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# News Release

## State awards over \$1 million to help homeless single mothers, victims of domestic violence and former substance abusers find safe and secure homes in Chicago

*Illinois Housing Development Authority provides families with stability at  
supportive housing building named after Civil War heroine Harriet Tubman*

**CHICAGO** – Continuing Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich’s commitment to affordable housing, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) announced today that 28 homeless single mothers, victims of domestic violence, recovered substance abusers and displaced public housing residents in Chicago will have the chance to rebuild their lives in a safe and affordable home.

IHDA’s Board of Directors recently approved a \$1.1 million interest-free loan to the not-for-profit group Brand New Beginnings to purchase and rehabilitate a building on the south side of Chicago to create affordable rental units for low-income families in need. Residents will also be provided on-site supportive services, such as family counseling and job development, to help them become self-sufficient.

“Governor Blagojevich and IHDA are proud to be able to work with Brand New Beginnings and other community groups to help families in need get back on their feet, in this case the homeless,” said Kelly King Dibble, executive director of IHDA. “Funding for this project comes from the Governor’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund which enables IHDA to finance the creation and preservation of more than 4,000 affordable housing units a year with approximately \$45 million.”

The three-story building is located at 5751 South Michigan Avenue in Chicago’s Washington Park community. It will be named the Harriet Tubman Apartments, after the 19<sup>th</sup> century African-American civil rights and women’s rights activist. The project creates 28 two, three and four bedroom apartments measuring between 820 to 1,300 square feet. Half of the units will be filled under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program Shelter Plus Care and will target homeless single mothers, many of whom are victims of domestic violence, former chronic substance abusers or ex-offenders. The remaining 14 units will be reserved for project-based Section 8 tenants who have been displaced after their dilapidated homes were demolished.

The faith-based, not-for-profit organization will help manage on-site support services that include individual, family and child counseling, case management, job development, parenting classes, motivation workshops, substance abuse recovery and spiritual counseling provided by the Department of Human Services and Brand New Beginnings.

“Our ultimate goal is to help homeless families in need regain self-sufficiency, get off welfare and overcome their issues to become stable, financially independent, community-minded residents through self-determination,” said Della Mitchell, president of Brand New Beginnings. “We are extremely grateful to IHDA for their help in financing this project. Supportive housing is a critical means to ending homelessness.”

Gwendolyn Howard, a 41-year-old mother of six, says she owes her future to the Sojourner Truth Building, a similar project funded by IHDA and purchased by Brand New Beginnings in 2001. After more than 12 years of heroin and cocaine addiction, Howard kicked the habit and moved into the supportive housing building in 2004. “If it had not been for the Sojourner Truth project, a person like me three years ago would still be hopeless, helpless and homeless now,” said Howard. “The support I get from living at the Sojourner Truth Building helps me stay strong and focused and it’s getting easier. I have been given the chance to start afresh, to become a responsible, independent member of my community and I embrace it with open arms. I have been blessed.”

Today Howard lives in the 3-bedroomed apartment in the Sojourner Truth Building on East 58<sup>th</sup> Street with three of her children, Tamika, 21, Robert, 16, Dashaun, 14, and 17-month-old grandson Quvione. She continues to work with the building’s social worker and spiritual counselor, despite having been free of alcohol and drugs for over three and a half years. Howard also works at a reputable hotel in downtown Chicago as a laundry coordinator – her first ever permanent job – winning the Employee of the Quarter and Year last year, and hopes to complete her GED program at Dawson Technical Institute next year.

Meanwhile, unemployed residents at the new Harriet Tubman Apartments will receive a 100 percent subsidy for their rent from the city’s Department of Housing and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Working families will be required to contribute no more than 30 percent of their income to rent. The authorities will subsidize the remaining amount.

Residents will be selected from the Brand New Beginnings and the Chicago Housing Authority’s waiting lists and are scheduled to move into the Harriet Tubman Apartments in April 2007. For more information on how to join the waiting list, please contact Brand New Beginnings at 773-955-5780.

Approximately \$2.5 million of rehabilitation work needs to be conducted on the building which includes a complete reconstruction of the basement, exterior concrete walls, replacement of all windows and doors, roof repair and updates to the plumbing and electrical systems throughout the building. The property was previously an affordable housing building before it was closed in June 2005 due to bad management.

The Governor’s 2005 *Building for Success: Illinois Comprehensive Housing Plan* allowed for spending earmarked for affordable housing at several state agencies to be strategically targeted to the following priority populations: very low income families; low income seniors; low income people with disabilities; homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless; low and moderate income families and people unable to find affordable housing near jobs or transportation; and low income families and people living in existing affordable housing in danger of becoming unaffordable. The

Harriet Tubman Apartments will address the needs of two of the priority populations and will help preserve affordable housing in the Chicago area.

The 2005 Housing Plan was developed by the Governor's Housing Task Force. The 35 members of the Task Force include advocates, developers, lenders, and state agency representatives, including eight Illinois state agency directors. Under the Governor's direction, the Task Force recently developed "*On the Road to Success: Illinois Comprehensive Housing Plan 2006*" which continues to build on the coordinated success of the 2005 Comprehensive Housing Plan.

Gov. Blagojevich recently signed the Comprehensive Housing Planning Bill to ensure that the housing needs of the priority populations remain a priority in Illinois for many years to come.

Since 2003, the state has helped approximately 2,650 individuals and families with special needs across Illinois buy their first homes, find safe and decent rental homes or conduct home rehabilitation with more than \$106.5 million in financing. The populations assisted include people who are physically handicapped and disabled, mentally ill, developmentally disabled, homeless and former substance abusers. Of these, more than 1,600 homeless families and individuals have been helped with nearly \$57 million in financing.

#### About the Illinois Housing Development Authority

IHDA ([www.ihda.org](http://www.ihda.org)) is a self-supporting state agency that finances the creation and the preservation of affordable housing across Illinois. Since its creation by an act of the Illinois legislature in 1967, IHDA has allocated more than \$7.27 billion and financed more than 174,000 units of affordable housing across the state. IHDA accomplishes its mission through a number of federal and state funding sources, including the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credits Fund, the allocation of federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits, HOME Investment Partnership funds and others. IHDA is also a bonding authority, and independently sells bonds, based on its own good credit, to finance affordable housing across the state.