

March 13, 2019  
For Immediate Release

## ***PHFA launches three informational podcast series for consumers***

*Podcasts will help listeners with homebuying and personal money management*

HARRISBURG – The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency today announced it has launched three new informational podcasts intended to help consumers. One, called “Close to Home,” will offer practical, easy-to-understand advice for people in the market to purchase a home. The second, “Master Your Money,” will provide insights people can use to better manage their personal finances. The third series, called “PHFA Update,” will cover a variety of housing topics to benefit homebuyers, homeowners and renters.

“A few years ago, we did focus groups with our customers and learned how much people want homebuying and personal finance guidance from a source they can trust,” said Brian A. Hudson Sr., PHFA executive director and CEO. “We’ve been looking at several options to make this sort of information available, and podcasting seemed to us to be the perfect venue for making this programming easily accessible for consumers.”

The Close to Home series has already posted three podcasts on the topics of understanding closing costs, homebuyer counseling options, and homebuying readiness. The show’s homebuying expert is Coleen Baumert, PHFA’s director of homeownership. Baumert has worked in the housing field for more than 14 years.

The Master Your Money series has posted three podcasts so far. They introduce listeners to the subject of personal money management and cover concepts like maximizing your earnings and making your money work for you. The topic expert for that program is Holly Zugay, PHFA’s financial education officer. Zugay has nearly 20 years of experience in the financial education field, including her current work providing financial education for former inmates and incarcerated veterans. Last fall, Zugay was selected by the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education as its 2018 Financial Educator of the Year.

The PHFA Update podcast was created to cover other housing topics outside the subjects of homebuying and money management. For example, the first show in this series is about the agency’s foreclosure prevention program, known as HEMAP, and provides guidance for people about how to apply for assistance if they are falling behind on their mortgage.

All three podcasts will be hosted by PHFA employee Renae Garofolo, who works in the agency’s communications division and has a background as a radio DJ. Garofolo is a strong advocate for the use of podcasting to educate consumers about housing issues that affect their lives.

“Being a new homeowner myself, I understand how intimidating it can be to buy a home,” said Garofolo. “In all our podcasts, we want to tackle real-world topics that will help people become more knowledgeable about homebuying, money management and other housing issues. Once we build up our audience, we hope people will send us their ideas for topics they want us to cover.”

A new podcast will be posted for each program every few weeks. The podcasts generally run less than ten minutes – a length that is convenient for people to fit into their daily schedules. Listeners interested in these new podcasts can access them on the agency’s website at [www.PHFA.org](http://www.PHFA.org). Once on the homepage, look for the podcast link at the top-left corner of your screen. All three PHFA podcasts can also be accessed on iTunes, Spotify and other podcast apps.

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 \$14.1 billion of funding for more than 175,000 single-family home mortgage loans, helped fund the construction of 134,507 rental units, and saved the homes of nearly 49,600 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.

**Media contact:**

Scott Elliott  
sellott@phfa.org  
717-649-6522 (cell)

# # #