

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Virginia Housing Announces Affordable Housing Heroes and Housing Finance Heroes

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*Prestigious awards honor 18 real estate professionals and 28 loan officers
who helped the most Virginians attain homeownership*

RICHMOND, Va. – March 11, 2025 – Virginia Housing today announced its 18 “Affordable Housing Heroes” and 28 “Affordable Housing Finance Heroes” to recognize leaders making a difference in housing access.

Virginia Housing expanded its recognition program to honor real estate agents and the loan officers who assisted the most Virginia households attain homeownership through Virginia Housing programs between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024. The agency celebrated these housing heroes at a luncheon in Richmond.

“We remain committed to increasing access to affordable housing and to celebrating those who make it possible,” said **Tammy Neale, CEO of Virginia Housing**. “In fiscal year 2024, we provided 4,057 home loans for a total of \$1.1 billion. Our lenders and real estate partners reflect the dedication, energy and passion that it takes to assist both first-time and repeat homebuyers in their search for housing affordability. Partnerships like these are critical to making the dream of homeownership a reality for so many Virginians.”

Affordable Housing Finance Heroes

The **Affordable Housing Finance Hero** awards (formerly known as Top Producing Loan Officers) recognize loan originators who closed at least 20 Virginia Housing transactions during its last fiscal year. Virginia Housing honored the 28 loan officers from communities across the Commonwealth at the luncheon, with **Mary White of TowneBank Mortgage** in the Central Virginia region winning the top award. White helped 54 families attain their dream of home ownership.

“I have been proud to be part of a long journey with Virginia Housing and to be a partner with them over the years,” said White, who has been recognized as a Finance Hero for 18 consecutive years. I am honored to be named the top loan originator of 2024.”

Collectively, these 28 loan officers closed 816 mortgages, helping individuals and families to secure safe and affordable housing in communities across the Commonwealth.

Affordable Housing Heroes

The **Affordable Housing Hero** awards recognize buyer-side real estate agents who were involved in the highest number of closed Virginia Housing transactions during fiscal 2024. To make the minimum bronze level of the awards program, a buyer agent had to be involved in no less than six transactions

utilizing Virginia Housing's loan programs. Of the 18 honorees, Virginia Housing named **Linda Smith of EZ-Vest Realty Inc.** in Hampton Roads the top honoree, with 11 closed transactions.

"I love to work with first-time homebuyers," said Smith, who also frequently hosts first-time homebuyer seminars throughout the Hampton Roads region. "Helping buyers find quality, affordable housing aligns with the mission of Virginia Housing, and I am proud to receive this distinction."

Since Virginia Housing's establishment in 1972 by the Commonwealth as a self-supporting, not-for-profit organization, it has provided more than 250,000 home loans through a variety of innovative programs.

About Virginia Housing

By investing in the power of home, Virginia Housing transforms where and how thousands of Virginians live and thrive, strengthening communities and the economy. Virginia Housing has worked for over 50 years in partnership with the public and private sectors to help Virginians attain quality, affordable housing. While receiving no state taxpayer dollars, Virginia Housing raises money in capital markets to provide mortgages to first-time homebuyers, financing for rental developments and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Virginia Housing invests in innovations in affordable housing and makes homes for people with disabilities and older Virginians more livable. Learn more at VirginiaHousing.com and review the most recent annual report.

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