



PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

PHFA

*Quick
Connections*

An electronic news service of the PHFA Housing Services Department – December 2011

Save the Date
2012 PHFA Housing Services Conference
June 25-27, 2012
Sheraton Station Square Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA

As you flip the page on the calendar to December, take a minute to pull out your 2012 calendar and mark June 25-27 for your trip to Pittsburgh to attend the 2012 PHFA Housing Services Conference. It's going to be a great event in a great city! We're putting together all the details and pulling out all the stops to welcome you to "The Steel City."

We know you come to the Conference for the great content in the sessions and keynote addresses and to reconnect with your colleagues. And all that will hold true in 2012; you'll just get to do it in a wonderful setting and take advantage of some after-hours fun in a new venue. We have a hometown team of service coordinators and management staff that is helping to plan and add their personal touch to this event. So make sure you don't miss it!



Smile for the Camera!

Building on the success of last year's Common Thread Quilt Project, we'll be unveiling our latest opportunity for you to show off how you and your residents make your neighborhood unique. And for all of you that suffer from a needle and thread phobia – this time we'll be doing it with photographs, instead of quilt squares. So dust off your cameras and watch for an announcement on the PHFA website at www.phfa.org in the next few weeks unveiling the project guidelines and inviting you to show us your stuff!

Marketplace of Vendors

Calling all potential vendors! PHFA will again be sponsoring a Marketplace of Vendors to give exhibitors and attendees a chance to interact and share information throughout the first day of the Conference – on Monday, June 25. Vendors with potential products and services for management, staff and residents of multifamily housing should contact cbaker@phfa.org for a fillable application or watch the PHFA website to download an application. This is a great opportunity to get your product/service in front of hundreds of representatives of rental housing developments across Pennsylvania. Applications are due by the first of April.

PHFA Information and Trainings

Marcellus Natural Gas Developments Effect on Housing in Pennsylvania

To access the report: [click here](#).

Reduced Rates for Renovate and Repair Program in Designated Disaster Counties

For more information on rates: [click here](#).

Other Trainings and Conferences

Dec 8 Workshop to Help Seniors Beat Holiday Blues-Philadelphia

To help seniors combat depression and feelings of loneliness, The Center in the Park is sponsoring a "Beat the Holiday Blues" workshop. It will be held at the Center in the Park, 518 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, December 8 from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM. Cost is free but registration is required by calling Erika Barber at 215.848.7722.

Free Training Opportunities Available for Organizations

The National Resource Center on LGBT Aging has developed four separate 4-hour trainings: two for aging services providers and two for LGBT organizations. These trainings are offered free of charge, to all levels of staff and volunteers. Contact Robert McNamara at 717.772.3688 or [visit here](#).

Various Dates-PA Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition Training Opportunity

Understanding Dementia: Diagnosis, Treatment and Behavioral Management, the Coalition's training series for 2011/12 will focus on dementia. Training is being offered at 4 locations across the state. Click here for a copy of the [flyer](#).

- December 7, State College, April 4, Bryn Mawr, May 9, Edwardsville, May 16, Clearfield

Go to: <http://www.olderpa.org/ViewEvent.aspx?eventId=365011>.

Resources/News – General

Conservation and Recycling

Every year Americans generate millions of tons of trash. Find recycling information and centers, conservation resources, and more to help you practice an environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible lifestyle. [Learn more about conservation and recycling here](#).

Disaster Crisis Counseling is Available to Pennsylvanians

Project Keystone is the Commonwealth's program to help disaster survivors in presidentially declared major disaster areas. Help is available for individuals, groups, and communities. Project Keystone provides crisis counseling through community-based outreach and supports short-term interventions that help disaster survivors. Project Keystone is available in the following counties: Bradford, Columbia, Lebanon, Luzerne, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Union, and Wyoming. For all other counties, contact your county mental health program for assistance. [FEMA News Release - November 16](#).

FCC Offering Low-Cost Broadband & Computers for Students & Families

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has announced an initiative called "Connect to Compete" to bring low-cost broadband and computers to millions of low-income Americans. "Connect to Compete" will begin in select cities in spring 2012. For more info: info@connect2compete.org.

Government Website CrimeVictims.gov

If you are the victim of a crime, the government has information and services to help at CrimeVictims.gov. There's also an online directory of non-emergency services for victims that can be searched by location or type of victimization. [Learn more about services for crime victims](#).

