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My name is Jake Day and I am Secretary of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. As the agency that administers the federal Housing Choice Voucher program for Maryland's rural counties, we recognized the long waitlists for the federal program and the need for something to act as a bridge or supplement to the program for those on the waitlist.

In 2023, Maryland enacted a Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program to provide vouchers and housing assistance payments for low-income families that are on a waiting list under the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program. The creation of a statewide voucher program was a long time coming. The federal voucher waitlists are packed, and this program has already proved to be a crucial tool to assist low-income and vulnerable Marylanders to secure stable housing. Seven public housing authorities are actively working to implement the statewide program and we anticipate all PHAs will participate after we make some adjustments to make it easier to deploy.

We're working with all the public housing agencies to align aspects of the program, such as inspection guidelines, family contributions, administrative expense rates, with federal standards to reduce administrative costs on local public housing authorities. We're also codifying the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development as a public housing agency under the state program to make the administration of it smoother.

While we are still in these initial stages of deployment, we anticipate this program to be an impactful tool for 500 to 700 Marylanders once it's fully deployed. As we continue to refine and expand the Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program in Maryland, its potential as a model for addressing housing challenges nationwide is increasingly evident.



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