

First Name Last Name Email [HOME](#)[OUR PROJECT](#)[HOUSING TRUST
FUNDS](#)[HTF ELEMENTS](#)[CAMPAIGNS](#)[NEWSLETTER](#)[PUBLICATIONS AND
RESOURCES](#)[CONTACT](#)[HOME](#)[CATEGORY](#)[ISSUE](#)[STATE](#)[SHARE THIS NEWS](#)

Victory in Pennsylvania: Legislature Dedicates Funds to Expand PHARE Statewide

by Michael Anderson // 2016, Winter



The Pennsylvania General Assembly's recent expansion of the state housing trust fund, PHARE (Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Act), was due in no small part to the advocacy of the [Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania](#) members. [House Bill 792](#) (now Act 58 of 2015) that expands PHARE passed the Pennsylvania legislature by an overwhelming bi-partisan vote of 242 to 1 and was signed by Governor Wolf on November 5th, 2015. This expansion will bring up to \$25 million more a year to PHARE and importantly now PHARE will be accessible to the entire state.

The campaign to secure dedicated revenue for PHARE was led by the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, a non-partisan, statewide public interest advocacy organization working to help increase the supply of safe, affordable and accessible homes available to all Keystone State residents – especially low-income, elderly and disabled individuals. *"We are thrilled that members of opposing parties, who represent very different constituencies, reached across the aisle to recognize the importance and value of this investment,"* said Liz Hersh, Executive Director of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. *"This bill is a win for everyone – Democrats and Republicans in all parts of the state. We can help those in need and have a major economic impact."*

The expansion of revenue to PHARE didn't happen just out of the good will of the State Legislature, but also as a result of the dogged pursuit of a state housing trust fund by the Housing Alliance. This recent victory builds on previous campaigns starting in [2010 with their first victory that established PHARE](#) followed in 2012 [by the first funding for PHARE](#), which came from Act 13, the Marcellus Shale Impact Fee. Act 13 was an overhaul of the state's gas-drilling regulations, including a new fee on drilling companies, a portion of which was dedicated to meeting local affordable housing needs in drilling-impacted counties.

The newly expanded version of PHARE will now receive dedicated revenue from a portion of future growth in the Realty Transfer Tax (RTT) revenues. The new revenue will have a \$25 million yearly cap

on RTT funds directed to PHARE. In addition to helping communities address their local affordable housing needs, dedicated investment of the RTT to PHARE has the power to spur nearly \$60 million in economic impact each year – adding up to 500 jobs and an additional \$2.9 million in state tax revenues – while also increasing the supply of rental, homeownership and homeless housing assistance for Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable citizens.

The Alliance and their members used a variety of strategies to win PHARE’s expansion. The Alliance engaged their members through call-in days, in-district visits throughout the state, lobby days, media, webinars, forums and email action alerts. They used a new technique of “patch-through” calls in which a service identified voters in specified districts, called them using the Alliance script about the trust fund and then offered to “patch through” the voter to their representative to leave a message.

Staff and a broad-based coalition of 175 endorsing organizations worked inside the capital while members worked in the districts. The Alliance published studies and white papers on the trust fund’s impact and potential. The most notable, [Real People, Real Results](#) showed the success of the program to legislators. The Alliance developed [a dynamic web presence](#) with multiple fact sheets and [resources](#) based on the input of coalition members to provide information about affordable housing for decision-makers, the media and general public.

Identifying and working with legislative champions inside the General Assembly played a critical role in the victory. State Representative sponsor was Tom Killion (R, Delaware) who had the respect of his peers and leadership, and worked tirelessly to move the legislation forward. In the Senate, the sponsors were Elder Vogel (R, Beaver) and Shirley Kitchen (D, Philadelphia). Vogel, a western Pennsylvania rural Republican, and Kitchen, a big-city Democrat, joined forces to create a “strange-bedfellows” leadership team that helped win support. The victory came in the midst of the longest, most acrimonious, partisan budget stalemate in the state’s history. The tireless work to keep the PHARE in front of the Legislature paid off.

Congratulations to the Pennsylvania advocates for their hard work, especially the staff at the Housing Alliance. For more information on PHARE and the campaign please contact Liz Hersh or Joyce Sacco at 215-576-7044 or [check them out here](#).



PREVIOUS

Los Angeles County Makes Historic Commitment to Affordable Homes

NEXT

National Housing Trust Fund Implementation Update



MORE FROM CURRENT ISSUE



Victory in Pennsylvania: Legislature Dedicates Funds to Expand PHARE Statewide



Los Angeles County Makes Historic Commitment to Affordable Homes



Kalamazoo County Passes Housing Millage to Assist Homeless Students



Red Wing, Minnesota Creates Affordable Housing Trust Fund



Seattle Adopts Commercial Linkage Fee to Fund Affordable Homes



Burlington, Vermont Approves Housing Plan and Builds Trust Fund



Portland Dedicates Short Term Rental Lodging Tax to Housing Investment Fund



Alameda County Makes Commitment of Funds to Affordable Housing Trust Fund

National Housing Trust Fund: Fannie,



Freddie to Transfer Funds in March

Copyright © 2011-2023 Housing Trust Fund Project. All rights reserved.