



PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

**PHFA**

*Quick  
Connections*

An electronic news service of the Housing Services Department – January 2012

## **PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY**

### **2012 HOUSING SERVICES CONFERENCE:**

**Welcome to My Neighborhood!**

**June 25, 26, 27 – Pittsburgh**

Even before Mr. Rogers started asking “Won’t you be my neighbor?” Pittsburgh has been famous for its neighborhoods and will be a great backdrop for the 2012 Housing Services Conference! Today, neighborhoods can still be a positive force in our world and on individual lives; and each of our rental communities can help shape the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Both through our physical buildings and grounds; and through our residents, we should never underestimate our capacity to influence our neighborhoods and neighbors.

The conference goal is to enhance the capacity of Service Coordinators, Property Managers and other housing professionals to design and carry out service programs that enrich residents’ lives, strengthen neighborhoods and communities, and improve the financial position of the property. We do this through a combination of expert trainers and the collective expertise of the people gathered.

A mix of basic and advanced housing and service delivery strategies, and tracks for Service Coordination, Supportive Housing and Management will bring attendees up to date on new developments in the field. Participants have the option of initiating coursework for a Certificate in Elder Service Coordination by attending specific sessions. Attendees are also invited to highlight their influence on their neighborhood through a photo collage project.

The 2012 Housing Services Conference will include three general sessions and more than 30 breakout sessions to:

- Be ready before a disaster hits your neighborhood or your building – and recover quicker
- Identify and fix your customer service pitfalls
- Use social media to build community
- Structure resident councils to improve relationships in your neighborhood
- Use art to enhance the aging process
- Help residents improve their financial position
- Take advantage of existing partnerships to better serve people with disabilities
- Build strong families
- Identify ways to improve conservation efforts and decrease energy costs
- Address the service delivery needs of families, elderly, and residents with disabilities.

Each of the sessions will provide new tools, strategies, and resources to help residents become active participants and help your housing development become a positive force in your neighborhood.

So take out your brand new 2012 calendars and mark June 25-27 to be in Pittsburgh for what’s bound to be a great conference!

## PHFA Information and Trainings

### 2012 Marketplace of Vendors Call for Exhibits

To access an application: [click here](#) or to have a fillable application emailed to you please contact Crystal Baker at [cbaker@phfa.org](mailto:cbaker@phfa.org) or call 717.780.1808.

### Certificate in Elder Service Coordination Program

Register now! Registration for the Certificate in Elder Service Coordination Program (CESC) is taking place now through **June 15, 2012**. If you are interested in registering for this program or if you have questions about the program, please contact Alicia Spencer at [aspencer@phfa.org](mailto:aspencer@phfa.org). Don't miss out on this training opportunity!

### Keeping Warm This Winter

For tips on keeping warm this winter, [click here](#).

### 2012 Photo Collage - "Welcome to My Neighborhood!"

Join in the 2012 PHFA Housing Services Conference Photo Collage - "Welcome to My Neighborhood!" For details and an application: [click here](#) and for the photo release waiver: [click here](#).

## Other Trainings and Conferences

### Jan 30 One Day Free Training from "Behavioral Health Connection"

"Behavioral Health Connection" is presenting a free one day training on *Understanding and Accessing Medicare Services for Mental Health Consumers and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) A Suicide Prevention Training* on January 30, 9:30 AM-3:00 PM in Factoryville. Lunch is provided. Register online at [www.olderpa.org/bhc](http://www.olderpa.org/bhc).

"Understanding Dementia: Diagnosis, Treatment and Behavioral Management," the Coalition's training series for 2011/12 will focus on dementia. Training is being offered at 3 locations across the state. Click here for a copy of the [flyer](#). The dates and locations are as follows:

- April 4, Bryn Mawr, May 9, Edwardsville, May 16, Clearfield

### Mar 24 ACHIEVEability Food for Thought Benefit-Philadelphia Area

On March 24, ACHIEVEability will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year at the event, *Food for Thought*, presented by PNC Bank. This exciting event, will take place at Urban Outfitters, Inc. at the Navy Yard, and will feature food prepared by top chefs from the Greater Philadelphia area. For details: [click here](#).

### Mar 28 –Apr 1 ASA's 2012 Aging in America Conference-Washington DC

ASA's 2012 Aging in America Conference will be held March 28 - April 1, 2012, in Washington, D.C. [More info here](#).

