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For Immediate Release

2022 Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellow announced

Funded research will benefit policymakers and the affordable housing industry

HARRISBURG – The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has named Carolyn Ristau as its inaugural Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship awardee. Ristau will receive a financial stipend of up to \$12,000 during 2022 to conduct research benefiting the affordable housing industry. During the fellowship, she will gain valuable experience contributing to her professional development.

“We are extremely impressed with Carolyn’s background, which makes her an outstanding choice to be our 2022 housing policy fellow,” said PHFA Executive Director and CEO Robin Wiessmann. “Given the importance of ensuring equity in housing policy, her research should produce results of value to municipalities statewide.”

Ristau’s fellowship project will focus on zoning districts in the city of Pittsburgh to determine whether an exclusionary pattern exists that affects housing availability for residents. Her research will seek to better understand local conditions, how and why the zoning districts were established, and ultimately determine if there is a pattern of single-family zoning districts in some neighborhoods and multifamily zoning districts in others. The methodology Ristau uses in this study will then be available for application in other Pennsylvania municipalities. At the conclusion of her fellowship, her findings will be made publicly available to benefit the state’s policymakers and the housing industry.

Ristau has a Bachelor of Arts degree in urban studies from the University of Pittsburgh. She graduated summa cum laude in 2012 with concentrations in urban planning, architectural history and writing.

Ristau works at Carnegie Mellon University’s School of Architecture assisting with writing and compiling content for the school’s website and social media platforms. Since 2012, she has also worked as an independent writer and consultant on issues pertaining to zoning. Previously, she held multiple positions with Pittsburgh’s Department of City Planning, including special operations manager, site plan review specialist, and zoning specialist. Her experience and education are strengths for performing her research under the fellowship.

The stipend provided through PHFA’s housing policy fellowship can be used for a variety of activities supporting Ristau’s research, such as conducting interviews with experts, securing resources and study materials, and travel for attending relevant conferences.

This is the second year of PHFA’s housing policy fellowship. In 2021, the fellowship was renamed the Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship in honor of PHFA board designee and affordable housing champion Kathy A. Possinger. Possinger served Pennsylvanians for two decades through her housing work in both the public and private sectors.

Editor's Note: A photo of Carolyn Ristau is available upon request.

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 \$15.6 billion of funding for more than 184,870 single-family home mortgage loans, helped fund the construction of 138,000 rental units, distributed approximately \$191 million to support local housing initiatives, and saved the homes of nearly 50,400 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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