How to Prepare for Natural Disasters

This article outlines the things you need to do to be prepared - whether facing power outages, earth quakes, or other unexpected events. [Click here.](#)

Is Money Tight During the Holidays

Is money tight during the holidays? http://www.absolutelyfreebies.com/misc_free_stuff/Christmas_Freebies.html.

MyMoneyCheckup

[MyMoneyCheckup](#), is a new online financial resource tool for consumers from the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC). It has been added to the [Personal Finance](#) page on USA.gov under Money Management.

Need to Locate a Food Pantry in Your Area?

If you need food assistance and are having trouble locating a food pantry in your zip code area. Visit: <http://www.ampleharvest.org/211.php?qclid=CKGm752YyKwCFcZM4AodkVbtgg>.

On Guard Online Blog

The [OnGuard Online Blog](#) helps you and your family be safe, secure, and responsible online. It offers information on preventing identity theft and cyber crimes, keeping kids safe while surfing the Internet, and more. <http://onguardonline.gov/blog/preventing-identity-theft-and-other-cyber-crimes>.

ProtectYourIDNow.org

For victim and consumer tips on protecting your ID go to: <http://www.protectyouridnow.org/>.

Re-Entry Resources

For a listing of resources for individuals reentering society after incarceration visit: <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/Incarceration/index.shtml>.

Save Energy and Resources This Holiday Season

Make "green" holiday choices when you are shopping, traveling, decorating, sending cards, and choosing gifts. When you save energy and resources, you protect the environment and safeguard health both now and for the future. <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/GreenHolidays/?source=govdelivery>.

Social Security Announces 3.6 % Benefit Increase

The Social Security Administration has announced that monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits will increase 3.6 percent in 2012. The 3.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with the January 2012 benefit payments. <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pressoffice/pr/2012cola-pr.html>.

You Can Help End Domestic Violence

Domestic violence not only affects those who are abused, but it also has a negative impact on family members, friends, coworkers, other witnesses, and your community. If you think someone you know is being abused, [find resources to help](#). If the person is in immediate danger, call 911. [You Can Help End Domestic Violence](#).

Zombie Novella Teaching Tool for Emergency Preparedness

CDC has a fun new way of teaching the importance of emergency preparedness. Our new graphic novel, "Preparedness 101: Zombie Pandemic" demonstrates the importance of being prepared in an entertaining way that people of all ages will enjoy. [Zombie Novella](#).

Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

[Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors](#) - explains disability, pension, health care, education and housing loans, and other benefit programs for veterans and their families.

Military Homefront

Visit Military Homefront to find information about and how to receive counseling services, family

centers, child care, and more. [Find services for military families.](#)

New Initiatives to Help Veterans Back to Work

President Obama announced several new initiatives to help Veterans translate their military skills for the civilian workforce and provide Veterans with new tools to aid their search for jobs.

- The new [Veterans Job Bank](#) connects unemployed Veterans to job openings with companies that want to hire them.
- [My Next Move for Veterans](#) is an easy-to-use online tool created by the Department of Labor that allows Veterans to enter information about their experience and skills in the field, and match it with civilian careers that put that experience to use.
- The [Veteran Gold Card](#) provides post-9/11 Veterans with extra support as they transition out of the military. Once a Veteran has downloaded the Veteran Gold Card, he or she can access six months of personalized case management, assessments and counseling at the roughly 3,000 [One-Stop Career Centers](#) located across the country.

VA's Telephone Service Helps Family Members Encourage Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a telephone service, [Coaching into Care](#), to provide assistance to family members and friends trying to encourage their Veteran to seek health care for possible readjustment and mental health issues. Callers can reach VA's Coaching into Care program at the toll-free number 1.888.823.7458, 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM, Monday- Friday. Veterans can reach immediate help at the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) at 1.800.273.8255, press 1 for Veterans.

VAntage Point Blog for Veterans

At [VAntage Point](#), the VA talks about things you might not have been aware of, and they break down and explain processes which might have confused you. VAntage Point welcomes comments on their posts, and they have a special section for guest posts where you can submit your own writing for publication.

Wounded Warrior Careers

With the U.S. military engagement in Iraq drawing to a close, it is an appropriate time to take a closer look at the challenges of the more than 110,000 post-9/11 Veterans with service-connected disabilities of 60 percent or greater. These disabilities often demand a long and difficult period of recovery and adjustment. Go to: <http://blog.govdelivery.com/usodep/2011/11/wounded-warrior-careers-its-ability-not-disability-that-counts.html> for information.