### Apr 23 Financial Literacy Live Webcast

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago will host a live webcast on Financial Literacy on April 23 from 9:00 AM-11:00 AM Central Time. To register: <http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/summit2012/index.php>.

### Free Online Training Course for Aging Information & Referral Professionals

A new online course for aging network professionals offers basic training in aging information and referral/assistance (I&R/A). To enroll, [click here](#). Free online registration is required at The National Association of States United for Aging & Disabilities online learning center.

## Resources/News – General

### BenefitsCheckUP® Celebrates 10 Years with a New Look

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is celebrating the 10-year anniversary of its free, online

screening service BenefitsCheckUp®. At the website, visitors can get help with identifying benefits that could save money and cover the costs of everyday expenses. To access the new user-friendly website go to <http://www.benefitscheckup.org/>.

### **CMCS Launches Medicaid and CHIP Website**

The Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) is pleased to announce the initial launch of the first federal government website devoted to the policies and the people of Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Also available is a section for consumers to get information about the Medicaid or CHIP program in their State. To access the website, go to [www.medicaid.gov](http://www.medicaid.gov).

### **Find Ways to Save Money on Your Energy Budget**

[Find Ways to Save Money on Your Energy Budget](#): It's a good time to look at your home energy use. This calculator can help you find places to save.

### **Free New Year's Publications**

[Free New Year's publications can help you be healthier and more financially organized](#), Order yours today.

### **GoDirect.org**

Ice, snow and sleet can delay your federal benefit check. Switch to electronic payments. Your money on time, every time. [www.GoDirect.org](http://www.GoDirect.org).

### **LGBT Housing Resources**

Secure, welcome and affordable housing is an important key to healthy aging, especially for LGBT older adults where they can be themselves and connect to their communities. Go to: <http://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/index.cfm>.

### **Looking for a Few Great Organizations**

Nominate a tenant group for NLIHC's first Resident Organizing Award! Tell about a tenant association or resident council that has successfully organized to improve building conditions, influence local, state or federal policy, preserved affordability, or achieved another victory. The award will be presented at the Annual Housing Policy Conference & Lobby Day in March. For more information and eligibility criteria contact Mary Kolar at [outreach@nlihc.org](mailto:outreach@nlihc.org) or call 202.662.1530, x 233.

### **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help low-income households to pay for immediate energy needs. LIHEAP helps families pay their energy bill and provides assistance if the power company shuts off energy to the home. [http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/foradults/heatingassistanceliheap/S\\_000960](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/foradults/heatingassistanceliheap/S_000960).

### **Learn More About Energy Related Tax Credits, Rebates and Financing**

[Learn more about energy related tax credits, rebates, and financing](#).

### **National Association of County Veterans Service Officers**

The National Association of County Veterans Service Officers is a membership organization of accredited County Veterans Service Officers. These local government employees help Veterans and their families with their claims for benefits. Contact your local Service Officer for assistance. Go to: <http://www.nacvso.org/>.

### **Pillbox Website**

It can be hard to identify a pill if you've lost the container. Pillbox, from the National Library of Medicine, can help you quickly and easily identify unknown pills. Search by shape, color, size, and more. Once you've identified the pill, you can also find drug information and labels. [Search Pillbox now](#).

## **Rental and Mortgage Assistance Resources**

If you need assistance with paying your rent or mortgage, these resources might be able to help: [Rental Assistance](#) - The Department of Housing and Urban Development can assist you with privately owned subsidized housing or public housing. [Mortgage Assistance](#) - The Making Home Affordable program may be able to help you lower your payments or rates, exit a mortgage gracefully, or get help if you lost your job or your home has lost value. [Find more benefits, grants, and financial aid from the government.](#)

## **Segurosocial.gov-Spanish Social Security Website**

To access the Spanish Social Security website: [www.segurosocial.gov](http://www.segurosocial.gov).

## **The SNAP-Ed Connection**

The SNAP-Ed Connection is a dynamic online resource center for State and local SNAP-Ed providers. The SNAP-Ed Connection provides tools and resources to help low-income families make healthy eating an attainable goal. [Click here.](#)

## **Tips for Saving Money and Energy**

Saving money and saving energy are often the same thing. [Get tips for saving money and energy.](#)

## **VITA Needs Tax Preparation Volunteers**

Volunteer tax preparers are needed to staff the IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program for the 2012 tax season. VITA provides tax preparation for low- to moderate-income people, including those eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). For more information or to sign up [click here](#).

