



DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY NEWS RELEASE

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VETERANS GET HOUSING PRIORITY

Delaware veterans will now receive preference under the Delaware State Housing Authority's (DSHA) Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher rental programs as well as the Single Family Mortgage Revenue Bond homeownership program. Under the new guidelines, veterans and the families of deceased veterans (if the death was service related) living and/or working in Kent and Sussex County will be given first preference for DSHA's subsidized rental housing. In addition, DSHA will also waive the first-time homebuyer requirement for qualified veterans so they may take advantage of the low-interest rate Single Family Mortgage Revenue Bond Program, regardless of whether or not they have previously owned a home.

Studies show that veterans make up a disproportionate share of homeless people. They represent roughly 26 percent of homeless people, but only 11 percent of the civilian population 18 years of age and older. Last month, Fannie Mae released the study *Homelessness in America: Veterans' Perceptions, Attitudes and Knowledge*. The study found that nearly a quarter of veterans have been concerned they may become homeless,

and 86% of veterans think that homelessness among veterans is increasing or staying the same.

Governor Ruth Ann Minner said, "Our veterans have made incredible sacrifices to protect the freedoms we enjoy in this country. I believe our efforts to ensure that they have adequate affordable housing are the least we can do to repay them for what they have done for our state and our nation."

DSHA's Director Sandy Johnson remarked, "According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, almost 200,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. In January 2006, the Homeless Count conducted by the Homeless Planning Council of Delaware reflected over 200 homeless veterans in Delaware. This is absolutely unacceptable." As Chair of the Council which published the 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, Johnson says, "We must be certain that Delaware is doing its utmost part in assisting those who have bravely served our country."

Since 2001, DSHA has issued nearly a billion dollars in Single Family Mortgage Revenue Bonds that have assisted almost 7,400 families move into homeownership for the first time. DSHA also provides affordable rental opportunities in Kent and Sussex Counties. DSHA owns and manages more than 500 units at ten public housing apartment communities and administers over 900 Housing Choice Vouchers. Most residents are eligible to receive a rental subsidy under these programs for a maximum of five years (with some one-year extensions) while they take part in the self-sufficiency Moving to Work Program. The elderly and disabled are exempt from this program.

For more information on DSHA's affordable homeownership and rental housing programs, and the U.S. Veteran's preferences, please contact us toll-free at 888-363-8808, or visit our website at www.DeStateHousing.com.

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