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NEWS

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Governor Quinn Announces Public-Private Initiative to Grow Independent Housing for Persons with Disabilities

State Investment Spurs Private Investment in Innovative Housing Program, Returns Vacant Properties to Productive Use

CHICAGO – December 16, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today announced the commitment of \$15 million in *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital program funds to launch a housing program to help people with disabilities live independently. Joined by partners and advocates, Governor Quinn laid out plans for the first phase of the new public-private Home First Illinois initiative. In this first phase, accessibility features will be added to 18 condominium units in Chicago, creating new independent living opportunities for Illinoisans with disabilities and returning vacant housing to productive use.

“By increasing accessible and affordable housing opportunities for our state’s residents with disabilities, we are helping to increase their independence and improve their quality of life,” Governor Quinn said. “Through this program and other initiatives, we are expanding choices for those who want to live in the community. This program also will help Illinois’ economy by turning vacant housing into attractive, accessible units.”

Under Governor Quinn, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) provided financing to nonprofit lender IFF to develop the program. The state’s commitment leveraged an additional \$4 million investment from Chase bank, and an additional \$125,000 in operational support from The Chicago Community Trust.

Over the next three years, the Home First Illinois initiative will develop nearly 100 accessible and affordable homes, creating permanent affordable housing opportunities for an estimated 145 people with disabilities. Accessibility features can include wider doorways, bathroom handles or a flashing light system to notify residents when someone is visiting.

In the first phase, 18 units will be rehabilitated and are anticipated to be ready for occupancy in the Chicago area in six months. IFF, which will manage the units, will use the capital program funding to target currently vacant units in elevator buildings to enhance accessibility. After renovations are complete, not-for-profit Access Living will provide referrals and help individuals with physical disabilities move from institutions into the newly-accessible community settings.

“This collaboration of nonprofit, public, private and philanthropic partners takes an innovative ‘strength-in-numbers’ approach to eliminate housing barriers for Illinois residents who have disabilities,” IHDA Executive Director Mary Kenney said.

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"This is private/public partnership at its best," said Marca Bristo, President and CEO of Access Living. "The purchase of distressed properties will help communities grow stronger, and people with disabilities in institutions will find a place to live in the community."

Governor Quinn included \$130 million in the *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital program for affordable and supportive housing, demonstrating his administration's commitment to creating additional opportunities for people with disabilities to live independently. The first phase of the Home First Illinois initiative will create 21 construction jobs. Chase pledged an additional \$4 million toward the initiative in support of future phases of development and the creation more jobs.

"This project is helping expand opportunities for people with disabilities to be part of our communities," IFF CEO Joe Neri said. "The initial public funding under the state of Illinois' capital program helped leverage additional support from critical partners, such as Chase, to expand the reach of this initiative."

"JPMorgan Chase's commitment to strengthening our communities by increasing access to capital is reflected in this important housing initiative and is a great example of the best type of partnership. Providing appropriate and affordable housing and creating jobs has multiple benefits within our communities both socially and economically," said Glenn Tilton, JPMorgan Chase Chairman of the Midwest.

About IHDA

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (www.ihda.org) is an independent, self-supporting bonding authority that finances the creation and preservation of affordable housing throughout Illinois. Since 1967, IHDA has allocated more than \$10.6 billion to finance more than 215,000 affordable housing units for the residents of Illinois.

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