## **What to Do With Unused Meds**

Expired drugs are dangerous to leave sitting around but shouldn't be thrown in the trash or flushed down the toilet, because they can contaminate landfills and groundwater. They can be disposed of properly through the Safe Medication Disposal Program. Simply get a specially designed envelope at pharmacies and mail your drugs in. For info: [click here](#).

## **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)**

The WOTC is a tax credit incentive for private sector employers who hire certain individuals, including participants in the Ticket to Work program. The website explains the rules for employers and which Social Security beneficiaries will qualify employers for the WOTC. Note that this tax credit may also apply to hiring Veterans, SNAP (food stamp) recipients and other potential hires. The credit can be as much as \$9,000 for each new long-term TANF recipient hired over a 2-yr. period. [Click here for info.](#)

## **www.Vote411.org**

Register to vote! Even if you think you are already registered, if you have moved in the last three years you should register again at [www.Vote411.org](http://www.Vote411.org).

## **Resources/News - Senior Sites**

### **AARP's Five-Step Toolkit for Job Seekers**

AARP presents an online employment guide that covers the entire job search process from start to finish. It helps to set work goals, organize job search activities, conduct a career exploration to find out which jobs are best and learn how to increase success in finding a job. [AARP's Five-Step Toolkit for Job Seekers.](#)

### **AoA Funds First National Adult Protective Resource Center**

The Administration on Aging (AoA) will award nearly \$200,000 to the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) to establish a new National Adult Protective Services Resource Center to serve as a knowledge base for the fight against elder abuse. To read the entire press release, [click here](#). For information about the National Adult Protective Services Resource Center,

[visit here.](#) For info about elder abuse, [click here.](#)

### **Illicit Drug Use Among Older Adults**

Research has shown that the baby-boom generation (persons born between 1946 and 1964) has relatively higher drug use rates than previous generations. Nonmedical use of prescription-type drugs also has been identified as a concern for this population. A recent report from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health examines this issue. Read the report [here](#).

### **Medicare Covers Screening & Counseling for Alcohol Misuse and Depression**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced two new national coverage determinations that cover alcohol misuse screening and behavioral counseling for Medicare beneficiaries as well as screening for depression. These new coverage policies add to the existing portfolio of covered preventive services, most of which are now available to people with Medicare at no additional cost.

### **National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities**

For aging news, topics and issues, go to: <http://www.nasuad.org/>.

## **Resources/News - Family Sites**

### **Free Books for Read Across America Day, March 2, 2012**

Read Across America Day is March 2, 2012. The Literacy Empowerment Foundation has free books – pay shipping only. If you need to stock your resource center or homework club with new books – this is a great way to get a selection of 100 new books shipped to you for only \$68. For more information: [Click here to order](#).

### **Hotline Numbers Every Youth Should Have**

Many communities report a spike in the number of youth who run away around the holidays and shortly after due to conflict at home and problems at school. If you know young people at risk for running away, give them these numbers so they can call or text for help when they need it. Go to: <http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/the-beat/2012/12/resources-for-runaways>

### **Report Cyber Bullying**

If you or someone you know is being bullied, you can find resources on how to report it at [StopBullying.gov](http://StopBullying.gov).

### **Up and Away and Out of Sight Program**

Almost 60,000 young children end up in emergency rooms each year because they get into medicines while their parents or caregivers aren't looking. CDC initiated a public-private partnership, the [PROTECT Initiative](#), aimed at reducing unintentional medication overdoses in children. A coalition of PROTECT partners is launching the *Up and Away and Out of Sight* campaign to educate parents and caregivers about three simple steps they can take to protect their children. <http://www.upandaway.org/>.

## **Resources/News - People with Disabilities**

### **I'm the Evidence/Mental Health Campaign-Celebrating Hope, Encouragement, Recovery**

Across the state, men and women are standing as the evidence that people recover from mental illness. They are empowered and supported by the [I'm the Evidence/Mental Health Campaign](#) (ITE/MH), a grassroots Campaign that engages individuals, organizations, and communities in the support of recovery, by honoring human potential and inspiring hope, creating opportunities, and offering encouragement. [Visit here](#).

### **New Educational Video about Medicare in American Sign Language (ASL)**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has released an educational video about the

Medicare program in ASL for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The video gives an overview of the Medicare program, including what Medicare is, who qualifies, the four parts (A, B, C and D), new [preventive services](#) under the Affordable Care Act, and help paying Medicare costs. [New Educational Video about Medicare in American Sign Language \(ASL\)](#).

