



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Allegheny County Receives \$175,000 PHARE Grant for Accessibility Program

PITTSBURGH – Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald announced today that Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED) has received a \$175,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) fund. The fund is administered by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). The grant will allow ACED to provide accessibility modifications to residents of the county who have permanent physical disabilities with low to moderate incomes. Working with its partner, ACTION-Housing, Inc., ACED expects to be able to provide modifications for 19 households.

“Our partnership with the state and PHFA consistently enables us to do more with less, and meet the needs of our growing community, and we are grateful for the board’s continued support,” said Fitzgerald. “We want our community to be one in which everyone can take full advantage of the opportunities and experiences here, and by offering this program, we give those who thought they had no choice but to move, an opportunity to stay in their homes and to sustain the affordable housing stock as well.”

The United Way of Allegheny County recently commissioned a study by ACTION-Housing, Inc. and Regional Housing Legal Services that helped define this gap. According to data from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development and PHFA, there are twice as many Allegheny County residents with a disability than housing units to serve them. Every accessible modification will preserve a unit of affordable housing, allow the resident of that unit to stay in a housing situation that is safe and comfortable, and provide any further stress on an already inadequate supply of affordable housing.

“We are thankful to PHFA for providing the \$175,000 in PHARE funds that will enable us to work with our partner ACTION-Housing, Inc.,” said ACED Director Bob Hurley. “Together, we can help make homes for Allegheny County residents with disabilities safe and sound.”

Applicants for the program will need to have a clinically or medically documented disability, and all modifications will either be directly related to a) that disability, or b) a health and safety barrier that would inhibit a medically necessary modification. ACTION-Housing will work with the participants to create a scope of work that will ensure the project is completed consistent with their physical needs. The organization will also provide initial and final inspections, and oversee construction.

“The ACCESS program provides essential home modifications to allow people with disabilities to live independently,” said Larry Swanson, Executive Director of ACTION-Housing, Inc. “This is both the best quality of life for people to live in the communities where they are supported by family and friends, and the most cost effective way for us to provide good and affordable housing.”

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency made its announcement on October 13, approving \$6.2 million for 40 housing projects to improve the availability and affordability of housing in 29 counties.

This is the fifth year for the PHARE program which has invested more than \$39 million into Pennsylvania communities, in addition to nearly \$255 million of other leveraged funding.

For more information, or to apply for the program, contact Andrew Shull at 412-281-2102.

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