COVID-19 PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OHIO HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY TO PROVIDE $5 MILLION FOR RENTAL ASSISTANCE AND EMERGENCY HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

COLUMBUS, OH - At its board meeting on Wednesday, March 18, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency approved a proposal to provide up to $5 million in funding to help homeless and low-income Ohioans negatively affected by the coronavirus pandemic avoid or escape homelessness and stay in their homes.

Each of the state's nine Continua of Care will receive a portion of the dollars to address homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, and emergency rental assistance. A Continuum of Care is a regional planning body that coordinates housing and other services for homeless families and individuals. Ohio's CoCs have significant experience administering homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing and rental assistance programs.

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"Our state's Continua of Care are best situated and equipped to assist homeless families and households struggling with paying rent or facing housing instability during this difficult time," said OHFA Executive Director Sean Thomas. "We appreciate the support of our Board and are proud to provide this funding to help meet these urgent needs across our state."

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Funds will be disbursed based on a formula corresponding to the number of extremely low-income and very low-income residents in CoC service areas. CoCs could begin receiving funds as early as April.

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"You can't stay home if you don't have a home," said Michelle Heritage, executive director for Community Shelter Board. "This quick deployment of emergency funds will help us address a tremendous need among our most vulnerable neighbors facing homelessness."

"We appreciate OHFA's leadership and flexibility in getting these resources out quickly," said Bill Faith, Executive Director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio. COHHIO, along with the Ohio Development Services Agency, serves as one of the lead staffing agencies for the Ohio Balance of State CoCs, which represents the 80 non-urban counties in Ohio.

Also in response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Board approved a proposal to work with previously funded affordable housing apartment communities throughout the state that agree to suspend evictions at their properties for the next six months. OHFA staff will contact eligible owners directly with details of this assistance.

As part of its regular agenda, the board also approved the construction and rehabilitation of 10 developments in counties across Ohio: Adams, Seneca, Allen, Clark, Hancock, Portage, Hamilton, and Montgomery.

Additional information and updates about OHFA's response to the coronavirus health emergency are available on OHFA's website (../../../covid-19.aspx).

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ABOUT OHFA

As the state's affordable housing leader, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency offers a variety of programs to help first-time homebuyers, renters, senior citizens and others find quality affordable housing that meets their needs.

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