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Delaware Governor John Carney

Governor Carney Marks Milestone in Housing Delawareans in Need *State Rental Assistance Program has housed 1,200 clients on 5th anniversary of collaboration*

NEW CASTLE, Del. – Governor John Carney celebrated Monday the fifth anniversary of the State Rental Assistance Program, which has provided housing for 1,200 Delawareans through a unique collaboration supporting those in special need of help. The anniversary event took place at the Herman S. Holloway Campus of the Department of Health and Social Services.

“We are providing a bridge to independence, helping more Delawareans live self-sufficient lives,” said **Governor Carney**. “SRAP is a great example of how government agencies can work together to more efficiently deliver important services, and effectively help Delawareans in need. Thank you also to members of the General Assembly for their continued support of the program.”



DSCYF Secretary Manning providing remarks.

The State Rental Assistance Program, or SRAP, provides rental vouchers to low-income Delawareans who require affordable housing and supportive services to live safely and independently in the community. Case managers help provide or coordinate those services and help residents through the rental process. SRAP helps particularly vulnerable populations – people exiting or at risk of admission to state long-term care institutions, youth aging out of foster care, and families for whom housing is a barrier to reunification, among others. All clients must be referred by an agency or partner.

Since 2011, more than 200 SRAP clients have successfully transitioned out of the program, either by handling rental payments on their own or by receiving housing assistance from another source. There are more than 720 families and individuals currently housed through SRAP.

SRAP client Zoraida Baez found the first apartment she has lived in that she can call her own through the program. “It’s such a relief,” said Baez, of Newark, who has also experienced homelessness. “I love it. I can come and go when I want. It’s my own place.”



Governor Carney with SRAP Client Empress Devone. DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker and DSHA Director Anas Ben Addi in background.

SRAP is operated jointly by the Delaware State Housing Authority, which issues the vouchers; the Department of Health and Social Services, which refers clients in various programs; and the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, which refers former foster youth and reunification families. Funding comes from the state’s General Fund through DSHA, as well as through DHSS’ Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, totaling \$5.3 million.

“This is about caring for the whole person – not just looking at one part of their needs at a time,” said **DSHA Director Anas Ben Addi**. “We heard from advocates that the lack of affordable housing is a barrier to many low-income people and families with special needs to live and be successful, and we responded. This partnership shows that it is possible to serve people better, with a better quality of life, while reducing public costs.”

“The State Rental Assistance Program gives vulnerable populations the one thing we all want: The opportunity to have a place to call home,” said **DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker**. “For people leaving facilities or individuals with disabilities, these housing vouchers offer an affordable and safe way for them to live in the community. It’s not always easy to start anew, but the teamwork of SRAP makes the transition manageable, including clients to supportive services. The collaboration across state government provides a better quality of life for the vulnerable people we serve, saves the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars and helps us build a healthier Delaware.”

“For young people leaving our foster care system, the challenges of transitioning to adulthood can be quite daunting. Sometimes their most basic needs, like a safe and affordable home, can seem unobtainable,” said **DSCYF Secretary Josette Manning**. “The SRAP program helps our youth secure a home so they can focus on meeting their other needs, such as education, employment and even basic health services. We are extremely grateful for this program because without it, it would be impossible for our foster children to thrive as adults.”

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L-R: DSHA Director Anas Ben Addi, DSCYF/DFS Independent Living Manager Felicia Kellum, DSCYF/DFS Deputy Director Trenee Parker, DSCYF Secretary Josette Manning, SRAP Client Empress Devone, SRAP Client Zoraida Baez.

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