Resources/News - Senior Sites

10 Myths About Falls

Many people think falls are a normal part of aging. The truth is, they're not. Most falls can be prevented—and you have the power to reduce your risk. To read: [click here.](#)

Caring for an Aging Loved One

Take a look at the article, [Caring for an Aging Loved One](#) from the Federal Citizen Information Center. You'll find support services to help you research housing options, sort legal matters, address end-of-life care, and more.

Due Jan 15 Stories & Photos Sought for Falls Prevention Contest

National Council on Aging (NCOA) is looking for personal stories and photos to demonstrate the value of evidence-based falls preventions for seniors. Date for submission is January 15, 2012. [For details click here.](#)

Hunger Among Older Americans Spikes Nearly 80 Percent Since 2001

An AARP Foundation report finds 1 in 11 Americans 50-plus is at risk of hunger. The report, "Food Insecurity Among Older Adults," is the first of its kind to examine this issue among people age 50 to 59, the youngest of the baby boomers. [Visit here for info.](#)

Medicare Part B Premiums for 2012 Lower than Projected

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has reported that Medicare Part B premiums in 2012 will be lower than projected and Part B deductible will decrease by \$22. [Medicare Part B Premiums for 2012 Lower than Projected](#).

Philabundance Commodity Supplemental Food Program-Philadelphia Area

Many seniors find themselves unable to keep a stocked kitchen. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides USDA donated food to low-income seniors through monthly CSFP/senior boxes. Philabundance packs and distributes these boxes to strategically chosen locations throughout the Delaware Valley. <http://www.philabundance.org/programs/programs-2/senior-food-box/>.

Resources/News - Family Sites

5 FREE Holiday Activities in the Philadelphia Area

Come enjoy the top 5 FREE Holiday Activities in Philadelphia Area. [Visit here](#).

America's Home Energy Education Challenge

[America's Home Energy Education Challenge](#) is the new contest for parents, teachers and students where schools can compete for more than \$200,000 in prizes! The contest teaches kids and their families about energy, and the benefits of energy efficiency. It is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Application Period for White House Internships Now Open

[Application Period for White House Internships Now Open](#): Learn about the roles and responsibilities of a White House intern and apply for the program.

DadTalk Blog from the President's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative

DadTalk, the official blog of the President's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative, talks about responsible fatherhood and healthy families. Topics include fatherhood success stories, mentoring, ideas for talking with your kids, and more. [Read the DadTalk Blog](#).

Due Jan 6 Documerica-Inspired Student Multimedia Contest

The National Archives in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the launch of a student multimedia contest, "Document Your Environment". Drawing inspiration from a collection of environmental photos from the 1970s, this contest invites students ages 13 to 18, college and graduate students to create any type of graphic art, a short video, or a poem using a Documerica photo as a prompt. . Entries are due by January 6, 2012. View contest details online at: <http://documerica.challenge.gov/>.

Due Jan 15 The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

The [Alliance for Young Artists & Writers](#) invites creative teens in grades 7-12 to submit work in 28 categories of art and writing, including film and animation, video-game design, sculpture, photography, fashion design, poetry, journalism, humor, dramatic script-writing and science fiction. [Learn more and apply](#).

Games for Kids

The holiday season is a great opportunity to teach children about money. For a listing of games to help kids learn about money visit: <http://www.moneysbestfriend.com/default.aspx?id=128>.

Keeping your Family Safe from Kitchen Fires

Don't let a kitchen fire ruin the holidays. For a list of top safety tips visit: <http://www.safekids.org>.

Marine Toys for Tots Foundation

Marine Toys for Tots Foundation – To donate or request toys. <http://www.toysfortots.org/>.

Tips on Bullying Prevention

Find ways to bully-proof your child and how to spot warning signs of school bullying: http://childparenting.about.com/od/schoollearning/a/prevent_stop_bullying.htm?nl=1.

Resources/News - People with Disabilities

Accessible Technology Coalition (ATC)

The Accessible Technology Coalition provides people with disabilities, and those who work with them, answers to questions about assistive technology (AT) so they can identify the solutions that work best for them. <http://atcoalition.org/>.

Bookshare

Bookshare provides accessible books, newspapers, magazines and other printed materials to readers with print disabilities. Free for U.S. schools and all U.S. students with qualifying disabilities. Go to: <http://www.bookshare.org/aboutUs/howBookshareWorks>.

