housing Forum at the Harrisburg Hilton Hotel. *Save-the-date* cards and e-mails will be sent in future months, but now is a good time to start your planning for the event.

FHLB lists affordable housing program application deadlines

The deadlines for Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh 2006 Affordable Housing Program applications are: 2006A funding round—5:00 p.m., Thursday, March 30; and, 2006B funding round—5:00 p.m., Thursday, September 28. Both rounds will be fully electronic. No paper applications will be accepted. The Web site is www.bank4banks.com. For assistance, call 1.800.288.3400 or 412.288.2826.

US Treasury fights identity theft

The United States Treasury has produced a DVD, *Identity Theft: Outsmarting the Crooks*, to help consumers protect themselves from, and learn what they should do if they are victims of, identity theft. Topics include credit reports, internet security, taxpayer vulnerabilities, and debt collection. Families of recently deceased individuals, older citizens, and hospital patients are likely targets of this kind of illegal activity. The DVD has English subtitles for persons with hearing impairments, and Spanish language dubbing. Contact the Federal Citizen Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009, phone toll-free, 1.888.878.3256 to get a copy, for a handling charge of \$2.00.

Rural Housing loan guarantees available

The USDA Rural Housing Service has \$99,000,000 of Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program funds available for new and rehabilitated affordable rental units. Guarantees can be used for existing Section 515 properties, as well. RHS deadline is June 16, 2006. Check *RHS Section 538 NOFA* on the USDA Web site, www.usda.gov.

Federal agencies, mortgage lenders join to prevent foreclosure

PHFA has operated the Homeowners' Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program since 1984, and it has prevented foreclosure on nearly 36,000 Pennsylvania family homes. Now, HUD, the US Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and a number of mortgage companies are working to help other Americans save their homes. "Help for Homeowners Facing the Loss of their Home" is on the www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/econ/econ.cfm Web site.

FEBRUARY 2006

www.phfa.org

Harrisburg Pennsylvania 17101

211 North Front Street