



Cumberland County Board of Commissioners

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cumberland County Introduces ECHO: Independent Senior Living Closer to Loved Ones

Carlisle, PA – Cumberland County residents who have a parent or friend in need of care but can live independently, may be eligible for a place to live near their loved ones, through the Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO).

One ECHO cottage is available for an eligible senior through the Cumberland County Office of Aging and Community Services, in collaboration with its housing partner, New Visions of South-Central PA, Inc., the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and a PHARE grant through PA Housing Finance Agency.

“Elder cottages are separate, transportable residences for older adults that are temporarily placed on the property of a family member or close friend, maintaining independence for the older adult,” said Ann Wagner, Cumberland County Community Services Manager. “We are able to provide an independent senior with this opportunity, and also determine eligibility for Aging programs and referrals for services for the senior to age in place.”

The cottage is approximately 600 sq. ft with 1 bedroom, kitchen, bath, living room and a small deck. Appliances include a washer and dryer, stove, over-range microwave and refrigerator, with the utilities hooked up to the host home. The ECHO unit will be placed and then removed once it is no longer needed at no cost to the tenant or host family.

ECHO cottages provide safety and autonomy for older adults along with easy access to family members who can help. Instead of having to travel to pick up a loved one for appointments or shopping, they are only steps away.

Cumberland County Aging & Community Services reaches out to a variety of public and private agencies, and individuals in the county to identify older adults and host families interested in participating in the ECHO program. They will be responsible for screening all

prospective participants to ensure that they meet the age, income, and other program eligibility requirements.

Eligibility for older adults:

- Host property located in Cumberland County
- Must be 60 years of age or older
- Income at, or below, 80% area median income (\$51,350 annually)
- Must be able to live independently, with or without supportive services. Assessment will be completed by the Cumberland County Office of Aging & Community Services.
- Must pay affordable rent, no more than 30% of income. A Background check and leasing will be handled through our non-profit partner New Visions.

The landowner/host family will be responsible for maintaining the property, allowing the utilities for the cottage to be hooked up to the main house, and permitting New Visions to inspect the cottage on a biannual basis. These responsibilities will be secured through a Letter of Agreement between New Visions and the landowner/host family.

For an application, and ECHO cottage details, visit www.cumberlandcountypa.gov/ECHO. Hand-deliver or mail applications to the Cumberland County Office of Aging & Community Services, 1100 Claremont Road Carlisle, PA 17015, or email to aging@cumberlandcountypa.gov. For additional information, please call Aging and Community Services at 717.240.6110.