CaptionCall FREE Phone Still Available

For a limited time when you use Promo code HS1060 on your online order. Here's the link: www.captioncall.com. CaptionCall has begun to install the phones. The captions are large and clear enough to read. You can have a conversation without asking the other person to repeat twenty times! You can adjust the volume of the voice and change the ringer volume and you can adjust it to your unique hearing loss. There are many other valuable features to the phone.

Due Dec 16 Brain Injury Assoc. of PA Call for Presentations and Posters

The Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania Conference Planning Committee announces the upcoming 12th Annual Conference. The conference will be June 25-26, 2012, at the Lancaster Marriot & Convention Center. The theme for the conference will be, "Improving Quality of Life: Practical Approaches and Cutting Edge Strategies". The BIAPA is accepting proposals for a presentation or poster for the Annual Conference. [Call for Presentations](#) or [Call for Posters](#). Visit the conference page on the BIAPA website. Deadline for submitting a proposal is December 16. For questions regarding the call for presentations/posters or the conference, contact Kara Latshaw at 866.635.7097 or admin@biapa.org.

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Report on Disabilities

In a new report issued by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, it was found that the number of people reporting mental health disabilities has increased in the United States during the last decade. The study also found that the number of disabilities attributed to other chronic conditions decreased, while the number of related to significant mental distress stayed the same. The new report was published in the November edition of the American Journal of Public Health. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Learning Ally Resources

For students who are blind, visually impaired or have a physical or learning disability, Learning Ally provides the nation's largest online accessible audio library of core curriculum textbooks and literature, helping them achieve academic success and prepare for the workplace. [For details visit here.](#)

Navigating College-Handbook on Self Advocacy for Students with Autism

A handbook from The Autistic Self Advocacy Network written by adults and youth with autism for current and future college students with autism discusses disability and special education laws that apply to students from grades K-12 and how students in college must advocate for themselves. Order a copy or download the book in PDF format from the website. [Navigating College - A Handbook on Self Advocacy for Students with Autism.](#)

PTI Centers as Resources to Get Services for your Child

PTI Centers help families better understand their child's disability, learn about appropriate early interventions and special education services and provide training on how to work with special

education professionals. There are 91 information centers for parents of students with disabilities. Every state has at least one Parent Training and Information Center, [find one](#) near you. <http://www.parentcenternetwork.org/parentcenterlisting.html>.

Report Finds Parent Training Effective for Treating Children with ADHD

Formal training in parenting strategies is a low-risk, effective method for improving behavior in preschool-age children at risk for developing attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), while there is less evidence supporting the use of medications for children younger than 6 years old, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). [Report Finds Parent Training Effective for Treating Young Children With ADHD](#).

Resources for Purchasing Toys for Children with Disabilities

Ableplay.org provides information and reviews of toys for children with special needs. Go to www.Ableplay.org. Lekotek Leader specializes in toys and play for children with special needs. For info call the Lekotek Toy Resource Helpline, 800.366.PLAY. Toys R US publishes an annual Toy Guide for Differently-Abled Kids. View online at: www.toysrus.com/DifferentlyAbled

The Sibling Support Project

A national effort dedicated to the life-long concerns of brothers and sisters of people who have special health, developmental, or mental health concerns. The Project also holds workshops around the country. <http://www.siblingsupport.org/>.

Funding Opportunities

Due Dec 15 Grants to Parent-Child Education Program

AVANCE, a nonprofit organization that promotes parent education, will award \$50,000 grants to four nonprofit organizations serving low-income Hispanic families. The grants will be used to implement AVANCE's evidence-based parent-child education program as part of its Unlocking America's Potential Project. The project, funded by a \$12.6 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, aims to expand AVANCE's parent-child education program across the United States over the course of three years. [Grants to Implement Parent-Child Education Program](#). Due date: December 15.

Due Dec 21 Grants to Help Disadvantaged and Homeless Women

J. Jill Company is accepting pre-applications from organizations that support underprivileged and homeless women. Funding priority is given to nonprofit programs and organizations that provide job training, education, and transitional and/or affordable housing to disadvantaged and homeless women. Priority consideration will be given to programs that have a relationship with, or are located near a J. Jill store. Eligible applicants should be Community-based organizations or national organizations with local affiliates serving women in need; 501(c) (3) tax-exempt status. Due December 21. Details and application at <http://www.jjill.com/jjillonline/compassion/grantguidelines.aspx>.

