

March 20, 2020

**TO:** OHFA Partners  
**FROM:** Sean Thomas, Executive Director  
**RE:** Emergency Housing Assistance Response to COVID-19

On March 9, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine declared a state of emergency in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus. On March 18, 2020, the OHFA Board of Directors, per their authority in ORC 175.06, "to provide financial assistance for emergency housing," authorized the use of \$5 million in the Agency's General Fund Reserves to provide funding for homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing and emergency rental assistance.

OHFA took this action per its authority in ORC 175.06 (see excerpt below) to "provide financial assistance for emergency housing:"

175.06 Program duties and powers - bonds and financial assistance.

(A) The Ohio housing finance agency shall do all of the following related to carrying out its programs:

- (1) Upon the governor's designation, serve as the housing credit agency for the state and perform all responsibilities of a housing credit agency pursuant to Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code and similar applicable laws;
- (2) Require that housing that benefits from the agency's assistance be available without discrimination in accordance with Chapter 4112 of the Revised Code and applicable provisions of federal law;
- (3) Demonstrate measurable and objective transparency;
- (4) Efficiently award funding to maximize affordable housing production using cost-effective strategies;
- (5) Encourage national equity investment in low-income housing tax credit projects;
- (6) Utilize resources to provide competitive homebuyer programs to serve low- and moderate-income persons.

(B) The Ohio housing finance agency may do any of the following related to carrying out its programs:

(1) Issue bonds, provide security for assets, make deposits, purchase or make loans, provide economic incentives for the development of housing, and provide financial assistance for emergency housing;

OHFA staff is working internally and with our CoC partners to develop program parameters and anticipates that funds will be distributed based on a formula corresponding to the number of extremely low-income and very low-income residents in CoC service areas. CoCs could begin receiving funds as early as April.

### **Homelessness Prevention and Rapid-Rehousing Funding (HPRR)**

HPRR Grants will be distributed based on a formula corresponding to the number of extremely low-income and very low-income residents in CoC service areas. Funds will be provided directly to the 8 large Continuums of Care and the Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoSCoC) or their designees.

- Eligible uses of funds may include rental assistance payments, security deposits, landlord verification services, etc.
- Eligible individuals to include people and households identified through the CoC's centralized intake process.

### **Emergency Rental Assistance Grants (ERA)**

Emergency rental assistance grants will similarly be distributed based on a formula corresponding to the number of extremely low-income and very low-income residents in CoC service areas. Funds will be provided directly to the 8 large Continuums of Care and the Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoSCoC) or their designees. The rental assistance will be provided to assist low and moderate income renter households on the cusp of homelessness because they are unable to pay their rent due to COVID-19 related job loss or similar circumstance.

- Eligible uses of funds include rental assistance payments, landlord verification services, etc.
- Eligible individuals will include those who, but for this assistance, would become homeless. This includes, but is not limited to, those who experience a decline in income, job loss, weekly wage reduction or other financial challenges stemming from COVID-19 related matters.

Please stay tuned for additional announcements regarding this program. Questions about this program may be directed to 1.888.362.6432 or [Communication@ohiohome.org](mailto:Communication@ohiohome.org).