



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

# NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

October 11, 2006

**CONTACTS:**

Abby Ottenhoff 312/814.3158

Rebecca Rausch 217/782.7355

Gerardo Cardenas 312/814.3158

Man Yee Lee (IHDA) 312/836.5234

## **Governor Blagojevich announces program to help seniors and the disabled remain independent and in their own homes**

*Illinois Housing Development Authority allocates \$1 million to eight municipalities, counties and non-profit groups statewide to administer program*

*City of Springfield and Macon County Health Department receive \$250,000 to help families in Springfield and Macon County*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today launched the Home Modification Program, to help hundreds of low-income seniors and disabled individuals across Illinois afford basic home improvements, and continue living independently in their own homes. The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) has allocated \$1,070,000 to eight administering groups around the state that include the City of Springfield and Macon County Health Department. The city received \$150,000 to help 15 families in Springfield, and the county received \$100,000 to help 24 families in Macon.

“Nobody should have to leave their home because they can’t afford to install a ramp, or bathroom handrails, or fix a leaking roof. We should help seniors and disabled individuals remain independent, live in their own homes, and avoid having to move to nursing homes or other institutions. This program will help them stay in their homes, and remain active members in their communities,” said Gov. Blagojevich.

“While Illinois already has a number of programs to help keep low-income seniors and people with disabilities from institutionalization -- such as the Community Care Program offered by the Department of Aging, and the Department of Human Service’s Home Services Program -- these do not specifically address home modification needs. With the Governor’s leadership, IHDA is able to allocate \$1 million from the State’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund to better serve the needs of this community and help these families stay in their homes,” said Kelly King Dibble, executive director of IHDA.

The City of Springfield estimates it will be able to help 15 families -- eight seniors and seven disabled individuals -- with the \$150,000 awarded by IHDA, while the Macon County Health Department predicts it will assist 16 seniors and eight disabled residents with its \$100,000 grant. Each eligible household will receive a maximum \$15,000 five-year forgivable loan to spend on modifications that address accessibility or health and safety concerns. The funds are expected to be available in early 2007.

To qualify for the program, households must have at least one disabled family member or a senior over the age of 60. Household incomes must not exceed 50% of the area median income based on household size. For a family of four living in Sangamon County, this limit is \$32,450, while the same size family in Macon County can not earn more than \$28,250. There must also be a documented need for home modifications. Eligible households have to be referred to either the City of Springfield or the Macon County Health Department from agencies funded by the Department of Aging or Department of Human Services and will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.

“There is a very real need for accessibility-related rehabilitation work to homes in the City of Springfield,” said Mayor Timothy J. Davlin. “We are excited to have been chosen as one of the groups to administer the Home Modification Program. Having over 30 years experience in helping families rehabilitate their homes we feel this funding source will help cut the costs of home repairs for many seniors and residents with disabilities.”

“Last year, the Coalition for Productive Senior Living, which consists of around 12 senior community agencies, conducted a needs survey in the area and discovered that home modification was one of the top three needs for the elderly,” explained Amy Reeser, director of Starting Point, the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Macon County. “Macon County also has a comparatively high senior population and we successfully administered \$100,000 worth of home modifications and technical assistance for the Department of Aging in 2002 so we are no strangers to the business.”

Families in the Springfield area who believe they may qualify for the awards should contact the City of Springfield’s Office of Planning and Economic Development – Housing Division at **(217) 789-2377** for more details. Families in Macon County should contact Amy Reeser from Macon County Health Department at **(217) 423-6550**.

The Home Modification Program supports Governor Blagojevich’s *2005 Illinois’ Comprehensive Housing Plan: Building for Success* aimed to increase affordable housing options for six priority populations that include low income seniors and low income disabled individuals. Under the leadership of Governor Blagojevich, Illinois is now one of the most progressive states in the nation in regards to affordable housing, with a record of accomplishment that includes:

- Created the first statewide Affordable Housing Task Force. Brought together 230 active members of Illinois’ affordable housing community, including state and local agencies, private and non-profit developers, service providers, activists, community leaders and elected officials to help develop a comprehensive housing plan for Illinois and develop a better and coordinated approach to financing and developing affordable housing.

- Published *Building for Success* and *On the Road to Success, Illinois' Comprehensive Housing Plans*, which outline targets, goals and strategies to coordinate and implement a comprehensive housing plan in Illinois.
- Extended the Affordable Housing Tax Credit for an additional five years to continue to provide an important state resource for financing affordable housing. This program annually awards approximately \$20 million in tax credits to leverage \$40 million in direct donations. In three years it has leveraged more than \$600 million in additional financing.
- Signed the Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act into law to require municipalities with less than 10% affordable housing to create, pass and implement an affordable housing plan to aid the development of more affordable housing.
- Signed the Federally Subsidized Housing Preservation Act into law to require owners of federally subsidized affordable housing to notify their tenants of any intent to sell the property with sufficient notice so that tenants can organize and purchase the property to maintain its affordability components.
- Signed the Rental Housing Support Program Act in law to create the nation's largest state supported rental assistance program. It is expected to generate \$25 million annually and help as many as 4,000 families.
- Created the new I-LOAN Mortgage and I-LOAN certificate program that increased homeownership production 85% since 2003, from \$125 million to \$224 million in 2005 that now helps more than 2,000 families each year afford to buy their first home.
- Greatly expanded the state's Employer Assisted Housing programs to leverage private sector dollars to aid in moderate-income homeownership programs.
- Renewed the Supportive Living Facility program that allows Medicaid waivers to be used for seniors who do not need acute nursing care to avoid nursing homes and live with less costly supportive services, such as cooked meals, medication reminders and help with dressing and daily chores.
- Increased funding for services in supportive housing projects every year to \$13.84 million in FY07 to provide a home and support to almost 2,000 additional mentally ill or formerly homeless individuals and families.

###