



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Nichole Tillman, 215-888-2869, Nichole.Tillman@pha.phila.gov

PHA Expands Second Chance Voucher Program for Returning Citizens

Philadelphia – March 28, 2022 – The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) is extending and expanding its successful Second Chance Voucher Program, which gives returning citizens a new place to live for up to two years. The program, in cooperation with the Supervision to Aid Reentry (STAR) Court, a District Court/United States Probation Office (USPO)-Eastern District of Pennsylvania initiative, allows the participant to lease rental housing in the private market.

Under the new agreement between PHA and USPO, PHA will allocate an additional 20 Housing Choice Vouchers, bringing the total allotment for this program to 30. PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah said he and the PHA Board of Commissioners made the decision to expand based on the encouraging results to date.

“We began the program with 10 vouchers in 2015, and so far, 20 returning citizens have successfully used the program to find homes and get their lives back on track,” Jeremiah said. “Not a single voucher holder has fallen out of compliance with PHA during their time in the program. I believe those outcomes are a testament to the impact that stable, affordable housing can make on a person’s life. It is a privilege for PHA to assist these individuals in their transition toward self-sufficiency. I want to thank USPO for their partnership on this initiative.”

The program offers an incentive to individuals on supervised release who are participating in the STAR program. After successful completion of STAR, individuals can reduce their supervision period by a year. Participation in the voucher program leads to greater stability and successful reentry. In addition, individuals are required to enroll in a financial literacy program and PHA’s Housing Opportunity Program to help them find and secure a place to live.

USPO, whose mission involved aiding the reentry of individuals on supervision into society, has a pool of prospective participants ready to join the program as well as the staff to manage the increased number of participants. The STAR program provides comprehensive and collaborative oversight by judges and federal prosecutors, probation officers, reentry coordinators, and defense attorneys while offering a variety of social services to program participants.

To qualify for the program, which grew out of the Second Chance for Ex-Offenders Act of 2009, returning citizens must remain in good standing with the STAR program. If after two years, an individual has not made sufficient progress to afford housing on their own, PHA has the discretion, based on circumstances, to help the person move into public housing or into the voucher program.

The agreement runs through November 2025, with options to extend to 2027.

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The Philadelphia Housing Authority is the nation's 4th largest housing authority, serving nearly 80,000 residents. PHA is also a major real estate developer. Learn more at www.pha.phila.gov.