



**For Immediate Release**

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## PRESS RELEASE

# Housing Authority of Baltimore City & Coppin State University Launch Maryland's First Housing Program for Low-Income Students

The Student Housing Initiative opens door for eligible students to receive tenant-based housing vouchers

**BALTIMORE** — The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) and Coppin State University (CSU) today launched the Student Housing Initiative, a first-of-its-kind program in Maryland to provide low-income college students with vouchers to live in tenant-based housing.

The Student Housing Initiative will provide 10 time-limited vouchers to students who will be identified by CSU and must meet eligibility requirements, including:

- graduate from a Baltimore City high school,
- qualify as an independent student using HUD's independent student criteria,
- matriculate in a four- or five-year college program located within HABC's jurisdiction,
- full-time student enrollment, and
- maintain a at least a 2.5 GPA

The initiative will be an investment by HABC valued at about \$600,000 over four years.

"We know housing can be a major barrier preventing low-income students from earning a college degree," said Janet Abrahams, HABC's President and CEO. "Our partnership with Coppin State University has created a unique initiative to break down this barrier and provide students with resources that they might not otherwise realize."

Abrahams continued, "We need to be creative and thoughtful about how we tackle the affordable housing crisis in Baltimore and across the country. This is one of many resources and programs we have in place, helping to tackle a national crisis."

Participating students will pay the highest of 10 percent of gross monthly income, 30 percent of adjusted monthly income or a \$25 minimum rent and will have recertifications completed on a biennial basis during their participation in the program. The voucher will be provided for up to five years for eligible, matriculated, full-time students in an accredited five-year college program. Students enrolled in four-year community colleges within HABC's jurisdiction are also eligible under this program.

Participants must continue to remain enrolled full-time and maintain the required GPA to be eligible for subsidy renewal each year. Each student will be required to utilize academic support services and counseling services available at the college, which HABC will make available as part of the initiative.

“We are pleased to partner with HABC to initiate this important housing program,” said Coppin State University President Anthony L. Jenkins. “As a leader in urban higher education, we pride ourselves on being an institution that is in tune with our students’ needs and we are committed to providing holistic support mechanisms to address these needs and ensure their success. This program affords us yet another opportunity to address a student challenge — housing insecurity.”

The subsidy will be limited to housing assistance, in the form of rent in privately owned housing and will be paid directly to the housing provider. The subsidy may also cover security deposit assistance up to one month’s subsidy. HABC will conduct the HQS inspections and conduct reasonable rent determinations prior to unit approval.

In addition, HABC will provide utility allowances to students where the cost of utilities is not included in the rent.

“We look forward to a thriving initiative, the success of the participating students, and our ongoing partnership with CSU,” said Abrahams.

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#### **About HABC**

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) was established in 1937 to provide federally funded public housing programs and related services for Baltimore’s low-income residents. HABC is the fifth largest public housing authority in the U.S., providing quality affordable housing for more than 23,000 households. The agency creates diverse and vibrant communities, provides opportunities for self-sufficiency, and builds pathways for strong partnerships.