

\$5.5 million awarded to Strong Neighborhoods projects statewide

Funding also allocated to clean up and maintain vacant or abandoned homes

WILMINGTON – Nine projects statewide will receive \$5.5 million from Delaware’s Strong Neighborhoods Housing Fund to address vacant, abandoned or foreclosed properties, Governor John Carney announced today, joined by Delaware State Housing Authority Director Anas Ben Addi and elected officials and community leaders from across Delaware.

“This funding will directly help families, cities and towns across Delaware become stronger. When we put homes together, they become neighborhoods, safe places enriched by diversity where we collectively share in our cities’ growth and successes,” Governor Carney said. “When families step into houses, they become homes – residences of refuge, centers of companionship, locations of learning, and places of worship. Home is where we celebrate our accomplishments and draw upon strength and support to face our challenges.”

The second round of the Strong Neighborhoods Housing Fund, funded by bank settlement money, will lead to about 100 new or rehabilitated housing units in Wilmington, New Castle County, Dover, Milford and Laurel. The investment of \$5.5 million will leverage an estimated \$15 million in private or other funding sources.

“These projects will be helping families and individuals who need housing, while strengthening the neighborhoods in which they are located, revitalizing properties that have fallen into disrepair and bringing people back to live in them,” said DSHA Director Ben Addi.

The housing projects chosen for funding in this round, listed by jurisdiction, are:

City of Wilmington, lead applicant Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank, \$2.1 million

- Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank, \$645,000 to acquire blighted properties and remove them
- Wilmington Housing Partnership, \$205,000 for four new units and two rehabbed
- Interfaith Community Housing of Delaware, \$550,000 for eight new units and three rehabbed units in Wilmington
- Inter-Neighborhood Foundation, \$200,000 for four rehabbed units in Wilmington
- Habitat for Humanity of New Castle County, \$550,000 for 10 new units and one rehabbed unit

New Castle County, \$1.3 million

- New Castle County Department of Community Services, \$1.3 million for 10 new units and 17 rehabbed ones along the Route 9 corridor

Kent County, \$1.5 million

- NCALL Research, \$1 million for 20 new units in Dover
- Milford Housing Development Corporation, \$500,000 for 10 new units in Milford

Sussex County, \$500,000

- Laurel Redevelopment Corporation, \$500,000 for 10 new units in Laurel

The Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank led a coordinated planning and application process on behalf of multiple Wilmington projects, for a total of \$2.1 million awarded. “These projects will help transform neighborhoods dealing with blight or other forms of stress, including crime, by increasing homeownership,” said Richard Gessner, chair of the Land Bank board. “This is a strong collaboration that will strengthen and support ongoing efforts to improve the quality

of life in Wilmington.”

“Wilmington is grateful to the Governor and State Housing Director for their support of our efforts to strengthen City neighborhoods,” said Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki. “This funding will be deployed strategically and efficiently in targeted areas of the City so as to make maximum its use. We appreciate this support which will help us improve neighborhoods and the lives of our citizens.”

The Milford Housing Development Corporation will use \$500,000 to create 10 new units in the City of Milford’s Downtown Development District area. The effort is aligned with the city’s Rivertown Rebirth 2025 plan, said Milford Mayor Bryan Shupe. “Increasing homeownership will help strengthen our community and support our downtown,” Mayor Shupe said. “Neighborhoods succeed because of the people living and working there, and we are pleased to partner in this effort.”

Applicants requested more than \$8.2 million, but not all projects could be funded, Director Ben Addi said. “The level of interest remains high, showing the strong involvement and commitment that our partners and others have to supporting neighborhoods in need,” he said. “We hope that these successes will allow us to expand this effort in the future to even more communities in the future.”

Also announced was \$475,000 in funding for the Vacant Property Maintenance Fund, which will help local governments clean up vacant and abandoned properties. Wilmington will receive \$175,000 and New Castle County, Kent County and Sussex County will each receive \$100,000.

The first round of funding from the Strong Neighborhoods Housing Fund was allocated in 2015, with \$2.7 million going to build or rehabilitate 68 housing units in Wilmington, Dover and New Castle County. All homes will be sold to families or individuals with incomes at or below 120 percent of the area

median income.

Patricia Benton, who recently purchased a home in New Castle County's Garfield Park neighborhood as part of the the first round of SNHF grants, said she is enjoying her new home. "It's like having a brand new home but in an established community," she said. "I could not be happier. I love my new home!"

Interfaith Community Housing of Delaware, one of the 2015 recipients, is constructing 11 units of affordable live/work housing for artists in the Quaker Hill Historic Neighborhood, located in Wilmington's Creative District. The work is being done by repurposing old vacant, abandoned residential properties in which some have been vacant for nearly 30 years.

Interfaith Executive Director Gary Pollio said that for Interfaith to be truly successful, each project must fit into the community and meet its expectations. "Our projects are not just about the housing," Pollio said. "Our overarching goal is revitalizing the neighborhood, expanding affordable housing opportunities for new residents, and growing community."

About the Delaware State Housing Authority

The Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA), formed in 1968, is dedicated to providing quality, affordable housing opportunities and appropriate supportive services to low- and moderate-income Delawareans. In addition to its role as the State's Housing Finance Agency, DSHA is unique in that it also serves as a Public Housing Authority and acts as a Community Development and Planning Agency. As a Public Housing Authority, DSHA receives funding from HUD to build, own, and operate public housing in Kent and Sussex counties, two of Delaware's three counties. For more information about the Delaware State Housing Authority, please call: (888) 363-8808 or visit our website at www.destatehousing.com.

Media Contact:

Dan Shortridge, Director of Public Relations

[Delaware State Housing Authority](#)

Office: 302-739-0271

Cell: 302-632-0470

dans@destatehousing.com