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For Immediate Release

PHFA thanks state's housing counselors for making positive difference

Counselors provide consumers with housing and credit information to help them make informed purchases and smarter life decisions

HARRISBURG – PHFA honored the work of the state's private sector housing counselors today 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 tend to work in the background, so we wanted to take this day to lift you up and thank you for your tireless efforts on behalf of consumers," said PHFA Executive Director and CEO Brian A. Hudson Sr. "You are part of a customer-focused counseling network available across Pennsylvania, and we want you to know your work powerfully impacts lives and is appreciated."

Housing counselors from across the state attended today's event, representing more than 75 counseling agencies. The audience of counselors was thanked in brief remarks by Hudson and Robin Wiessmann, secretary of the state Department of Banking and Securities.

The event began with the presentation of the Award of Excellence to Liz Hersh, director of supportive housing with the City of Philadelphia.

Hersh was recognized for her decades of service helping people on low incomes, especially her work to expand affordable housing options in the Commonwealth. Prior to her recent position with the City of Philadelphia, Hersh worked for 14 years as the executive director of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. During that time, the Housing Alliance spearheaded the creation of Pennsylvania's Housing Trust Fund and supported the growth of land banks as a tool for fighting blight. Under her leadership, the organization leveraged nearly \$500 million dollars for housing, community development and support for the homeless.

In addition to the award for Hersh, awards were presented to those individuals and counseling agencies exhibiting exemplary service to Pennsylvania residents:

Best Counselor Award

- **Rosemary Ashton**, Clarifi, Philadelphia
- **Rita Masi**, Fayette County Community Action Agency, Uniontown
- **Darlen Martinez**, BASE, Lancaster
- **John Arentzen**, Advantage Credit Counseling Service, Greensburg
- **Annette Santiago**, Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, Bethlehem

Best Agency Award

- **Community Action Southwest**, Washington, Pa.
- **Mt. Airy USA**, Philadelphia

Community Partnership Award

- **Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership**, Lancaster

Lender Partnership Award

- **Fayette County Community Action Agency**, Uniontown

Funder Partnership Award

- **NeighborWorks Northeastern Pennsylvania**, Scranton

Financial Education and Coaching Award

- **Clarifi**, Philadelphia

About PHFA

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency works to provide affordable homeownership and rental housing options for older adults, low- and moderate-income families, and people with special housing needs. Through its carefully managed mortgage programs and investments in multifamily housing developments, PHFA also promotes economic development across the state. Since its creation by the legislature in 1972, it has generated more than \$12.8 billion of funding for more than 165,000 single-family home mortgage loans, helped fund the construction of 129,322 rental units, and saved the homes of more than 48,650 families from foreclosure. PHFA programs and operations are funded primarily by the sale of securities and from fees paid by program users, not by public tax dollars. The agency is governed by a 14-member board.

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