Due Dec 22 Annual P3 Awards

The 9th Annual P3 Awards: A National Student Design Competition for Sustainability Focusing on People, Prosperity and the Planet through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as part of the P3-People, Prosperity and the Planet Award Program, is seeking applications proposing to research, develop, and design solutions to real world challenges involving the overall sustainability of human society. Due date December 22. For more details about this program: http://www.epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2012/2012_p3.html.

Due Dec 23 Mobility Management Grant

The National Center on Senior Transportation released a request for proposals for mobility management projects that demonstrate innovative and effective solutions to enhance transportation options for older adults through person-centered mobility management. Non-profit or local/regional/Tribal governmental agencies that plan, administer, or provide aging and/or transportation services may apply. Details available at a conference call, December 8, at 2:00 PM,

Call-in number: 1.866.846.3997, Pass code: 139803. Application and details at [Please visit the NCST webpage to find the request for proposal and on line application](#). Due December 23.

Due Jan 11 Gates Millennium Scholars Program

The Gates Millennium Scholars Program selects 1,000 talented students each year to receive a good-through-graduation scholarship to use at the college or university of their choice. Recipients are outstanding minority students with significant financial need. In addition to getting financial help to go to college, Gates Millennium Scholars participate in leadership programs and receive academic support throughout their college careers. [Gates Millennium Scholars: Scholarship Program for Low-Income Minority Students](#). Due Date: January 11, 2012.

Due Jan 13 Corporation of Supportive Housing Call for Proposals

The Corporation of Supportive Housing has released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to nonprofit organizations who can implement cost-effective models of supportive housing connected to coordinated health services for low-income men and women with chronic health challenges who are a) experiencing homelessness or persistent housing crises and b) high-cost users of crisis health services Important dates to remember: December 19, Letters of Interest due to CSH. January 13, 3:00 PM, RFP responses due. Visit www.csh.org/sif for more details.

Due Jan 18 AmeriCorps State and National Grants FY 2012

The 2009 Serve America Act expands volunteer opportunities for older adults by targeting 10 percent of AmeriCorps funds for organizations that enroll adults aged 55 and older. These grants will help organizations implement programs that utilize AmeriCorps members to engage in evidence-based interventions to strengthen communities. To register, find a description of each call type and the dates and times by clicking on: http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/12_1003_applicant_call_schedule_fy_2012.pdf. The Funding Opportunities are at: http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa_detail.asp?tbl_nofa_id=93. For additional information contact a program officer at 202-606-7508 or americorpsgrants@cns.gov.

Due Mar 1 Facility Investment & Building Reserve Grants for Arts and Culture

The Kresge Foundation, one of the few national foundations that help nonprofits build and maintain facilities, is offering grants meant to start or enhance building reserve funds at arts and culture organizations. Funds are to be used for the ongoing maintenance and replacement of an organization's facilities. View the full announcement and application instructions. Due March 1. [Click here for details](#).

HUD Providing Funds for Housing Very Low-Income Seniors & Persons w/ Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is providing \$749 million in housing assistance grants to help nonprofit organizations deliver accessible housing, rental assistance and supportive services for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Find out about rental assistance by contacting your local HUD office. [Click here](#).

Singing for Change Grants

Singing for Change grants are awarded to programs that work to improve the health, education and safety of children and their families and aim to foster self-esteem, self-sufficiency, nonviolence and creative problem solving. Learn more and download the grant application form at the Singing for Change website. If your project fits the guidelines, please submit a one-page letter of interest describing your organization and your project to: Judith Ranger Smith, Director, Singing for Change, P.O. Box 729, Sullivan's Island, SC 29482. Phone: 843.882.8021 Email: judithrangersmith@gmail.com. Letters of interest may be submitted at any time by email or USPS, and are reviewed on an ongoing basis. <http://www.singingforchange.org/>.

Lowe's Support for Community and Public Education Enhancement Projects

The Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation offers grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 to community-improvement and K-12 public-education projects. In 2011, the foundation is focusing on funding basic, one-time projects. The foundation prefers to fund projects in communities with a Lowe's store or distribution center. [Learn more about the foundation and find out if your project is](#)

[eligible for funding.](#)

Kinder Morgan Foundation Grants

The Kinder Morgan Foundation funds programs that focus on education, the arts and the environment. Programs must serve a community in which Kinder Morgan operates. Applications are due the tenth of every other month starting in January. [View the funding guidelines.](#)

Subscriber: If you wish to unsubscribe from Quick Connections please email cbaker@phfa.org. To assure that you continue receiving this e-newsletter in your inbox, add cbaker@phfa.org to your email address book.