



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 13, 2021

Contact: Mike Nowlin
Cell: 989-450-0855

**Harriet's Hope gets \$1 million federal funding boost to help support
Columbus-area human trafficking survivors' need for affordable housing**

Affordable Housing Program federal award marks major win for Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority and Beacon 360 Management to help development of \$13 million, 52-unit building

Columbus, OH – Harriet's Hope, a \$13 million affordable housing community planned to open on the city's west side, has received a \$1 million federal grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of Cincinnati's [Affordable Housing Program \(AHP\)](#) that represents a major financial boost to help advance the project from its current blueprint phase to eventual groundbreaking, the [Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority \(CMHA\)](#) announced today.

"The AHP program plays a critical role in the production and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing in Ohio and across the U.S. as it is considered an extremely successful and efficient method for leveraging private capital to build affordable housing," said **CMHA President and CEO Charles Hillman**.

"We are delighted to have earned this highly competitive award from FHLB of Cincinnati as the grant will move us closer to beginning construction on the vitally important Harriet Hope's project," said Hillman.

"There is an urgent need for diverse solutions that collaboratively address the human trafficking epidemic in central Ohio," he added. "We envision Harriet's Hope as a vessel to bring hope, restoration, rehabilitation and freedom for some of our community's most vulnerable residents."

The Harriet's Hope grant is among a total of \$25 million that will go to 31 AHP awardees nationally as part of the [latest round of Affordable Housing Program awards](#) that will help produce 1,999 units of affordable housing for very low- to moderate-income residents.

The Harriet's Hope initiative is a partnership between CMHA and [Beacon 360 Management](#), and it will receive funding from the [Ohio Housing Finance Authority \(OHFA\)](#), [Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing \(OCCH\)](#), the City of Columbus, Park National Bank and the Affordable Housing Trust of Columbus and Franklin County.

The brainchild of **Beacon 360 Management CEO Celia Kendall**, Harriet's Hope represents a first-of-its-kind development for the Columbus community that will serve survivors of human trafficking. Kendall conceived of the name as an homage to Harriet Tubman, the slave-turned-abolitionist who rescued dozens of slaves from bondage.

Human trafficking has devastated central Ohio with over 9,000 statewide contacts to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in the past 12 years and 1,214 victims and survivors reported in 2019, Kendall said.

National data shows someone is trafficked every 30 seconds and over 80% of them are girls and women used in the sex trade. As a result of human trafficking, over \$150 billion is generated annually worldwide, including over \$50 billion in the United States.

Ohio ranks fourth in the U.S. for human trafficking and second for opiate overdose deaths, mostly due to the major highways that link the Buckeye State to Canada, New York City, Michigan and other places.

The \$1 million AHP award for Harriet's Hope was approved by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati, a regional wholesale bank providing financial services for residential housing and economic development to 628 member-stockholders in the FHLB System's Fifth District of Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee. Created by Congress in 1932, the Federal Home Loan Bank System is a national network of 11 Federal Home Loan Banks and more than 6,700-member financial institutions.

FHLB Cincinnati allocates 10% of its net income annually to the AHP, which makes housing more affordable for people at or below 80% of the area median income. Subsidies are awarded to members through an annual AHP competitive offering.

Tentatively scheduled for groundbreaking in 2022, Harriet's Hope will contain a blend of one- and two-bedroom apartments, a multipurpose space, private meeting rooms, computer access, laundry access and recreational/green space. Through a number of partnerships with local service providers, Harriet's Hope will provide a rich array of programming to support each resident through the recovery journey.

Trafficking survivors require a wide range of services, with a lack of affordable housing being named as the top priority, CMHA officials note. Studies show that housing is the main impediment for human trafficking survivors to escape a life of being trafficked. Nationally, there is a shortage of permanent supportive housing exclusive to trafficking victims.

CMHA and its partners are seeking to address the multifaceted problems that human trafficking survivors face in Columbus through Harriet's Hope.

"Harriet's Hope will create housing that promotes healing, instills confidence and inspires independence," said **Scott Scharlach, CMHA chief operating officer**. "As a housing provider, we see Harriet's Hope as a community response to the lack of coordinated housing and social services for this underserved population."

Officials say the Harriet's Hope team is committed to incorporating survivor voices in the building design and supportive services that will be provided on-site. Survivors have met with the project's architects and engineers on at least three occasions so far to discuss the building's layout.

According to Scharlach, the most important concerns for the survivors include building security (internal and external), space for private and semi-private meetings, community space for all residents to hold programming, computer access and recreational space. The potential future residents' recommendations are shaping the property's design and they will continue to be consulted throughout the entire process, Scharlach added.

###

About CMHA: CMHA helps people access affordable housing through collaborative partnerships, promotes neighborhood revitalization and assists residents in accessing needed social services. CMHA has more than doubled its portfolio of housing over that last five years, including over \$200 million in investment in 2020. It owns over 4,500 units of affordable housing and through its Housing Choice

Voucher and Project Based Rental Assistance Programs provides rental assistance to more than 250,000 Ohio and Washington, D.C., residents. Half of the authority's apartments are set aside as workforce housing for families earning 80% of the area median income.