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Top Stories

PHFA issues PHARE/RTT RFP to fund housing initiatives

PHFA has released a request for proposals (RFP) soliciting applications from organizations for projects to improve the availability and affordability of housing across the Commonwealth. The RFP will use funding made available through a portion of the Realty Transfer Tax (RTT), and organizations from across the state are encouraged to apply.

This new RFP builds on the success of the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) fund, which receives a portion of the impact fees collected from natural gas companies operating in the state. Since 2012, the PHARE program has used that funding to support wide-ranging housing initiatives. But that funding could only be used to assist projects in counties that have working natural gas wells. This new RTT-based funding can be used to support projects in any of the state's 67 counties. The PHARE fund is often referred to as the state's Housing Trust Fund.

Act 58 of 2015 provides revenue from the RTT to provide money to the PHARE fund. Governor Tom Wolf signed it into law in November 2015. This first year of RTT funding allocated through PHARE will make \$12.67 million available for housing developments and programs.

The deadline to submit funding applications is January 13. Proposals will be evaluated by PHFA staff and presented to the agency's board of directors for approval in April.

Organizations interested in applying for 2016 PHARE/RTT funding can learn more by participating in one of two remaining informational webinars. All webinars will cover the same information, including the RFP application and approval process, plus any questions received prior to or during the webinar. Webinar dates and times are:

November 16, 2016 – 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. – [register here](#).

December 14, 2016 – 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. – [register here](#).

You can also contact Clay Lambert at PHFA at clambert@phfa.org or by phone at 717-780-1855 for more information.

Governor Wolf announces funding for housing throughout the Marcellus Shale region

Governor Wolf and PHFA announced that its board has approved \$6.2 million for 40 housing projects to improve the availability and affordability of housing in 29 counties.

These projects are being supported by the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) fund, which is administered by PHFA and funded by the 2012 Act 13 impact fee on natural gas producers.

Award recipients were approved during PHFA's October board of directors meeting.

To view the list of the PHARE funding recipients, visit [PHFA's website](#).

Fair Housing Act

New HUD guidance on Fair Housing Act protection for people with limited English proficiency

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently issued guidance regarding the applicability of the Fair Housing Act (FHA) to a housing provider's consideration of a person's limited English proficiency (LEP). LEP refers to a person's limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. Although LEP individuals are not a protected class under the FHA, there is a close connection between LEP and national origin, which is a protected class under the FHA. Because a person's primary language usually derives from his or her national origin, the FHA prohibits housing providers from using an individual's LEP as a basis for an adverse housing decision. A housing provider can violate the FHA by either intentionally discriminating against people with LEP or using LEP in a way that causes an unjustified discriminatory effect. For more information, please visit [HUD's website](#).

PHFA Around the State

PHFA spent this fall at ribbon-cuttings and grand opening ceremonies across Pennsylvania.



Bishop McIntyre blesses the ground during the groundbreaking at St. John Neumann Place II in mid-August in Philadelphia. He is joined by Heather Huot, senior project developer and archdiocesan coordinator for Catholic Campaign for Human Development. The development will be a 52-unit affordable housing facility for seniors. It will boast a Wellness Center, which earned it a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Innovation in Design award from PHFA. The building will also meet Passive House design standards. The project was funded, in part, by LIHTCs administered by PHFA.



WinnCompanies held a ribbon cutting ceremony in late September to celebrate the completion of Breslyn House in Philadelphia. Along with other officials, Philadelphia Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell (second from left), Senator Vince Hughes (third from left, and PHFA's Dave Doray (far right) were in attendance. Breslyn House consists of 48 two-bedroom units and 12 three-bedroom units. Thirty of these units are set aside for people with household incomes less than 50 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) and 30 units are set aside for residents below 60 percent AMI. The development was funded, in part, by Low-Income Housing Tax Credits administered by PHFA.

