



DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY NEWS RELEASE

DATE FOR RELEASE:
Thursday, April 17, 2008

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

DSHA Launches “Step-Up” Housing Program to Combat Homelessness

Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) is pleased to announce the January, 2008 launch of “Step-Up”, a three-year rental assistance pilot program which will assist emancipated youth exiting the foster care system who are at risk of homelessness and individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse conditions who are chronically homeless or at risk for chronic homelessness.

“The Step-Up Program provides that first promising step toward independence for those in need of a place to call home,” said Governor Minner. “With financial support provided by Delaware Housing Development Fund, the program gives those who are at risk of chronic homelessness a ‘Step-Up’ to safe and secure housing.”

DSHA Director Sandy Johnson said, “For youth exiting foster care – stepping out into the world for the first time with limited skills and education - affordable, stable housing is challenging. These youth and people dealing with disabilities and mental health issues need the security the Step-Up Program will provide.”

Three agencies were awarded grants to administer the program:

- Connections Community Support Program, Inc., will serve 15 individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, specifically targeting persons with mental health and substance abuse conditions. Connections will operate the program statewide.
- Gateway House plans to provide 10 chronically homeless men with supportive housing in a shared environment on Wilmington's Eastside.
- West End Neighborhood House, Inc., will serve 10 emancipated youth exiting the foster care system that are at risk of homelessness, and will operate statewide.

“Step-Up” is funded by a one million dollar grant through DSHA’s Housing Development Fund. The goals of the program are to increase the number of housing units available to individuals who are chronically homeless or at risk for chronic homelessness and improve outcomes for people served by the program. The Delaware Interagency Council on Homelessness identified these needs as part of its 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.

For more information on the Step-Up Program, contact Vicky Powers at (302) 739-4263, Vicky@destatehousing.com. For information on affordable housing, visit www.DeStateHousing.com, or toll-free at (888) 363-8808.

#

kcm:rvm