



PHA Receives Mainstream Housing Vouchers to Fight Homelessness

(Philadelphia, PA – October 03, 2018) — The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) has received 99 Mainstream Housing Choice Vouchers from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The vouchers are specifically for non-elderly persons with disabilities who are transitioning out of institutional or other separated settings, those at serious risk of institutionalization, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

The voucher subsidies worth over \$873,000 enable non-elderly disabled families to lease affordable private housing of their choice. The vouchers are particularly valuable to persons with disabilities who often face difficulties in locating suitable and accessible housing on the private market. Sixteen percent of Philadelphia residents are people with disability and 13 percent of them are mobility impaired.

“We’re thrilled to receive these new vouchers to further the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act by helping persons with disabilities live in the most integrated setting, as well as fighting homelessness,” said PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah. “The program also encourages partnerships with other agencies that enable individuals to live independently in the community, in this case, our partners, Liberty Resources and the Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services.”

“These mainstream housing vouchers will be a vitally important housing resource to assist low-income city residents with disabilities, especially those seeking to relocate from segregated, expensive and unnecessary nursing facilities to accessible, affordable housing units in the diverse communities of our great City,” said Thomas Earle, CEO of Liberty Resources.

“The Office of Homeless Services is pleased to partner with PHA on making these critically important ‘mainstream’ housing choice vouchers available to people with disabilities who would otherwise be in shelters or institutions,” said Elizabeth Hersh, Director of the Office of Homeless Services for the City of Philadelphia. “We always want our neighbors living with disabilities to be part of the community, living safely, affordably and with dignity. This assistance makes that possible.”

The new mainstream vouchers are in addition to an existing pilot program that addresses the same population, but is supported by traditional housing choice voucher subsidies.

In addition to the voucher program, PHA currently has over 1,000 wheelchair accessible units in its housing developments and over 250 adaptable units.

As for the future, PHA is constructing three developments and rehabbing one site with units dedicated to people with disability.

The new Norris Phase III Apartments will have 5 handicapped accessible units or 10 percent of the total being built. Similarly, the Blumberg 83, which will be built on a new neighborhood block being created from the old high-rise site, will have 9 handicapped accessible. The Blumberg Senior Tower, which is being rehabilitated, will have 12 handicapped accessible units, 24 adaptable units, and 2 for people with visual/hearing impairment; that’s a total of 38 dedicated units or over 40 percent of the units. And the Walton School, which will be rehabilitated, will have 4 handicapped accessible units out of 40 planned units.

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