

HUNTINGTON WEST VIRGINIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

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PRESS RELEASE

January 6, 2005

The Huntington WV Housing Authority, an affordable housing organization serving Cabell County since April 1, 1938, has been awarded a \$400,000 Youthbuild Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

A total of 20 persons (18 – 24 years of age) who are high-school dropouts have been targeted for enrollment in the Housing Authority's Youthbuild Program during the 24-month grant implementation period, which begins no later than April 2005. Applications for enrollment will be accepted beginning in February 2005. Each Youthbuild participant (10 annually) will enroll in a one-year course (½ education and leadership development and ½ on-job training in the construction and building-maintenance field of work). The Youthbuild trainee will be assigned to a single-family home in the Fairfield Community (that is currently vacant) to begin rehab work training. After completion, the unit will be rented to a low-income homeless or disabled person. A total of two rental homes will be completed during the grant period by Youthbuild trainees. Case management follow-up will occur throughout the program.

The Youthbuild Program office and classroom will be located in a "one-stop shop" social service center (Douglass Centre) in the Fairfield Community of Huntington. This program will be sponsored with in-kind partnering assistance and support provided by a number of local organizations that include but are not limited to the City of Huntington, Workforce Investment Act Program, the Empowerment Zone, the Housing Development Corporation, Cabell County Schools, and the Bureau of Employment Programs.

The Housing Authority has been providing on-the-job training and educational assistance to low-income persons since 1993 and is a licensed STEP-UP On-The-Job Training and Apprenticeship facilitator. According to Bill Dotson, Housing Authority Executive Director, "receiving these federal dollars gives us the opportunity to help those eligible individuals (males and females) who want to improve their chances for reaching self-sufficiency. We will help them get their GED, gain construction-related job skills, and further their educational achievements and enhance their leadership abilities. We plan to employ a program coordinator who will serve to ensure that participants are well served and program goals and objectives are met. We are hopeful that some of these trainees will qualify for apprenticeships with local trade unions."

(end)

For more specific program information, call Tim White at (304) 522-0576 or Michele Hargis at (304) 526-4400.