RENTAL ASSISTANCE AND EMERGENCY HOMELESSNESS SERVICES PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 23, 2020
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HOUSING AGENCY PROVIDES ADDITIONAL $4.75 MILLION FOR EMERGENCY HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

COLUMBUS, OH - In a special meeting on Thursday, April 23, the OHFA Board approved an additional $4.75 million to support the increased housing needs of Ohio homeless and those at risk of homelessness because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board also approved $5 million in emergency funding in March.

The monies will go to Ohio's nine Continua of Care and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio. In addition, an additional fund will provide financial help to nonprofits previously funded by OHFA that operate senior housing, permanent supportive housing and affordable assisted living properties.

The Board approved the following:

- $2.5 million in Emergency Housing Assistance Funds to the nine CoCs
- A $750,000 grant to COHHIO for its Pandemic Emergency Fund
- A $1.25 million no-interest loan to COHHIO for its Pandemic Emergency Fund
- A $250,000 COVID-19 emergency fund

"As the coronavirus has continued to spread, the housing and safety needs of those who serve the homeless and persons at-risk of homelessness have also continued to grow," said OHFA Executive Director Sean Thomas. "We are grateful to our Board's leadership and are proud to offer our support to the number of organizations in the state serving these vulnerable populations."

Ohio CoCs will continue to provide rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention efforts with the additional funding. However, today's approval provides additional flexibility for the CoCs to use the funds to isolate and quarantine facilities or provide hotel/motel assistance for homeless Ohioans.

OHFA's contribution to COHHIO's Pandemic Emergency Fund enables the organization to continue helping homeless shelters throughout Ohio contain the spread of COVID-19 among residents, staff, and the broader community.

"We've received hundreds of donations, but the needs are enormous, and we nearly exhausted the Emergency Fund. OHFA's generous contribution enables us to continue supporting shelters, and it will certainly save lives by keeping vulnerable Ohioans – seniors, people with health conditions, and families with young children – out of harm's way," said Bill Faith, COHHIO's Executive Director.

The loan will support COHHIO's efforts as they await Temporary Assistance for Needy Families dollars that Governor Mike DeWine approved for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing efforts. The organization will disburse the $1.25 million and repay OHFA through a TANF reimbursement.

The final allotment addresses a need for Ohio's most vulnerable citizens and the organizations that serve them. Owners and management companies of OHFA–financed properties can apply for grants to purchase protective equipment, cleaning supplies and more. Nonprofit organizations that create emergency housing funds to address emergency needs related to COVID-19 at affordable housing properties and facilities across the state may request a contribution to those funds.

OHFA will disburse Emergency Assistance Funds based on a formula corresponding to the number of extremely low-income and very low-income residents in CoC service areas. Details about the second round of Emergency Housing Assistance will be posted on OHFA's website (https://www.ohiohome.org/) on Monday, April 27; funds will be disbursed by May 31. Information about the grant program will be forthcoming.

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Media Kit
(../../../mediakit/default.aspx)

Training
(../../trainings.aspx)

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(../../events.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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