



Contact:

Christina M. Hardin-Dirksen

Chief of Community Relations, DSHA

Phone: (302) 739-4263

Email: [Christina@destatehousing.com](mailto:Christina@destatehousing.com)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY PROGRAM ENABLES INDIVIDUALS TO MOVE FROM STATE-RUN FACILITIES TO RENTAL UNITS**

*Nearly 100 people to Receive Rental Assistance Through New Program*

**December 19, 2011 – (DOVER, DE)** – On Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) hosted an event to celebrate the stories of five individuals who are moving from long-term care facilities and foster care to rental housing with the help of DSHA's new State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP).

The objective of the SRAP program, which was launched in August 2011, is to assist low-income individuals who require affordable housing and supportive services to live safely and independently in the community.

The event recognized several individuals who are successfully utilizing the SRAP:

- Sandra Johnson and Alfredia Forrest — They are leaving Emily P. Bissell Hospital and are currently looking for new homes in or near the Wilmington area.
- John Talone — He is leaving the Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill and plans to move to the Claymont area.
- Matt and Mindie Stevenson — 19-year-old twin brother and sister who are leaving foster care. They are moving in as roommates in New Castle.

“This is a wonderful story and a great example of how we’re helping individuals to move from State institutions back into communities or who are aging out of foster care — both vulnerable, special needs populations,” said Governor Jack Markell. “The State Rental Assistance Program is also a great illustration of how State government agencies can effectively work together to both serve our citizens and achieve cost savings for Delaware.”

Supported by Governor Markell, SRAP was made possible by \$1.5 million in funding from the General Assembly and a memorandum of understanding with the Delaware

Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF). Within the first five months of the program, 129 applications have been received and 88 SRAP vouchers have been approved.

“We’re extremely pleased to have worked directly with DHSS and DSCYF to make this program a reality and to help many individuals in need with rental assistance,” said Anas Ben Addi, Director of the Delaware State Housing Authority. “SRAP is the realization of a lot of groundwork laid by the nonprofits, advocates, legislators and many other partners who worked with us to help shape the program and assisted us with facilitating its implementation. Thanks to their efforts, we are able to offer this unique program today.”

Several studies conducted in the last five years have indicated that one of the most pressing housing issues facing the State of Delaware is homelessness of individuals who need long-term stable housing and comprehensive supportive services.

Along with *Delaware’s Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness and Reduce Long-Term Homelessness* (2007) and the working group report *Housing Delaware’s Extremely Low-Income Households* (2009) – which identified a need of over 1,000 rental subsidies to adequately house this special needs population – the Homeless Planning Council conducts a Point in Time (PIT) study each year. The PIT conducted in January 2011 estimated there are nearly 6,600 homeless persons in Delaware this year.

The SRAP program will help to fill this need and also benefit the State of Delaware, who will no longer need to house individuals who are able to live independently in the community or are ready to leave foster care with appropriate supportive services.

“Because of the work of the SRAP team across our three agencies, vulnerable Delawareans will be provided affordable housing and supportive services to live safely and independently in the community,” said Department of Health and Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf. “At DHSS, SRAP is helping individuals who are leaving long-term care at the state’s institutions and seniors who are being diverted from nursing home care so they can remain in the community. For these individuals, the rental assistance program is critical in helping them to achieve self-sufficiency and, ultimately, reintegration. And, finally, as state agencies, we are being fiscally responsible as we transition more individuals from high-cost institutional care to more affordable and sustainable community-based services and housing.”

DSHA estimates that it will cost between \$8,000 and \$10,000 per household per year to provide rental assistance with the SRAP program.

In contrast, it costs \$270,000 per year for the State to house an individual at the Delaware Psychiatric Center, nursing home care costs \$70,000 per person per year, and foster care costs the state \$24,000 per year for the average 2-child family. Many of

these families and individuals are often in the state's care because they cannot find or afford safe and decent housing.

According to DSHA, SRAP will save the State of Delaware:

- \$63,100 per person for individuals in state-run nursing facilities;
- \$144,400 per person for individuals in the Delaware Psychiatric Center; and
- \$8,450 per family with children in foster care.

“Youth who age out of foster care face the obstacles of becoming an adult much as their peers do, but often without the support and resources of a family,” said Vivian Rapposelli, Secretary of the Delaware Children’s Department. “Programs like SRAP don’t just offer housing support; they provide hope for our young men and women. They give them peace of mind and allow them to begin the next phase of their life on a solid foundation.”

### **About the Delaware State Housing Authority**

The Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA), formed in 1968, is dedicated to providing quality, affordable housing opportunities and appropriate supportive services to responsible low- and moderate-income Delawareans. In addition to its role as the State's Housing Finance Agency, DSHA is unique in that it also serves as a Public Housing Authority and acts as a Community Development and Planning Agency. As a Public Housing Authority, DSHA receives funding from HUD to build, own and operate public housing in Kent and Sussex counties, two of Delaware's three counties. For more information about the Delaware State Housing Authority, please call: (302) 739-4263 or visit our website at: [www.destatehousing.com](http://www.destatehousing.com)

###