

Raleigh Housing Authority (RHA) 2020-2021 Annual Agency Plan Attachment

Below is a description of the items addressed in the Agency Plan template:

B.1 Revision of PHA Plan Elements

Statement of Housing Needs and Strategy for Addressing Housing Needs:

Housing Needs

The regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing makes a number of recommendations to address areas of concern. The following is a summary of the areas RHA addressed as was suggested in the analysis completed in 2015:

- The development of affordable housing should be directed to high opportunity areas, when possible.
- Implement transportation policies that provide the protected classes with better access to high opportunity areas.
- The analysis also recommends that local governing bodies pass ordinances that prohibit discrimination based on source of income. The purpose is to expand opportunities for families using Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance.
- Need to increase stakeholder awareness of fair housing and ensure they are taking steps to meet their legal obligation to affirmatively further fair housing. Fair housing training and information is needed for non-governmental entities such as mom and pop landlords, churches, HOAs, and other groups that are not familiar with fair housing laws. In response, RHA participates in the City of Raleigh's Landlord Training Program to market the voucher program to the landlords attending the training. Many of the attendees are new landlords or landlords with only a few units. Many are not familiar with the voucher program.
- RHA is a part of the Wake County Affordable Housing Committee formed by Wake County Commissioners in 2017.
- RHA is a member of the Wake/Raleigh Partnership to End Homelessness. The partnership plays a key role in developing and leading community initiatives and programs that directly address barriers the homes population faces to receive housing and many other needs.
- RHA will continue to work with the community as a partner to agencies, individuals and businesses to develop strategic goals and solutions to the affordable housing shortage in Raleigh.
- The Raleigh Housing Authority (RHA) remains committed to protecting and increasing the affordable housing within the city of Raleigh. This approach may include purchases, redevelopment, demolition and/or disposition.

- RHA intends to use whatever tools are available to increase housing choice under the HCV Program.
- RHA encourages voucher holders to look outside poverty areas to secure housing. RHA provides a computer with an on-line connection so voucher holders can look for housing in a cost effective and timely manner. Certain sites that specialize in advertising units that accept vouchers are bookmarked on the system. Staff is available to offer assistance.
- Provisions in the Continuums of Care (CoCs) program interim rule (24 CFR 578.7(a)(8)) require that CoCs establish a centralized or coordinated assessment system. The goal of this coordinated system is to ensure individualizes experiencing homelessness know where and how to access a system established to identify, assesses, and prioritize their needs for services and housing. In Raleigh, our CoC has a coordinated entry system in place. Since 2017, RHA has implemented a local preference to accommodate referrals through this system either. Over 45 vouchers have been issued to date.
- Housing Choice voucher applicants will have additional local preferences offered to them in order to assist in addressing the housing needs of families who reside in the jurisdiction Raleigh Housing Authority serves.
- Waiting List Preferences are offered to both public housing and Section 8 applicants. These preferences provide structure to the waiting list and impact the order in which individuals receive assistance. The following preferences are available to one or more waiting lists:
 - Elderly and/or disabled
 - Residency – lives or works in Wake County
 - Working preference
 - Graduate of the “Ready to Rent” program
 - Mobility impairment
- Local Preferences are offered to Section 8 applicants which allows them to bypass the regular waiting list due to various factors. RHA’s local preferences include:
 - **VAWA**– The Housing Authority will offer five (5) referrals per RHA fiscal year for voucher housing assistance, based on voucher availability, to individuals who present a claim for initial assistance based on incidents or actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or criminal activity related to any of these forms of abuse.
 - **Coordinated Entry referrals**– In continued support of the city of Raleigh’s initiative to coordinate services established to end homelessness; RHA has agreed to offer a local preference to housing choice voucher applicants received through the Continuums of Care coordinated entry system. Those referred through this system must be homeless families that have been recognized to be the greatest in need. The referrals must still meet all other eligibility requirements for voucher assistance. This assistance will provide vouchers for up to 30 homeless families during fiscal year. This number has been increased from 20 vouchers to accommodate the growing needs of our area. RHA is proposing to increase the number of Coordinated Entry vouchers again once final approval of Administrative Plan is approved and adopted.

- **Olmstead Referrals-** RHA offers a local preference to housing choice voucher applicants received through Alliance Health/NC Housing & Finance Agencies coordinated entry system. This preference will support the efforts of the State of North Carolina to increase housing opportunities that are available for individuals with disabilities who are transitioning from, or at serious risk of entering, institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, adult care facilities, and other restrictive, segregated settings. Families referred through the system must meet the Olmstead requirements for voucher assistance. This assistance will provide vouchers for up to (15) fifteen voucher families per RHA fiscal year as vouchers are available. This number has been increased from 5 vouchers to accommodate the growing needs of our area.
- RHA has applied for Mainstream Vouchers through a HUD grant. If awarded, this grant would supply additional vouchers for non-elderly disabled individuals.

