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For Immediate Release

2023 Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellows announced

Funded research will benefit policymakers and the affordable housing industry

HARRISBURG, PA – The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has named Jongwoong Kim and Julie Wilson as its 2023 Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship recipients. Both Kim and Wilson will receive a financial stipend of up to \$12,000 during the year to conduct research benefiting the affordable housing industry. This is the first time that two fellowships have been awarded in the same year: one is designated for an academic-led project and one for a practitioner-led project.

“We couldn’t be more pleased with the high caliber of our two 2023 fellows,” said PHFA Executive Director and CEO Robin Wiessmann. “Jongwoong Kim and Julie Wilson have exceptional backgrounds focused on housing issues, and their separate research projects should produce valuable insights to help us expand housing opportunities and address pressing housing issues. Our hope is that their fellowship experience with PHFA also further prepares them for future leadership roles in the housing field”

Jongwoong Kim is an assistant professor and assessment coordinator in the Department of Geography and Planning at West Chester University; he is also a faculty affiliate with the Center for GIS and Spatial Analysis at the university. Kim's research and teaching interests include housing and community development, geospatial analysis and visualization, and health and aging and the built environment. He holds a doctorate in regional development planning from the University of Cincinnati and a master’s in urban planning from the University of Michigan.

Kim’s fellowship project will connect and analyze issues that are often discussed separately but have consequences from their combined impact on seniors: those are property taxes and aging-in-place. Using spatial analysis techniques, his project will examine the geography of locally varied property tax components (such as the local tax rate and school tax rate) in Pennsylvania and their implications for older Pennsylvanians, especially those with limited financial means, as they age-in-place. The project will develop a set of publicly accessible web-based and interactive maps, as well as a series of rankings of counties and municipalities, to provide a more comprehensible analysis of the feasibility of aging-in-place across the commonwealth.

Julie Wilson is the director of housing and community development at Common Roots, a community organization committed to developing permanently affordable housing that builds wealth and security for low-income residents in Meadville. She is a leader in Meadville’s community wealth building movement and co-author of the report “Community Wealth Building in Meadville: A Strategic Assessment by The Democracy Collaborative.”

Wilson’s fellowship project will explore how new approaches to cooperative housing might intervene in the escalating housing affordability crisis through the medium of documentary film. Specifically, the film will chronicle Common Roots’ work to establish a renting cooperative where renters are able to build equity by collectively governing and managing their homes. The film will be targeted to affordable

housing professionals, grassroots actors and organizations, and general audiences interested in housing issues and cooperative enterprises.

Wilson is a former associate professor of communication arts and community and justice studies at Allegheny College. She is the author of “Neoliberalism,” a textbook that explores contemporary politics, economics, and culture; and the director/producer of “Bending Hell,” a documentary about a local city council campaign. Before getting her doctorate at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, she was a neighborhood organizer, during which time she helped support a housing cooperative and served on the board of the Rondo Community Land Trust.

The stipend provided to both these researchers through PHFA’s housing policy fellowship can be used for a variety of activities supporting the fellows’ approved research, including interviews with experts, securing resources and study materials, and travel for attending relevant conferences.

This is the third 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 Possinger. She was a passionate affordable housing advocate who served Pennsylvanians for two decades through her work in both the public and private sectors.

Editors: Head shots of both PHFA fellows are 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 \$16.7 billion of funding for more than 190,750 single-family home mortgage loans, helped fund the construction of 141,492 rental units, distributed approximately \$239 million to support local housing initiatives, and saved the homes of more than 50,660 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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