

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

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**PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY TO FUND
NEW DESIGN INITIATIVE**

(HARRISBURG) The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency today announced that \$1,000,000 is available under its Excellence in Design Initiative, a new measure to encourage high architectural, engineering, planning, and construction standards in affordable housing developments. PHFA Executive Director Brian A. Hudson, Sr., said the innovative effort will help elevate good design in an often-neglected area: places to live for families of modest means.

“PHFA wants to help make sure that design excellence is incorporated in the developments it funds from their inception, not just as an afterthought,” Hudson said. “The Excellence in Design Initiative will reward well-designed dwellings because they offer consumers lower utility charges, less expensive maintenance costs, and better overall value.”

Hudson noted that the Excellence in Design Initiative will be implemented as a demonstration program, and that PHFA has issued a “*Request for Proposals*” for funding under the new initiative. Qualifying submissions can receive a preliminary design grant under the program.

“The Agency will judge its effectiveness after the demonstration is complete and decide what the next step should be,” Hudson said. “PHFA has been encouraged by the positive response of those involved in affordable housing and expects the new Excellence in Design Initiative to be well received.”

The Excellence in Design Initiative incorporates concepts outlined in HUD’s *Affordable Housing Design Advisor* (www.designadvisor.org), which specifies design and planning standards for construction and rehabilitation of homes in urban areas. The *Advisor* lists basic criteria to increase the availability of affordable housing, to improve the quality of life for the residents that will be served, and to enhance neighborhood stability.

PHFA's request submissions for new *Excellence in Design Initiative*

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PHFA's new initiative is part of the Homeownership Choice Programs, begun in 2000 and responsible for the Agency's investment of more than \$66,000,000 in helping builders turn older, neglected neighborhoods into attractive communities. This has generated another \$414,000,000 of investments from other public and private sources, and created a variety of incentives for greater housing options in new construction and rehabilitation, neighborhood revitalization, and mixed-use development.

The Excellence in Design Initiative *Request for Proposals* may be viewed on the PHFA Web site, www.phfa.org. Prospective participants must attend a pre-development seminar on either Wednesday, November 15, 2006, or Friday, December 1, 2006, at the Agency's headquarters, located at 211 North Front Street in Harrisburg. Those wishing to register may contact Jennifer Gerace at jgerace@phfa.org.

Completed proposals must be received by PHFA no later than 2:00 p.m., Thursday, March 1, 2007. Award selections for will be announced later in the year.

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency is the Commonwealth's leading provider of capital for affordable homes and apartments.

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