

**Innovative:**

This is the only *comprehensive* directory of affordable housing services, affordable housing sites and emergency shelters available throughout Delaware. It has become the information basis used by other housing-related agencies for their own resource publications.

**Respond to Important Need:**

When originally published in the late 1980's, The Delaware Housing Services Directory was a valuable resource for DSHA personnel. The book contained contact information and descriptions of housing-related services offered by Delaware organizations. It also contained contact information for affordable housing sites and emergency shelters throughout Delaware. When new employees were hired, they were advised to study the book, which enabled them to provide knowledgeable assistance to constituents seeking affordable housing. The Directory also responded to the needs of social service organizations and state agencies that would contact DSHA for names and phone numbers of other firms specializing in affordable housing matters. Designed by DSHA, the book consisted of 240-250 pages, separated by dividers, within a large, custom-printed loose leaf binder. The last Directory published in this format cost \$7.50 each to print, not including the binder and dividers. Mailing costs in 2006 ran approximately \$4.50 each. For this reason very limited numbers were printed each year (approximately 100 books). We provided them free of charge to the agencies listed within the Directory and to government officials as a service. The remainder was given to DSHA Senior Staff for use by employees in their sections.

The Directory was greatly appreciated by the agencies, and they looked forward to the annual updates. Most of the agencies listed in the original directory boasted as many as three or four pages describing their programs and contact information. The book was too large (and too costly!) to send to individuals, so DSHA would copy sections, such as the section, "Kent County Affordable Rental Housing Sites", to have on hand for distribution to the public. These rental packets could be copied as needed. However, the printing costs for toner and printer maintenance are substantial. In addition, if the book could be professionally printed in larger quantities, it could be made available to the general population of Delaware, and therefore improve DSHA's efforts to carry out its mission: *To provide, and to assist others to provide quality affordable housing opportunities and appropriate supportive services to responsible low- and moderate-income Delawareans and their families.*

In 2008, DSHA revamped the Directory to a more manageable size of 76 pages, as a self-cover booklet. Using Microsoft Publisher, DSHA's Community Relations Section completely re-designed the book, condensing most agency descriptive information, and adding colorful new features, including photos and graphic elements. We then posted the new version on the DSHA Website. While the book was still in production, we referred our fellow housing services providers to the DSHA Website to access it.

The response from the agencies and even private recipients has been gratifying. Even though many agency descriptions were reduced up to four times, the agencies were happy with the convenience of the self-cover book!

When DSHA received our order of 3,000 books in January 2009, we were positively dismayed that the new books were purple instead of the specified color, dark blue. DSHA received a credit from the printer for the color error.

Few recipients seemed to notice the error, however, and most actually *liked* the purple color. The book became known as the “Purple Book.” DSHA was inundated with callers asking for additional copies of the “Purple Book.” It’s just so much easier to say than “Delaware Affordable Housing Services Directory.” The purple book quickly became the “Yellow Pages” for affordable housing. DSHA’s supply of purple books was depleted in less than a year.

In June, 2009 we began working on the 2010-2011 update of the Directory. Our Chief of Community Relations asked us to please add an *Index of Housing Services* in the front section of the publication. The 7-page *Index* aligns a chart of services to a corresponding list of agencies, facilitating the user’s research for specific services.

This brings us to the present. DSHA is happy to announce the arrival of 5,000 copies of our latest “Purple Book”, the 2010-2011 Edition of the *Delaware Affordable Housing Services Directory*. The new *Index of Housing Services*, in the front of the book is already proving to be a time-saving research feature. We believe that directories such as our “Purple Book” would make perfect additions to the family of publications that now grace the shelves and desks of other State Housing Finance Agencies, Public Housing Agencies, and their partners.

**Benefits to the Agency:**

- DSHA has realized a reduction in employee production time, toner costs and postage required to photocopy and mail rental housing information. At a printing cost to DSHA of \$2.50 each plus our mailing costs, the books provide a wealth of valuable research information for those seeking affordable or subsidized housing.
- DSHA has realized an increase in good will from our fellow affordable housing and social services professionals, many of whom consider this book their contact “bible” for affordable housing in Delaware.
- DSHA has realized an increase in exposure to our Website: [www.destatehousing.com](http://www.destatehousing.com), where the Directory can be accessed in “Publications.” We now have a quick, easy referral for callers asking for help in finding affordable housing in Delaware. For those without internet access or those who prefer the hard copy of the publication, we are happy to oblige by mailing them a copy.

Overall, the *Delaware Affordable Housing Services Directory* has become a handy, must-have publication for the affordable housing industry, DSHA and for Delaware’s low- and moderate-income residents.