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Phillips, Sing named PHFA 2026 housing policy fellows

Funded research will benefit policymakers and the affordable housing industry

HARRISBURG, PA – The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has named Zachary Phillips and Dr. Evaine K. Sing as its 2026 Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship awardees. Both Phillips and Sing will receive a financial stipend of up to \$12,000 during the year to conduct independent research benefiting the affordable housing industry.

“Zachary and Evaine’s résumés and backgrounds make them both outstanding individuals to be PHFA housing policy fellows,” PHFA Executive Director and CEO Robin Wiessmann said. “The work of previous fellows has produced valuable insights to help expand housing opportunities and tackle housing issues. I am excited to see the research these two produce that will benefit our mission to provide affordable housing to Pennsylvanians.”

Phillips, who is pursuing a master’s degree in business analytics at Georgia Tech, works as an economic development analyst at Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development. In his role, he manages HOME contracts across 16 counties, overseeing approximately \$20 million in annual funding allocations. An Army Reservist, he additionally holds dual bachelor’s degrees in economics and political science from Syracuse University.

Phillips’ fellowship research project will examine the housing challenges faced by Pennsylvania’s veterans, particularly in rural and deindustrialized communities where housing support is often fragmented or inaccessible. His work explores the disconnect between available federal and state housing programs and the lived experiences of veterans navigating civilian life — many of whom face eligibility gaps, landlord stigma, or compounding health and substance-use issues. He aims to highlight policy and program innovations that better support veterans through key transition points such as military discharge, reentry from incarceration, or recovery.

Sing, a registered landscape architect, serves as principal of EKS Solutions, where she advises municipalities, CDCs, and resident-led groups on strategic planning, program design, and implementation frameworks. Previously, she served as executive director for Pittsburgh-based nonprofit Grounded Strategies. She holds a doctorate in social science from Royal Roads University, a master’s degree in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon, and a bachelor’s degree in landscape architecture from Virginia Tech.

Sing's research project will focus on the dual challenges of vacant urban land and the growing need for affordable housing in Pennsylvania's legacy cities. Focusing on Pittsburgh and the Borough of Wilkinsburg, her project explores how modular housing and prefabricated construction can be paired with underutilized parcels to create cost-effective, resilient, and community-centered housing solutions. With over 27,000 vacant lots in Pittsburgh, many of which are publicly owned and irregularly shaped, her project seeks to unlock their potential through innovative land-use strategies, zoning reform, and policy alignment.

The stipends 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 seventh 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.

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 PHFA issues RFP for PHARE funding, legislature in 1972, it has generated more than \$20.1 billion of funding for more than 206,750 single family home mortgage loans, helped fund the construction of 110,284 rental units, distributed approximately \$362 million to support local housing initiatives, and saved the homes of more than 51,400 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.

Media contact

Chris Anderson
canderson@PHFA.org
717.780.3915

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