Deconcentration Efforts

- RHA provides for deconcentration of poverty and encourages income mixing by bringing higher-income families into lower-income communities and lower-income families into higher-income communities. In partnership with various supportive service providers, RHA offers programs that help residents achieve self-sufficiency.
- RHA will continue to offer the Incentive public housing program and working preferences.
- Created income diversity within our redeveloped housing communities, including those redeveloped under the HOPE VI grant program.
- Encourage families receiving vouchers to consider relocating in neighborhoods that will improve the life opportunities of family members.
- RHA properties with fewer than 100 units or designated as elderly are not subject to the Deconcentration Rule.

Significant Amendment/Modification

- Annual review and update to both the public housing *Admission and Occupancy* and the Leased Housing *Administrative Plan*.
- See attached Executive Summary for changes to the *Admissions and Occupancy Policy – Public Housing*.
- See attached Executive Summary for changes to the *Administration Policy – Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8*.
- RHA plans to continue to evaluate and strengthen its screening criteria as it relates to applicant suitability for occupancy without creating a practice that may have an adverse or “disparate impact” on protected classes and placement on the waiting lists.
- RHA continues to review its domestic violence policy and emergency transfer policy to be consistent with HUD regulations. RHA will continue to relocate program participants and residents who are victims of domestic violence as an emergency transfer.

- Conduct an annual review and adjustments as needed to the 2019 Flat Rent schedule.
- Conduct an annual review and adjustments as needed to the 2019 Utility Allowance schedule.
- Annual review was conducted and the only update to the charges on the public housing resident *Maintenance Charge List* was to change the rate for Electricians and Plumbers from \$83/hour to \$85/hour.

B. 2 New Activities

Capital Grant Programs (i.e., Capital Fund Community Facilities Grants or Emergency Safety and Security Grants). Units with Approved Vacancies for Modernization.

- The Raleigh Housing Authority (RHA) is strategizing which option would best serve to protect and increase the affordable housing within the City of Raleigh. This approach can include purchases, redevelopment, demolition and possibly disposition.
- RHA will continue to explore the option of seeking designation as a Moving to Work Agency. RHA will consider its options to determine whether this change is advantageous to RHA and its residents.
- HUD continues to encourage housing authorities to convert public housing units under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) to voucher-based funding. RHA is submitting application to HUD to participate in the RAD program in 2019.
- RHA is applying to convert public housing to a Project Based Voucher program through our RAD applications. Adding a Project Based Voucher (PBV) portfolio seeks enhance the number of affordable housing rental units developed within our city.
- RHA has applied for a federal grant that, if awarded, will add Mainstream Vouchers to our housing portfolio. Mainstream Vouchers can be utilized by non-elderly, disabled low-income individuals.
- Through the application for Mainstream Vouchers, RHA is partnering with Alliance Health, Wake County Health and Human Services, and Disability Rights NC.
- RHA may seek HUD approval to sell some of its single-family public housing units offering a preference to public housing residents who qualify to purchase. Historically, these homes are among the most expensive to maintain. HUD will have to approve this disposition before any of the units can be sold.
- If the sale of single family public housing should occur, RHA may acquire replacement public housing in other communities within the city that more closely reflect RHA's current standards. HUD will have to approve this purchase before any of replacement units can be purchased.
- Housing Needs – RHA looks at the waiting list as a starting point for considering local housing needs. The current waiting list indicates that the majority of public housing applicants are seeking a one or two bedroom unit. Many applicants are on both the Public Housing and the Housing Choice Voucher waiting lists because many families will accept public housing until their names come up on the voucher waiting list. We will also

look at other sources of information regarding the need for affordable housing by considering data provided by the City and County.

