

April 1, 2013 Vol. 4, Issue 2

TOP STORIES

PHFA Board approves \$16.1 million in tax credits

The PHFA Board in mid-March approved \$16.1 million in low-income housing tax credits for the construction of affordable multifamily housing developments throughout Pennsylvania. The list of developments that received tax credits is available.

The tax credits will help fund 17 developments located in urban centers statewide. This funding will be used to leverage local, state, federal and private financial resources needed to complete the financing plans for these construction initiatives. These new developments will create an additional 662 affordable housing rental units for families and seniors in the state; their construction will also promote vital economic activity.

One of the developments was selected for an award of tax credits under the “Innovation in Design” category, which is new this year. Uptown Lofts on Fifth, located in Pittsburgh, will provide housing for young adults aging out of the foster care system. Its excellence in design, implementation of current and future energy efficient technologies, and leveraging of community and capital resources earned it this special recognition.

There is a second round of funding for developments in rural and suburban areas, with those awards being announced in July.

Ribbon-cutting for new apartments providing transitional housing in Greene County



Local and state government officials were on hand for a recent ribbon-cutting at Whitehill Place, apartments providing transitional housing in Waynesburg. Pictured are (front row, left-to-right): Karen Bennett, Greene County human services administrator; Brian Hudson, PHFA executive director; (second row) Greene County commissioners Archie Trader and Blair Zimmerman; Pa. Representative Pam Snyder; (back row) Shar Whitmire, Value Behavioral Health of Pa.; Ed Geiger, Pa. Department of Community and Economic Development; Jeff Widdup, First Federal Savings and Loan of Greene County; Pa. Senator Tim Solobay; John Bendel, Federal Home Loan Bank; Valerie Vicari, Pa. Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; and Greene County Commissioner Chuck Morris.



PHFA board members discuss low-income housing tax credit awards during the March 2013 board meeting.

HUD awards \$5.7 million for rental assistance in Pennsylvania

The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) is teaming up with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency to use \$5.7 million in federal rental assistance for making accessible housing more affordable for 200 low-income individuals with disabilities. Pennsylvania was one of 13 states selected to receive this rental assistance money from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), reflecting the state's proven history of helping people with disabilities live more independent lives.

PHFA, along with DPW, will create new housing opportunities by using methods developed through PHFA's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and other affordable housing programs administered by both agencies. The accessible, affordable housing will support three groups of individuals under the age of 62: people with disabilities who are institutionalized; those at risk of institutionalization, and those currently living in a congregate setting who desire to move into the community.

This rental assistance is part of HUD's first-ever selection of Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Project Rental Assistance Demonstration. Watch for more information coming from PHFA and DPW in late summer or early fall once the agencies have determined which housing developments in Pennsylvania will be receiving some of this rental assistance funding.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2013 Housing Forum offers early bird pricing and promises stellar keynote speakers

Registration is now open for PHFA's 2013 Commonwealth Housing Forum on May 2 and 3, which promises to be the biggest and best Forum yet! The three plenary keynote speakers include **Dr. Mark Zandi**, chief economist with Moody's Analytics; **Joseph Smith**, monitor of the National Mortgage Settlement; and **Alan Heavens**, longtime residential real estate reporter with the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.



The Forum offers a huge number of educational sessions from which to choose – 33 in all! An evening networking event will provide a great opportunity to mingle with peers and enjoy comfort foods from around Pennsylvania. Plus a prestigious awards ceremony on the second day of the Forum will recognize leaders in the industry. **Early bird registration is available through April 5 and is only \$125**; registration from April 5-26 is \$175. The event will take place at the Hilton Harrisburg. Learn more, and register, at the [Forum website](#).

2013 Housing Services Conference set for June

The 2013 Housing Services Conference will be held June 17-19 at the Penn Stater Hotel & Conference Center in State College. This event brings together housing management and services in one place for great keynote speakers and sessions for services staff and management. The conference Marketplace is filling up with new and returning exhibitors who are eager to share their products, services and information. New to this year's conference will be the chance to hear brief presentations from several Marketplace vendors.



