

Press Release



For business and local editors

Westmoreland County launches pilot program for housing rehabilitation

Residents in Derry, Hempfield, Sewickley, South Huntingdon, and Washington Townships eligible

Greensburg, Pennsylvania - The Westmoreland County Commissioners announced today the launch of a pilot program helping Westmoreland County homeowners rehabilitate homes with major code problems. The Westmoreland County Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program is a collaborative effort between the county's Department of Planning and Development and the Westmoreland County Housing Authority Weatherization Program. The rehabilitation program will use funds made available through the 2012 Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) Fund and the Marcellus Shale Impact Fees.

Westmoreland County is just one of 19 counties in the state receiving funds to improve the availability and affordability of housing in the Marcellus Shale region of the state. The program will be first offered to residents in those townships in Westmoreland County most impacted by Marcellus Shale drilling activity including Derry, Hempfield, Sewickley, South Huntingdon and Washington Townships. If there are no applicants from those townships, funding will be extended to other parts of the county.

Westmoreland County received \$125,000 from the PHARE fund and matched it with \$50,000 from the county's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. With the initial funding of \$175,000, the County expects to assist 8-10 income eligible owner occupied homes with projects such as roof replacement, rewiring, replacement of HVAC units and replacement of plumbing fixtures. Assistance is in the form of a no interest deferred loan. The repayment plan is prorated based on income and length of time the home owner continues to reside in the home after the rehabilitation. Qualifying applicants will be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 for rehabilitation efforts.

In addition to taking applications and verifying eligibility, the WCHA Weatherization Program will coordinate inspections of eligible homes, determine the scope of work, and perform the actual rehabilitation work.

Terri Yurcisin, Deputy Director for the Department of Planning and Development says, "The Westmoreland County Housing Authority Weatherization Program has a long track record of pooling resources to rehabilitate single-family homes. While \$20,000 is the maximum amount available for each home from PHARE funding, WCHA has the ability to enhance rehabilitation efforts by leveraging funds that may be available from utility companies and other sources."

Who is eligible?

Eligible applicants must live in one of the five designated townships. Based on interest and available funds, the program may be extended to residents countywide.

The person who applies must be the home owner and live in the home; rental properties are not eligible.

Income eligibility depends on the annual gross income of all people living in the home. A portion of the funding is required to be expended on low income households with an annual gross income below 50% of the County Median Income. All other recipients may have incomes up to 200% of the County Median Income.

Contact Information

For more details about the program, contact the Westmoreland County Housing Authority Weatherization Program at 724.832.9460. Interested residents will need to complete a standard rehabilitation application form, provide income verification and demonstrate the ability to repay loans.

Details about the program and an application form are available online at www.AffordableHomesWestmoreland.com.

#

For more information please contact:

**Westmoreland County Department
of Planning & Development
Contact Person: Terri A. Yurcisin, Deputy Director
Tel: 724-830-3615
Fax: 724-830-3611
www.co.westmoreland.pa.us**