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For Immediate Release

## **PHFA honors best and brightest housing counselors and agencies in Pa.**

*Counselors provide people with knowledge to become successful homeowners and renters*

HARRISBURG, PA – PHFA recognized the work of the state’s private sector housing counselors today during an event at the Harrisburg Hilton. These counselors help PHFA achieve its housing mission by assisting state residents with questions about homeownership, home foreclosure, budgeting, personal money management, and their personal credit score so they can make better informed housing decisions.

“Too often our housing counselors work in the background and don’t get the special recognition they deserve,” said PHFA Executive Director and CEO Robin Wiessmann. “We created this event to emphasize to our counseling agencies and our best and brightest counselors just how much they are appreciated. They touch countless lives in positive ways by helping consumers make better housing decisions.”

Housing counselors from across the state attended today’s event, representing 63 counseling agencies. The audience of counselors was thanked in brief remarks by Wiessmann and Acting Secretary of Banking Wendy Spicher. Also, an Award of Excellence was presented to state Senator Jay Costa recognizing his long-standing support for affordable housing and consumer education for homebuyers and others seeking housing.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of awards to these individuals and counseling agencies exhibiting exemplary service to Pennsylvania residents:

### Best Housing Counseling Specialist Award

- **Jeanette Velez**, Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, Bethlehem
- **Pamela Anslinger**, NeighborWorks Northeastern Pennsylvania, Scranton
- **Noelle Irving**, Advantage Credit Counseling Service, Pittsburgh
- **Carmen Labrador**, Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Berks, Reading
- **Maria Baez**, Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Berks, Reading
- **Darlen Martinez**, Base, Lancaster
- **Ping Lee**, Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corp., Philadelphia
- **Brendinelle Lopez**, Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Philadelphia
- **Aaron Williams**, Affordable Housing Centers of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

### Best Agency Award

- **NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania**, Pittsburgh

### Community Partnership Award

- **NeighborWorks Northeastern Pennsylvania**, Scranton

Financial Education and Coaching Award

- **Bucks County Housing Group**, Warminster

Lender Partnership Award

- **NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania**, Pittsburgh

Funder Partnership Award

- **NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania**, Pittsburgh

Best Practices Award

- **NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania**, Pittsburgh

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 \$17.6 billion of funding for more than 195,250 single-family home mortgage loans, helped fund the construction of 103,328 rental units, distributed approximately \$239 million to support local housing initiatives, and saved the homes of more than 50,860 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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