Registration opens April 1. Showcase applications are being accepted until April 15. For more information, please email HousingServices@phfa.org.

HOUSING IN THE MARCELLUS SHALE REGION

PHFA now accepting proposals to improve housing in areas impacted by natural gas drilling

The agency has announced that funding is being made available through the 2013 Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) fund, and from Marcellus Shale impact fees, for projects to improve the availability and affordability of housing in the Marcellus Shale region of Pennsylvania. PHFA is looking to build on last year's efforts to make a positive difference in state residents' quality of life in communities where the availability of housing has been impacted by natural gas drilling.

Eligible applicants for the 2013 Request for Proposals (RFP) include Pennsylvania counties that have adopted ordinances authorizing the imposition of an impact fee and that have unconventional gas wells. Also eligible are municipalities that have excess (or spillover) funds deposited into the PHARE Fund. Requirements for proposal submission are described in detail in the RFP, which was announced on March 18.

PHFA will host two public information and training sessions during which potential applicants can ask questions and get clarification on the requirements of the RFP. These will be held April 10 via webinar (registration required) and May 2 as part of the Commonwealth Housing Forum. More information about these sessions can be found at www.phfa.org; using the "Search PHFA" feature in the upper-right corner of the homepage, enter the search term "PHARE" for more details. The deadline for proposal submission is **June 7, 2013**.

HOMEOWNERSHIP

PHFA honors its best-performing lending partners

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency held its annual lender awards event in mid-March at the agency's Harrisburg office to honor its top mortgage lenders for 2012. These lenders assist homebuyers throughout Pennsylvania in the application, processing, and closing of PHFA mortgage loans. They play a key role in PHFA's mission to expand affordable housing options in the state.

From a group of more than 100 lending partners, Howard Hanna Financial Services, Inc. took top honors for the second year in a row. Following Howard Hanna in ranking order were: West Penn Financial Service Center; Gateway Funding Diversified; Huntingdon Valley Bank; Mortgage America; Allegheny Mortgage Corp. and Boulevard Mortgage Company of PA (tied for sixth place); Liberty Mortgage Corporation; Jersey Shore State Bank; Sovereign Bank, FSB; and Mortgage Network Corp. dba MNET Mortgage Corp.

For the names of other award winners from the Lender Awards event, please visit the [press release](#) page.



Glenn Moyer, secretary of Banking and Securities and PHFA Board chairman (left), and Brian Hudson, PHFA executive director (right), present George Crumlich, Howard Hanna Financial Services, Inc., with the agency's top lender award.



More than 90 people representing the agency's lending partners attended PHFA's Top Lender awards event held at PHFA headquarters in Harrisburg

FHLBank Pittsburgh is reopening doors for first-time homebuyers

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh has announced the re-launch of First Front Door (FFD), the Bank's down payment and closing cost assistance program for qualified first-time homebuyers at or below 80 percent of area median income. FFD helps homebuyers by supplementing the funds they are required to put towards their down payment and closing costs through a 3-to-1 matching grant. For every \$1 provided by the homebuyer, FFD will provide \$3 in assistance, up to \$5,000. Interested homebuyers can apply for FFD grants through FHLBank members that offer FFD as part of their residential lending programs. A list of those members can be found at the Bank's website at www.fhlp-pgh.com.



First Front Door also offers benefits to local housing organizations by providing additional resources to support their efforts to qualify households for homeownership and to the wider community by promoting the stabilizing benefits of a diverse homeownership market. PHFA is participating in the promotion of FFD.

The Bank has \$2 million in funds for FFD assistance this year, available on a first-come, first-served basis. To learn more about FFD, visit <http://www.fhlp-pgh.com/housing-and-community/programs/first-front-door.html>.