### **New Integrated Employment Toolkit**

This new online toolkit from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP) includes discussion guides and answers to frequently-asked-questions for people looking for jobs, employers, community employment agencies and others. Integrated employment places both youth and adults in regular jobs in their communities, along with any needed supports, so they can earn a decent wage. In an integrated employment setting, most of the employees are not persons with disabilities. [New Integrated Employment Toolkit](#).

### **Speaking Up at the Doctor's Office Guide from Healthy Transitions**

A Guide from Healthy Transitions has information for families and professionals to help youth who have developmental disabilities speak up for themselves and learn to handle visits at the doctor's office. For info: [Speaking Up at the Doctor's Office](#).

### **TAC Resource Center on Supportive Housing**

The Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) is pleased to announce the launch of a new web site, the TAC Resource Center on Supportive Housing. The goal of the TAC Resource Center is to expand new and innovative supportive housing approaches and models which link affordable and accessible permanent housing resources with community-based supports and services for people with disabilities. Visit the new site at <http://811resourcecenter.tacinc.org>.

### **Think Beyond the Label (TBTL) Creates New Jobs Portal for People with Disabilities**

TBTL's online jobs portal connects job seekers with disabilities to employers actively looking to hire them. This [new job-search engine](#) gives people looking for employment opportunities free access to nearly 1 million job listings from more than 90,000 screened employers in the private and public sectors. [Think Beyond the Label \(TBTL\) Creates New Jobs Portal for People with Disabilities](#).

## **Funding Opportunities**

### **Due Jan 7 Toshiba for Good "Helping the Helper" Technology Improvement Grants**

Toshiba for Good is awarding "Helping the Helper" technology improvement grants. Submit a 2 minute video describing why your nonprofit needs a technology makeover by Jan. 7, 2012. [More on Facebook](#).

### **Due Jan 10 PA Developmental Disabilities Council Multicultural Outreach Grants**

Grant applications are sought from minority-led groups to identify and correct gaps in PA services for people with disabilities who are minorities. PADDCC funds projects that engage in advocacy, systems change and capacity building to correct or modify community or service systems supporting minorities with disabilities. Proposals must be submitted by January 10. [Click here](#).

### **Due Jan 12 HUD to Award Grants for Housing Counseling**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will award more than \$40 million to housing counseling programs that help families find and keep housing. Grants will be awarded to HUD-approved counseling agencies and State Housing Finance Agencies nationwide that help people avoid foreclosure and mortgage scams, get information about buying or renting a home, improve their credit scores, and qualify for a reverse mortgage. [Visit here](#).

### **Due Jan 17 Sodexo Youth Grants**

Youth Service America will award 100 Sodexo Youth Grants of \$500 each to youth-led service projects that address childhood hunger on Global Youth Service Day (April 20-22, 2012). Projects must engage peers, friends, families, neighbors, Sodexo employees and other community

members in creative, youth-inspired solutions aimed at ending childhood hunger. [More information and online application](#). Due Date: January 17, 2012.

### **Due Jan 18 Americorp and National Grants**

AmeriCorps funds projects that use AmeriCorps volunteers to strengthen communities. Programs are encouraged to promote one of the Corporation for National and Community Service's six focus areas: Disaster services Economic opportunity Education Environmental stewardship Healthy futures Veterans and military families Application guidelines. Due date: January 18. [AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#).

### **Due Jan 18 HUD Offers Lead Hazard Funding**

Applications are due January 18 for both the Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant Program and the Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration Grant Program. Visit <http://www.grants.gov> or <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/fundsavail.cfm>. Contact Michelle M. Miller, HUD, [michelle.m.miller@hud.gov](mailto:michelle.m.miller@hud.gov), 202.402.5769.

### **Due Feb 15 Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program**

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the availability of funds for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program. Approximately \$100 million is available for initial and renewal supportive services grants to be funded under this notice for a 1-year period. Details and application at: <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>.

### **Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant Program**

Veterans or service members who have specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the purpose of constructing an adapted home or modifying an existing home to meet their adaptive needs. The goal of the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant Program is to provide a barrier-free living environment that affords the veterans or service members a level of independent living. For more information please contact Brian N. Bixler, Chief, Specially Adapted Housing, on 571.272.0091 or via email at: [brian.bixler@va.gov](mailto:brian.bixler@va.gov). There are two types of grants administered by VA, which are available to assist severely disabled veterans or service members in adapting housing to their special needs.

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