

Congressman Carney Announces Legislation to Expand Affordable Housing Options

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Housing Assistance Reform Act would increase housing options
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projects

DOVER, Del. – This morning, Congressman John Carney (D-DE) visited Liberty Court Apartments in Dover to announce new legislation to improve affordable housing options. The Housing Assistance Reform Act would increase housing options for low-income Americans and help housing authorities raise capital for affordable housing projects. The legislation would expand access to the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Moving to Work program from 39 local housing authorities to 60, and eliminate the current unit cap for the Rental Assistance Demonstration program, allowing any eligible housing authority to participate.

"Everyone deserves a safe, affordable place to call home," said Congressman Carney. "We don't have as many affordable options for low-income Americans as we need, and much of what we have has fallen into disrepair. My proposed legislation

builds on two successful HUD programs that increase access to quality, affordable housing, while helping low-income Americans get the tools they need to rent or buy a home on their own. The Housing Assistance Reform Act will help more Americans pursue better opportunities and improve their quality of life. I am working closely with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get it passed.”



Congressman Carney announcing his *Housing Assistance Reform Act* to affordable housing residents and advocates at Liberty Court Apartments in Dover.

The Moving to Work (MTW) program was created by Congress in 1996 to give local housing authorities the flexibility to create successful programs that meet the needs of low-income families while promoting self-sufficiency and increasing available housing options. Currently, 39 housing authorities nationwide are eligible to participate in the program.

The Delaware State Housing Authority was one of the first agencies to participate in HUD’s Moving to Work pilot program in 1999. Since then, DSHA’s Moving to Work program has helped more than 800 Delaware families increase their financial stability and move from subsidized housing to market rate rentals or homeownership. The program has disbursed more than \$2.4 million back to MTW residents in savings for successfully completing the program. For more information on DSHA’s Moving to Work program, [click here](#).

“Moving to Work has given DSHA the flexibility to efficiently manage our resources while also allowing us to provide our clients a comprehensive set of services that is not limited to just housing assistance, but also includes financial literacy and case management to help them set and reach their goals,” said DSHA Director Anas Ben Addi.

Rhianna Turner, a single mother and MTW graduate, shared her experience with the program. After losing her job, Rhianna entered DSHA's Moving to Work program in 2007. "The Delaware State Housing Authority's assistance allowed me to save money, learn to budget, and improve my credit, all of which helped me move toward my dream of homeownership," said Turner. "Today, I have been in my home for a year and four months, and I am incredibly thankful for the help I received that allowed me to work towards this goal. There are many stresses in my life as a single mother to three children, but where we live is no longer one of them."



(l to r): Rhianna Turner, an MTW graduate, and her DSHA caseworker, Lori Fretz, greet Congressman Carney at today's press conference.

"I'm here to give my unbridled support to this national legislation," added Fred Purnell, Executive Director of the Wilmington Housing Authority. "The critical piece for us is the flexibility that Moving to Work would bring to WHA. It would allow us to take resources that we have going in other directions and concentrate them on people."

The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program gives local housing authorities a powerful tool to begin tackling the backlog of at least \$25 billion in unmet capital needs and deferred maintenance for public housing. Specifically, RAD allows housing authorities to mortgage land and buildings, providing access to much needed private capital to make repairs to the existing housing stock. The mortgaged properties remain subject to the same use restrictions, ensuring that it will remain affordable for low-income families.

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