LEGAL TOPICS

In the interest of keeping PHFA staff and business partners abreast of developments affecting the housing industry, the agency's legal division has provided the following news briefs:

Violence Against Women Act is reauthorized and signed by President Obama

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), in an effort for reauthorization, was passed in the Senate and House of Representatives in late February and was signed by President Obama on March 7. The VAWA recognizes domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes and provides federal resources to encourage community coordinated responses to fighting violence. Funding from the reauthorization of VAWA will now continue for shelters and programs that prosecute individuals charged with domestic violence and sexual assault. The reauthorization impacts housing by expanding the federal housing programs covered by VAWA housing protections. It includes programs funded by the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and ensures residents cannot be denied assistance, terminated from or evicted from housing merely because they have been or are a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. For more information, please visit <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113s47enr/pdf/BILLS-113s47enr.pdf>.

HUD publishes rule regarding disparate impact lawsuits under the Fair Housing Act

On February 15, HUD published a final rule regarding disparate impact lawsuits under the Fair Housing Act (FHA). It provides that if a housing practice has a discriminatory effect, a plaintiff can bring an action under the FHA, even if there is no discriminatory intent on the part of the accused party. For more information, and to access the HUD rule, visit <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=discriminatoryeffectrule.pdf>.

New information available regarding Manufactured Home Community Rights Act

On Oct. 24, Governor Corbett signed into law House Bill 1767, amending the Manufactured Home Community Rights Act. Under this act, PHFA has been charged with providing notice of closings and sales of communities it receives from community owners to interested entities. Organizations interested in registering with PHFA to receive notices should contact PHFA's Chief Counsel, Rebecca Peace, in writing. For more information about this topic, please visit <http://www.phfa.org/legislation/act156.aspx>.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Building Your Financial House pilot program produces success stories

PHFA introduced the Building Your Financial House (BYFH) pilot program at four multifamily sites in southeastern Pennsylvania within the past year. The program concentrates on several core financial topics including investing in yourself, maximizing earnings, spending sensibly, understanding taxes, making money work, protecting your potential and borrowing to grow.

Among the success stories is Sheila Mobray, 55, who resides in Philadelphia. She is a single mother of three sons and has three grandchildren. She wanted to participate in the pilot program for personal growth, to learn different things and to help her family have a better life financially. Sheila was surprised how BYFH helped, not just in building financial skills, but in living everyday life. She now has a strategy for how she is spending, saving and planning for her future.



Sheila Mobray with Yuri Ben Isreal, community and supportive service coordinator for Cecil B. Moore Apartments.

HOUSING RESEARCH

New study examines loan performance for manufactured homes

The Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) has produced the report "Toward a Sustainable and Responsible Expansion of Affordable Mortgages for Manufactured Homes." It shares findings from analyzing actual loan performance data – accounting for more than \$1.7 billion in manufactured home mortgages – provided by state housing finance agencies, credit unions and other sources.

Surprising findings from the report include:

- Mortgage performance for manufactured homes is comparable to that of similar site-built homes
- Some manufactured home lending portfolios actually outperform mortgages for comparable site-built homes
- Mortgages for manufactured homes can be made with low down payments and alternative credit (not necessarily top-tier FICO scores) and still perform well

Data were compiled as part of a national initiative managed by CFED that works to ensure that owners of manufactured homes have the opportunity to build wealth through homeownership. Get the [full report](#); the [executive summary](#), or a [blog](#) by PHFA Executive Director Brian Hudson about the new report.

AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

PHFA's 2012 Annual Report now available online

PHFA has published its 2012 Annual Report, providing financial highlights from the past fiscal year and stories about people helped by the agency's housing programs. In recent years, the agency has printed fewer copies of the annual report in an effort to use less paper by making the report available electronically. Readers interested in viewing the 2012 report can find it on the website www.phfa.org/forms/annual_report/PHFA_2012_Annual_Report.pdf.



Tom Corbett, Governor • Brian A. Hudson Sr., Executive Director & CEO

To receive an e-mail notice when a new issue of PHFA Developments is posted, or for comments and questions, please write Scott Elliott at selliott@phfa.org

Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, 211 N. Front St.
PO Box 8029, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8029
717.780.3800 • 717.780.1869 (TTY)