- RHA intends to use whatever tools available to increase housing choice for Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) participants. RHA remains committed to developing additional marketing tactics to attract new landlords while retaining landlords under the HCV program. These ideas may include adjusting the Fair Market rents. RHA realizes it cannot expect to compete with current rising market rents trending in Wake County.
- RHA will continue to pursue reimbursement or termination of assistance for participants in the Public Housing and Section 8 programs who fail to report income in a timely manner. This also includes false documentation or false reporting of any kind, not just income.
- RHA plans to promote rent readiness guidelines to low income housing applicants while they are on the waiting list. RHA offers a preference for all current graduates of the Wake County Ready to Rent (RTR) program. This preference is for housing choice voucher applicants who have successfully graduated from the RTR program.
- Applicants will be encouraged to utilize their wait time for a HCV to improve their credit worthiness, rental references, and increase their income. Such efforts should make it easier to secure a landlord when their name reaches the top of the waitlist.
- In an endeavor to mobilize current residents towards economic self-sufficiency, RHA plans to continue to strengthen its working relationship with nonprofits and local educational institutions in the area. These partnerships allow staff to refer residents who request help with life skills, job training programs, or home ownership counseling.
- In response to HUD and Department of Justice (DOJ) guidance, RHA aims to prevent sexual harassment in housing by providing education to all employees, applicants and housing participants. Education is shared at all briefings for both Section 8 landlords and voucher holders.
- RHA maintains the agency website with contact information, pertinent documents and emergency announcements which improve communication with residents, housing applicants, and Section 8 landlords.
- RHA is working with the City of Raleigh Solid Waste division to offer recycling collection in all of our communities.
- RHA continues to work with Google Fiber to bring high-speed internet to public housing households free of charge.
- RHA is in the process of obtaining signature pads for applicant and resident meetings. This will be included as a way to lessen the burden on individuals and staff.
- Staff is in the process of researching online payment methods for rent and other fees. Online services would be added to acceptable ways of making payments to provide residents greater choice and flexibility.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between RHA and Alliance Health is underway. This MOU will become effective if/when the Housing Authority is awarded Mainstream Vouchers by HUD.

B.3 Progress Report

Progress toward Five-Year Plan Goals

- Making necessary adjustments for modernization, RHA maintained a satisfactory vacancy rate.
- Maintained operational standards as a distinguished high performing public housing agency.
- Conduct compliance reviews based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reviews such as this look at a sample of public housing developments and conduct physical surveys of dwelling units, including the designated accessible routes and access to common areas.
- RHA continues to partner with the nonprofit sector towards ending homelessness. The agreement term of our partnership with the Support Circle expired in May 2019. Due to higher utilizations and the growing needs of other local preferences, the 20 vouchers set aside for Support Circle were realigned with other preferences. Catholic Charities still has access to local preference vouchers through the Coordinated Entry program.
- RHA secured approval from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to designate Glenwood Towers and Carriage House communities as housing for families age 50 and older through September 20, 2020.
- RHA collaborated with the Raleigh Police Department (RPD) in several communities located downtown whose crime rate has increased due to elements in properties adjacent to RHA's. RHA contracts with the RPD for additional coverage in communities experiencing a spike in criminal activity.
- RHA continues to modernize its public housing units as needed and as funding allows.
- Maintain surveillance cameras, and add additional cameras/upgrade as funds allow. Software is in place at some communities which permit the police to log in to the network and view the communities in real time.
- RHA's audit was presented to the RHA Board on September 26, 2019. There were no financial audit findings for the 32nd consecutive year. The audit also resulted in a favorable review of a percentage of both public housing resident files and HCV participant files.
- RHA reviews annually the number of current families receiving rental assistance whose income has risen and now exceeds current income limits in accordance through the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA).
- RHA has joined the local partners of the City of Raleigh, Wake County, Town of Cary, and the Wake County Housing Authority to complete the Analysis of Impediments. The 2020 analysis has been initiated with Mullin and Lonergan Associates.

D. Capital Fund Program

RHA receives HUD funding through the Capital Fund Program (CFP) to assist with modernization, development, and renovation of public housing units community-wide, and as a way to ensure long-term physical and social viability of the communities. The following work items are either underway or recently completed:

- Continued installation of security cameras throughout sites as needs are identified including the addition of new cameras to Birchwood, Chavis Heights, Mayview, and Glenwood Towers.
- Replacement of outdated plumbing in a 60 unit development as units are turned during vacancies.
- Asbestos abatement portfolio wide.
- Installation of new luxury vinyl-plank flooring during vacancy turns.
- Planned roof removal and replacement at 14 story senior building Glenwood Towers.
- Exterior caulking replacement and waterproofing at Glenwood Towers.
- Emergency façade repair at Glenwood Towers.
- Planning new fire alarm system installation at Carriage House
- Planning lentil repair and replacement as well as additional securing of façade at Glenwood Towers.
- Planning repaving of private roads and parking at two developments.
- Planning new flooring of first floor common areas at Carriage House.
- Lead Based Paint testing at all pre-1978 multifamily developments.