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Friday, January 29, 2021

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES $30 MILLION IN AWARDS TO FINANCE CONSTRUCTION AND SERVICES FOR 1,200 SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS

Fifth Round of Governor's Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative Will Fund 179 Awards for 104 Community Providers in 41 Counties

Advances Governor's Sweeping $20 Billion, Five-Year Plan to Develop More Than 100,000 Units of Affordable Housing and 6,000 Units of Supportive Housing

Conditional Awards Listed by Region and County Here

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the fifth round of awards from the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative, which will provide $30 million annually to fund support services and operating costs for at least 1,200 units of supportive housing for homeless persons with special needs, conditions or other challenges. The 179 conditional awards will help 104 community providers create housing opportunities in 41 counties across New York. The conditional awards provide service and operating funding for permanent supportive housing units. The awards will allow applicants to secure separate capital funding to finance the development and construction of their housing projects. The conditional awards can be found listed by

region and county here.

"All New Yorkers, especially our state's most vulnerable, should have access to the services they need in the communities of their choice, and the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative delivers on that commitment during a time when they need more support than ever," Governor Cuomo said. "Through these five rounds of awards, we're providing New Yorkers with a range of specialized housing options and support services, while helping community organizations finance construction, operate buildings and provide those critical services throughout the state."

The awards announced today will be used to provide rental assistance and services to eligible target populations to ensure their housing stability. ESSHI has provided for the construction of more than 5,000 units of supportive housing for vulnerable populations, including veterans, victims of domestic violence, frail or disabled senior citizens, young adults with histories of incarceration, homelessness or foster care, chronically homeless individuals and families, as well as individuals with health, mental health and/or substance use disorders.

In total, New York has financed the new construction and preservation of more than 7,000 units of supportive housing, putting the State well on its way to meeting the Governor's goal of creating or preserving 20,000 units of supportive housing over 15 years. The Executive Budget includes $250 million in additional capital funding to help meet that goal.

The conditional awards follow the Governor's 2021 State of the State proposal to create new supportive housing by allowing commercial property owners to convert underutilized office buildings and hotels in New York to residential use, including affordable and supportive housing. Governor Cuomo also demonstrated his commitment to supportive housing in his 2021-22 Executive Budget proposal, which continues his $20 billion, comprehensive five-year investment in affordable and supportive housing and services to provide New Yorkers with safe and secure homes.

Although the New York State Office of Mental Health serves as the lead procurement agency for ESSHI, the program is a multi-agency effort, with a workgroup that includes representatives from the Department of Health, New York State Homes and Community Renewal, the Office of Addiction Services and Supports, the Office of Children and Family Services, the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.

New York State is a national leader in the development and ongoing support of housing for families and individuals living with mental illness and other special needs. Supportive housing has been shown to provide stability, safety and the opportunity for individuals and families to live in their own homes and

communities as they make their way on the road to recovery. Housing with support services also reduces the need for costly emergency department visits and inpatient hospital stays.

Office of Mental Health Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan said, "The Governor's ESSHI program has provided stable housing and supportive services to thousands of people and families, allowing them to live successfully in their own homes. Supportive housing enables many individuals living with mental illness to have full and productive lives while receiving the services they need. ESSHI has been a great success, and I'm proud of the role OMH has played to further its goals."

Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas said, "This $30 million in ESSHI awards is another leap forward in Governor Cuomo's unwavering commitment to ending homelessness and housing insecurity in New York State. With supportive services, we can help New Yorkers achieve stability, improve health outcomes and regain their independence in a nurturing and affordable living environment. The latest round of awards will support 104 organizations and create at least 1,200 supportive homes across every region of the state. By caring for our most vulnerable, we are building stronger and more equitable communities for all."

Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said, "Without first securing stable housing, it is nearly impossible for New Yorkers to address other conditions that threaten their health and well-being. Governor Cuomo's Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative is improving public health for all New Yorkers by expanding affordable and supportive housing to help people live in their own homes and communities while making their way toward recovery."

Office of Children and Family Services Commissioner Sheila J. Poole said, "Stable housing is foundational to young adults' success, whether they are aging out of the foster care system, previously homeless or returning to the community following a juvenile justice placement. At home, they can pursue education, employment or a vocational opportunity that will lead them to further accomplishments and maintain their place in their community. I commend Governor Cuomo for his commitment to continued support for these vulnerable New Yorkers as they attain the stability they need to focus on building successful futures."

Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commissioner Mike Hein said, "Supportive housing is the most effective tool we have in addressing homelessness as it provides not just a place to live, but access to support services that can help New Yorkers address the issues that may have contributed to them experiencing homelessness in the first place. OTDA is proud to play a critical role in the success of this initiative, which is making a real difference in the lives of some of our most vulnerable residents."

Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Executive Director Kelli Owens said, "Safe, affordable

housing is too often the reason DV survivors and their families can't escape abusive relationships. ESSHI's announcement of building even more pathways to safe, stable housing for some of our most vulnerable community members couldn't be more timely or important, especially as the need for a safe home is heightened during the pandemic. We value our partnership with ESSHI in this critical work and thank them for their leadership in expanding affordable, permanent housing throughout NYS."

Office for People With Developmental Disabilities Commissioner Theodore Kastner, MD, MS, said, "OPWDD strives to help New Yorkers with developmental disabilities achieve independence so that they may live and thrive in their communities of choice. Affordable, supportive housing provided through the Governor's Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative provides the foundation for integrated, community living and opens up a world of possibility for people with developmental disabilities who want to live independently and take part in their community while receiving the right supports."

Senator Samra Brouk, Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health, said, "Providing homes for more New Yorkers addressing mental health difficulties will help save lives. I am glad to see this investment being made, and I will work with my colleagues in government to ensure our state provides high quality services and support to those battling mental health disorders and issues."

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