

Lycoming County 2023/2024 PHARE Grant Program



2023 Application Packet

**Applications Due:
October 19, 2023**

2023/2024 PHARE Grant Program

Application Information and Instructions

Application Point of Contact

Please contact Jenny Picciano, Community Development/Lead Planner, Lycoming County Department of Planning and Community Development at 570-320-2136 or jpicciano@lyco.org for application questions and additional information. Applications materials are also available at: www.lyco.org/grants.

Application Submissions

Submit completed application forms to:

Jenny Picciano, Community Development/Lead Planner
Lycoming County Department of Planning and Community Development
Mail: 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA 17701
In-person: 330 Pine Street, 3rd Floor, Williamsport, PA 17701
Email: jpicciano@lyco.org

Program Overview and Background

Lycoming County is soliciting projects to include its 2023/2024 application to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Authority (PHFA) for Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement funds (PHARE).

The PHARE program was established by **Act 105 of 2010** (the "PHARE Act") to provide the mechanism by which certain allocated state or federal funds, as well as funds from other outside sources, would be used to assist with the creation, rehabilitation and support of affordable housing throughout the Commonwealth.

Since 2012, the PHARE program has gained funds through Marcellus Shale Impact Fees imposed on natural gas companies by the Commonwealth. This Marcellus Shale (Act 13) Fund provides an annual allocation of \$5 million into the PHARE program with the potential for additional revenues when funds remain following eligible disbursements to qualifying municipalities. The Marcellus Shale Impact Fee provides the funding mechanism to address the housing needs in impacted counties/communities of the Marcellus Shale region. These funds are made available through a competitive application process to counties experiencing natural gas well drilling. Since 2012, Lycoming County has secured \$12.6 million in PHARE funds through this process.

The PHARE/Marcellus Shale Impact Fee Program, administered by PHFA, has several goals, including:

- 1) Increase the availability of affordable housing opportunities, including:
 - Rehabilitation/re-use of abandoned, at-risk housing
 - Owner-occupied rehabilitation and homebuyer/rental assistance
 - Homeless prevention/rapid re-housing for vulnerable populations.
- 2) Strengthen existing housing stock and address long-term affordability.
- 3) Strengthen approaches to address housing needs and impact within an overall community plan.

Based on the Impact fees collected from Lycoming County in 2022, the County anticipates requesting approximately **\$1,300,000** of PHARE funds selected through this competitive process.

Additional information about the PHARE program, including previously funded projects, full application criteria, and use of funds, is available on PHFA’s website: <https://www.phfa.org/legislation/act105.aspx>.

Eligible Applicants

Lycoming County municipalities, non-profit and community organizations, for-profit housing providers and developers. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Timeline

October 19, 2023	Applications due to Lycoming County
October 31, 2023	Applicants notified of Lycoming County’s 2023/2024 selected projects (<i>expected</i>)
November 17, 2023	County submits application package with selected projects to PHFA
Summer 2024	PHARE funding announcements (<i>expected</i>)
Late Summer/Fall 2024	Earliest start date for PHARE-funded projects

PHARE Criteria

Responses to the following criteria will be used in Lycoming County’s application to PHFA for 2023/2024 PHARE funds. Projects that address multiple PHARE criteria will be ranked more favorably during the project selection process:

- 1) **Maximize resource leveraging**
- 2) **Affordability**
- 3) **Address greatest need**
- 4) **Foster partnerships**
- 5) **Effective and efficient implementation**
- 6) **Equitable and transparent allocation of funds**
- 7) **Emergency response to critical needs**

Eligible Uses

Examples of eligible uses under the PHARE program include: homeowner or rental rehabilitation, home buyer assistance, rental and utility assistance, housing accessibility, new construction, pre-construction costs, emergency home repairs, blight removal, transitional housing, and homeless prevention.

PHFA prioritizes the following housing initiatives*:

- Housing Preservation and Rehabilitation
- Rental Housing Creation
- Homeless Prevention
- Innovative Housing Solutions
- Homeownership
- Housing Counseling and Financial Education
- 4% Tax Credit Projects

*For additional details, see: https://www.phfa.org/forms/phare_program_phare_fund/2023_phare_rfp_final.pdf.

Funding Requirements

- A minimum of 30% of the grant funds must assist households below 50% of the median area family income (MAI) for Lycoming County (2023 MAI = \$78,700 50% MAI = \$39,350)
- No portion of the grant funds can be used to benefit households with incomes greater than 200% of the median family area income for Lycoming County (\$157,400).
- No more than 5% of the grant funds can be used for administrative purposes.
- All PHARE funds must be expended within 18 months of funding award.
- All PHARE- funded rental units must be reserved for occupancy by qualified households for a minimum of ten (10) years

Applicants are expected to satisfy the affordability requirements of the PHARE program and commit to a long-term sustainable program to maintain affordability. Applicants must abide by prevailing wage where applicable.

Evaluation Criteria

The County will review and evaluate all project and program applications received by **October 19, 2023** and evaluate applications based on the evaluation criteria.

1. Project must address one or more of the PHARE criteria listed above.
2. Project must adhere to the PHARE income requirements (see Funding Requirements above)
3. Applicant must be able to demonstrate ability to manage the proposed project.

Application Instructions

Please use the above information to prepare the accompanying PHARE program application.

Reporting

Semi-annual and final close-out report are required. All awarded PHARE grantees must track and report on the following impacts/outcomes:

- Amount of PHARE funds expended.
- Number of households served/impacted.
- Amount and percentage of funds used to benefit households below 50% of median area income.
- Household size (of each individual household assisted).
- Household income (tracked for each individual household assisted).
- Amount of Funding Used to Assist Households (tracked for each individual household assisted).
- Amount of administrative costs (capped at 5% of the total awarded funds).
- Source and amount of all matching/leveraged funds.
- Impact of funds used to address barriers to fair housing for marginalized communities.