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Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in mid-August in Jefferson to unveil the new Independence Place, a four-unit apartment building for people with disabilities. The doorways and hallways are a little wider, the light switches are a little lower on the wall and there are no steps in the two ground-floor apartments, which make the units more accessible. The building was constructed with a loan and grants from the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (administered by PHFA) and the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council.

Awards and Recognition

PHFA's executive director wins statewide distinguished achievement award



The Pennsylvania Builders Association awarded PHFA's Executive Director Brian Hudson with the 2015 Distinguished Achievement Award during its summer board of directors meeting in late July. Hudson was selected for the award based on his lifetime of achievement to both the housing industry and to people seeking affordable housing. Hudson (right) was presented with the award by PBA member Gary Lenker (left), vice president and director of operations of Donco Construction and president of the Home Builders Association of Metro Harrisburg.

Counseling

PHFA thanks state's housing counselors for making positive difference

PHFA honored the work of the state's private sector housing counselors in mid-October at the Harrisburg Hilton. These counseling agencies help PHFA achieve its housing mission by assisting state residents with questions about homeownership, home foreclosure and their personal credit score so they can make better informed housing decisions.

Housing counselors from across the state attended the event, representing more than 75 counseling agencies. Among the honorees was Liz Hersh, director of supportive housing with the City of Philadelphia. Ms. Hersh (right) spoke about homelessness in Pennsylvania during the event. To view the full list of award winners, please visit [PHFA's website](#).



Upcoming Events

Save the date...PHFA's Housing Forum set for May 2017

PHFA's 2017 Commonwealth Housing Forum is set for May 11-12, 2017, at the Harrisburg Hilton. The Housing Forum is a must-attend event for those involved in shaping the future of Pennsylvania's housing, including leaders from the state's housing industry representing single-family homeownership and multifamily rental interests. Seven hundred influential decision makers are expected to attend, including developers, builders, lenders, maintenance and management agents, preservationists, real estate professionals, attorneys, consultants, government officials and housing advocates.

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There are still great sponsorship opportunities available. Contact Chris Anderson at 717-780-3915 or canderson@phfa.org for details. To be added to our distribution list for future emails about the forum, please email your request to HousingForum@phfa.org.

PHFA's Multifamily Affordable Housing Conference comes to State College in June 2017

The 2017 PHFA Multifamily Affordable Housing Conference will take place June 28-30, 2017, at the popular Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center in State College. Plan to attend this outstanding and affordable training opportunity. If you work as a supportive service provider, service coordinator, property manager (regional and on-site), public housing and redevelopment authority staff, or social service agency staff, then this is the conference for you. For information about attending, or for any organization interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact Melissa Medernach, at mmedernach@phfa.org.

Community Involvement

PHFA partners with Harrisburg Senators on hometown heroes event

PHFA and the Harrisburg Senators partnered to recognize people working in public safety positions and current and past military personnel with a special, free afternoon of baseball for them and their families at FNB Field on City Island in mid-August.

All attending hometown heroes were recognized during the game. This gave other attendees the opportunity to share their appreciation for these special people living and working in the mid-state.



PHFA walks for epilepsy

PHFA employees, led by Tonya Warren (back row center), participated in the 14th Annual Senators Family Fun Run/Walk in early August. Tonya's Treasures, consisting of 20 employees, raised \$1,585. The money raised from the event will benefit people with epilepsy and seizure disorders in western and central Pennsylvania and further the efforts to find a cure.

PHFA employees bake to fight breast cancer

PHFA held its annual bake sale in mid-October as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. A raffle was also held to raise money. Other events included a five-week fitness challenge and jeans and sneakers week. There was also a "Souper Bowl" event held last February coinciding with the Super Bowl that raised more than \$437. The two campaigns raised more than \$3,100 to help find a cure for breast cancer and the money will be donated to three branches of the American Cancer Society in Norristown, Pittsburgh and Lancaster.



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

To receive an email notice when a new issue of PHFA Developments is posted, or for comments and questions, please write Renae Hodges at rhodges@phfa.org.

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