



DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY NEWS RELEASE

DATE FOR RELEASE:
Thursday, August 7, 2008

CONTACT: Christina Hardin-Dirksen
Community Relations Office
302/739-4263

Delaware Interagency Council on Homelessness Signed into Law

On August 7, 2008 Governor Ruth Ann Minner signed Senate Bill 310 into law, which makes the Delaware Interagency Council on Homelessness permanent. Originally created in March 2005 by Executive Order 65, the Interagency Council was established to help solve chronic homelessness in Delaware. Senate Bill 310 garnered broad legislative and community support.

On any given night, approximately 2,000 people in Delaware are without shelter, with about 300 people being chronically homeless, individuals who are homeless for long periods of time and may have one or more disabilities. In February 2007, Governor Minner received the 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness by 2017.

“Chronic homelessness is a problem across our nation and one that also affects us here in Delaware,” said Governor Minner. “We want to combat this problem by providing permanent housing along with necessary support services for those who are chronically homeless in our state,” said Governor Minner.

“We must create a continuum of housing, which includes a well-coordinated system for helping families get off the street and provides adequate affordable housing opportunities. This system mandates we pool human and financial resources,” said Sandy Johnson, DSHA Director. “No one in this prosperous state should be relegated to a life on the street.”

The Interagency Council includes a broad representation of stakeholders, community leaders, state and federal government agencies, supportive housing developers, homeless service providers and formerly homeless individuals. Sandy Johnson, Director of the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) is the Chair, and Catherine DeVaney McKay, CEO of Connections CSP, Inc. is the Co-Chair of the Interagency Council. The Interagency Council is composed of twenty-five (25) members appointed by, and serving at, the pleasure of the Governor.

To end chronic homelessness, the Interagency Council offers a multi-pronged approach: Develop new housing for persons who are chronically homeless or at risk for chronic homelessness; remove barriers to accessing existing housing; improve discharge and transition planning; improve supportive services for persons who are homeless; and enhance data collection and use of technology.

Working together with the Interagency Council towards solutions, DSHA created a set-aside of Housing Tax Credits specifically for affordable housing serving the chronically homeless. Connections CSP, Inc. submitted a Housing Tax Credit application to DSHA for 31 units of transitional housing for formerly homeless families, which has qualified for this set-aside. The housing sites will be known as Marcella's House and Judy's House. DSHA also expects to provide financing through the Housing Development Fund for these very important homes.

“The Delaware Interagency Council on Homelessness has made tremendous strides in developing and beginning to implement a plan that will end homelessness for the 7,000 Delaware citizens--half of whom have mental

health and substance use conditions--who experience it each year. This bill will ensure that our work will continue into the future and will focus our elected and appointed officials on addressing this problem,” remarked Catherine McKay, CEO of Connections CSP, Inc.

To view the Ten Year Plan and the Executive Summary to the Plan, please visit Delaware State Housing Authority’s website at www.DeStateHousing.com and click on “Publications”.

For more information, contact Kim Brockenbrough, DSHA Director of Planning and Community Development, at (888) 363-8808 or at kimb@destatehousing.com.

#

cmh:kcm

CONTACT FOR MORE INFO:

Christina Hardin-Dirksen, Chief, Community Relations
Delaware State Housing Authority
18 The Green, Dover, DE 19901
302/739-4263
302/739-3178 (fax)