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For Immediate Release

Pa. renters and homeowners reminded that applications for CARES financial assistance will be available June 29

Completed applications can be submitted for review starting July 6

HARRISBURG – Renters and homeowners who were financially impacted by the economic slowdown related to the coronavirus pandemic will be able to access applications for rent and mortgage relief starting June 29.

The applications will be available by clicking on a red CARES banner on the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency's website at www.PHFA.org. The red banner is already live on the site advising people of the date applications will be available. In addition to the applications, the website will have fact sheets and other information to help answer people's questions. PHFA is administering programs to help both renters and homeowners.

PHFA has identified partnering organizations in all 67 counties to help process the large number of rent relief applications anticipated. Renters will submit their applications and supporting paperwork to these organizations for review. Homeowners seeking assistance with payment of their past-due mortgage will have two options for submitting their applications directly to PHFA: using a web-based process or using a printable version that can be completed and mailed to the agency.

The Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, passed in March, provided \$3.9 billion for Pennsylvania and is intended to help people hurt economically during the pandemic. In late May, the General Assembly directed \$175 million of these CARES dollars to PHFA to provide assistance for struggling renters and homeowners. The portion for rent assistance is at least \$150 million, and \$25 million was set aside for mortgage assistance.

During June, in a period of about four weeks, PHFA developed detailed programs for distributing this financial assistance quickly to people in need while following legislative requirements. The agency will begin accepting completed applications for both rental and mortgage assistance on July 6.

"We know people have been eagerly awaiting applications for this assistance, and they will be available Monday," said PHFA Executive Director and CEO Robin Wiessmann. "This CARES funding for renters and homeowners is vital for helping people stay in their homes and reducing some of the stress associated with the current pandemic. Stable housing is critical for beginning our economic recovery from this health crisis."

The agency's call center will be available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to assist the public and help with questions about the programs. The toll-free number is 1-855-U-Are-Home (827-3466). Callers should listen for the prompt mentioning CARES assistance for renters and homeowners. The county organizations to which CARES applications are submitted will also have webpages offering useful information.

The CARES funding for renters and homeowners must be completely distributed by Nov. 30, 2020, although it is expected the assistance will be exhausted before the deadline because of the tremendous need by people hurt financially by the pandemic.

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 nearly \$14.6 billion of funding for more than 178,325 single-family home mortgage loans, helped fund the construction of 136,215 rental units, distributed more than \$109.2 million to support local housing initiatives, and saved the homes of more than 50,300 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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