PHARE
Pennsylvania Housing Affordability & Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund

THE PHARE PROGRAM: AT A GLANCE

The PHARE Act was established in 2010 to provide funding throughout the Commonwealth to assist with the creation, rehabilitation, and support of affordable housing. Currently, the program is funded by two funding sources, the Realty Transfer Tax Fund and the Marcellus Shale Fund.

Did You Know?

At the PHFA board meeting held in June 2024, PHFA announced the 2023-24 round of awarded PHARE grants. A total of 322 applicants received funding for a total funding amount of $64.9 million.

Erie DAWN

JULY 2024

My First Front Door Program

Erie, PA

Since 1995, Erie DAWN (Dwellings and Advocacy for Women in Need) has been committed to providing supportive housing for over 1000 women and children in Erie, Pennsylvania. The organization was originally founded by 3 religious orders, the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and the Benedictine Sisters as a transitional housing organization for homeless women and their children. This mission eventually led to the collaboration and partnership with local landlords to provide subsidized rents for the women they served while also providing wrap around services to help these women with securing employment and obtaining financial freedom.

In 2022, Erie DAWN received a PHARE grant in the amount of $75,000 to support the "My First Front Door" program which assisted 54 households of homeless women with or without children to provide support, resources, and tools they need to achieve economic self-sufficiency and permanent housing through transitional living arrangements, case management, rent and utility assistance, and connections with reliable landlords for permanent housing.

In a recent interview with PHFA, Executive Director, Dr. Susanne Kuligowski explained that most women that participate in the program stay for a year, but needs are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. She shared a story about a woman named Julie (pictured below) that most recently graduated from the program after 2 years. After an unhealthy relationship, Julie found herself out of a job which resulted in an insurmountable amount of debt and an inability to get back on her feet without assistance. The organization was able to house her in a fully furnished apartment, offer intense and customized case management, work with the court systems on child support arrears, and connect her with therapy services to bring Julie back to a place of hope and sustainability. As a woman who was unable to speak in the beginning of her journey due to the trauma she endured, she left the program and was able to obtain her own residence and secure more than one job, one of them in the social service sector. She has now been selected by Erie DAWN as a Peer Mentor for its new pilot program which will allow participants who have completed the program to be a beacon of hope and encouragement to the women who are current program participants, providing a "full circle" moment for the women they serve.

To learn more about Erie DAWN and what they are doing in Erie County, please visit their website at https://www.eriedawn.info/.

PHFA
PA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY