

PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
RESIDENT SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE JUNE 2021 REPORT

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RESIDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

COVID 19 Updates:

The RSD's approach to COVID 19 has been to serve Residents through an interdepartmental approach.

- 1) **Emergency Resident Outreach Log (EROL)**-The EROL for all **public housing residents** started at the beginning of the crisis and has evolved with multiple phases. See current phases below:

PHASE 9: Continued identification and outreach to potential partners to support food delivery. Food Task Force and Delivery Service – RIFB Senior box deliveries continued through May, and **PHA food boxes available for emergencies**. In May there were **150 RIFB** (37 at Parenti Villa, 57 at Dominica Manor, and 56 at Dexter Manor) Senior boxes, and **0 emergency PHA food boxes** delivered. **At Parenti Villa 81 Food Pantry boxes were distributed.**

PHASE 10: PHA continues to up-date the COVID 19 Hotline daily – In May there were **40 COVID follow up calls** to residents, **205 calls for vaccination questions and registration.**

PHASE 11: Covid vaccination outreach calls to high rise and elderly in family developments – *this is phasing out with decrease in clinics and increased use of CallMax for outreach.*

PHASE 12: Youth programs outreach for WIOA and the Summer Youth Internship program

Program Updates:

The contract was finalized with C3 Community Solutions for grant writing for the Resident Services programs with a focus in two areas: Workforce, and Health and Wellness. The Director and Associate Director will be meeting with C3 Community Solutions (Bert Cooper) to discuss approach and next steps.

\$35k from ONE | NB HEZ funding for employment support was awarded.

The Resident Services Department is working to develop and refine Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to evaluate program flow within the agency, department, and with partners

to date. The baseline tracking will continue through March 2021. In May we began what will be an on-going evaluation of the Resident Services Department Referral KPI's.

1) WELLNESS PROGRAMS:

Wellness Coordinator/SOR

- In May, the SOR Coordinator did not add new **Residents to his caseload or conduct follow up assessments** due to being out.
- The Coordinator received and followed up on 2 referrals from Security in May.
- Partnership development with **CODAC** to partner with their pop-up van services to begin on June 30th at Dexter. The pop-up clinic is designed to perform opioid assessments and help individuals get services and enroll for detox. The pop-up clinic is staffed by three nurses that perform high blood pressure, HIV, and hepatitis C testing. If the person is interested in detox, an assessment will be performed concerning SUD.

VOCA Coordinator

- **47 new clients** in May, making May the busiest month to date for new clients, for a total caseload of **261 Victims of Crime clients served** to date.
- Assisted with coordinating Nonviolent Crisis Communication training with LICSW and the PHA Security Department
- Continuous review of weekly Security Reports and weekly check-ins with the Institute of Nonviolence, Sojourner House, and the PHA Wellness Team.
- Weekly meeting with the Critical Response Team, who develop a Critical Response Plan for emergency and critical cases

Community Health Worker

- **2 new Residents** who completed a health screening tool with the Community Health Worker, for a **total of 50 Residents** who have completed screening in May
- Presented to the Resident Advisory Board (together with other members of the Wellness Team) at the May 19th meeting
- Participated in the weekly Security Report review, and Critical Response Team
- During May, the CHW has participated in all Covid testing and vaccination events at the PHA

LICSW

- **11 new clients in May, 112 total clients to date**
- Spearheading Wellness Team presentation to RAB for May 19th meeting
- Continued supervision of an MSW student from RIC, Grace Canton, who provides additional support to Residents
- Participated in the weekly Critical Response Team
- Conducted **2 trainings to the Security Department Staff** in May

- Success story: Through an internal referral from an Employment Case Manager, the LICSW was able to assist a young adult resident whose mother died. Through RSD support he was able to find work and begin engaging in social activities.

2) WORKFORCE PROGRAMS:

WIOA

- **A total of 14 additional out-of-school** were recruited and processed for WIOA. WIOA Recruitment continues for out-of-school youth
- **In development: WIOA has been granted another program year. Contracts and budgets are being negotiated**
- Youth completed **a Financial Literacy Seminar**
- Staff participated in monthly WIOA provider meetings

Workforce Development Coordinator

- **31 residents received employment counseling**
- **1 new employer partners established, for a total of 25 YTD**
- Continued partnership and participation with DCYF Youth Voluntary Extension of Care (VEC) Program -Academic and Career Engagement
- Continues to support JPP participants that are looking for employment

Financial Coach/Homeownership Program

- **Served 5 residents in May**
- The partnership with HarborOne Bank has enabled us to continue financial counseling services

Homeownership Counseling

- **The HUD Homeownership Counselor passed his HUD Counselor examination and is now a certified HUD Homeownership Counselor**
- Partnership established with Washington Trust to host a financial literacy and a homeownership workshop in July

FSS

- **\$172,297.37 escrow dollars disbursed FYTD (for May \$10,240.32)**, and \$11,064.10 escrow dollars forfeited FYTD (for May \$0)
- FSS staff have been scheduling progress report meetings with FSS participants outside. For the month of April **84 progress report follow up appointments** have been completed
- **38.46% of FSS participants showed an increase in Earned Income** in May (with 61.53% having no increase in earned income) with **an average increase of \$28,121.11**
- There have been 0 extension requests due to Covid in May

Adult Education Programs:

- **Genesis Center**-conducting on-line distance learning for Adult Basic Education classes through the summer and reviewing a hybrid approach for the fall . The ESL and Ged Classes are at capacity, along with a long waitlist. Due to the partnership, PHA residents do have priority. COVID-19 continues to impact our

educational partners' ability to post-test. They are working on trying to provide testing virtually.

- **Progreso Latino**-Continues to serve PHA residents in achieving their Spanish GED through their regular programming sessions.

3) RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATION:

- On-site support to Residents by appointments only in May:
 - **Family RSC's have a combined caseload of 168 Residents**
 - **High-Rise RSC's have a combined caseload of 93 Residents**
- **Lead RSC has conducted over 800 Outreach calls to High Rise buildings;** 300 Outreach calls at Dexter Manor, 112 at Hartford Park Tower, 204 Outreach calls at Dominica Manor, and 190 Resident Outreach calls at Carroll Tower.
- Monthly Safe Harbor follow up with 109 Residents across all AMPs. Most Residents are in compliance with the program, for on-time rent payments. Both PM and RSC's enter relevant information into a shared spreadsheet
- Housing Retention with the RentRelief RI collaboration with Property Management. RSC's will provide assistance to Residents participating with uploading documentation into the portal
- Manton Heights RSC continues to manage the **food distribution program with the YMCA that started April 12, 2021 in which 17 families 50 children between the ages of 2-18 are provided one hot meal and two cold meals every Monday and Thursday.** Parents and children are very excited and happy that we have this program onsite.
- High Rise RSC is continuing to lead the Covid Hotline project
- Program planning and outreach for One Providence Summer Youth Internship program, with a focus at Chad Brown Family Development. The Chad Brown RSC is recruiting 35 youth, with a target **of 25 Chad Brown Youth to be served by this program.**

RSD Partnerships:

- **Boys and Girls Club**-The Boys and Girls Club have opened their program at 50 Laurel Hill Ave, and as well as Manton Heights and Chad Brown. They are limiting the children to groups/pods of 20.
- **Children's Friend**- Programming moved to other locations due to enrollment.
- **YMCA** -food distribution partnership at Manton Heights through August
- **Urban Greens** – Contracted to provide paid internship experience for WIOA youth.
- **Providence Public Library (PPL)** – is supporting on-going computer literacy through on-line teacher guided learning.
- **Progreso Latino**-is supporting adult HSE learning through on-line teacher guided learning
- **ONE**-Community Health Workers
- **RIFB**-Senior Box program at Dexter Manor, Dominica Manor, and Parenti Villa as well as Parenti Villa Food Pantry agreements for 2021

- **HarborOne**-financial coaching partnership.
- **JPP HUD**- these calls will continue quarterly, as HUD has requested continued engagement to build upon the PHA's lessons learned for JPP

RSD Planning Updates:

1. Re-vamping the MMR data collection from staff to streamline and more accurately reflect outcomes based on function (i.e.: Wellness programs, Workforce programs, Education programs, and Resident Service Coordination) and alignment to the 5-year Strategic Plan
2. TAAG data entry protocols for new staff
3. Begin reviewing other Case Management data systems that could better meet RSD needs
4. FSS Program Coordinating Committee (PCC), MOUs for partner agencies
5. Preparing for remote VOCA site visit at the end of June
6. Preparing for ROSS-SC close out at the end of June
7. RSD section of the PHA Website with OSD
8. Preparing with OSD, Year 2 Strategic Plan goals

OFFICE OF STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT:

COVID-19 Activities

High-level communications with partners, funders, and government – OSD is in communication with government partners at all levels.

Federal: On May 4, HUD released a series of updates to its COVID-19 waivers. During May, OSD worked with departments across the agency to determine what waivers we would continue to utilize through any new expiration dates (many were extended from June 30 to Dec 31) and we posted an update on our waivers for residents, landlords and the public on May 28th.

OSD participated on HUD's monthly call with all RI Housing authorities on June 10th.

Partners Locally:

We maintain PHA participation in the Central Providence and West End Health Equity Zone projects and with the current Accessing Home AmeriCorps program cohort of host sites.

Homes RI– OSD staff continue to participate in monthly Zoom meeting convened by Homes RI. These meetings highlight issues related to homelessness prevention and affordable housing, as well as developing advocacy strategies and building partnerships.

COVID-19 Funding and Resource Development

Recent funding notifications and updates

FEMA – OSD submitted an application, in the amount of \$315,000, to FEMA reimbursement for Covid costs associated with testing and vaccination clinics from May 2020 to May 15, 2021, PuroClean's high rise sanitation services, and NESS security guard services that were not covered by Cares Act funds. Testing and vaccination expenses incurred prior to 1/21/21 will

be reimbursed at 75%; testing and vaccination expenses incurred after 1/21/21 will be reimbursed at 100%. In early June FEMA notified PHA that it is now requesting applicants who conducted vaccination activity and other Covid response activities to submit separate applications for reimbursement for vaccination activity and a separate application for all other Covid response activities (including Covid testing). PHA will submit the two applications before the end of June.

City of Providence CDBG – The City was officially awarded \$112,000 to conduct COVID response work relating to health, including testing, vaccinations, and connections to other health resources. This funding will support several staff in Resident Services working in the health and wellness area.

One Neighborhood Builders/Central Providence Health Equity Zone

OSD received notification that PHA has been awarded a grant, in the amount of \$35,000, that will support part of the position for a new service coordination for residents of Hartford Park centered around family economic self-sufficiency.

State of Rhode Island Community Development Covid Response Block Grants- We are waiting to hear back on two grants submitted to the RI Office of Housing and Community Development: \$154,655, for support of the *Workforce Development Coordination Initiative* that will assist public housing residents struggling to find work during the pandemic; and \$128,050 to address needed services for homeless Mainstream Voucher participants to assist them in securing housing and maintaining tenancies. If successful, this funding will be provided over a two-year period.

COVID-19 Communications and Resident Outreach

Covid 19 Testing and Vaccinations

OSD staff continued to work cross-departmentally to support messaging regarding vaccinations including announcements, informative handouts (including translations of vaccine fact sheets), call scripting, mass messaging, and then provided event support by taking photographs and filling in as needed.



HUD Covid-19 Webinars

OSD participated in HUD's Covid-19 Best Practices webinars to keep abreast of initiatives being undertaken by PHAs and their partners across the country. PHA's efforts meet or exceed those of peers nationwide. Many

All OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other Funding and Resource Development

New and pending applications:

United Way of RI Olneyville Fund

OSD Submitted a grant proposal to the United Way's Olneyville Fund for funds that would support the coordination of services and referrals for residents of Manton Heights who are seeking Wellness resources, including access to treatment and recovery services for substance use disorders and mental health needs. Short term goals include providing 30 Manton Heights households with referrals to service, providing direct service and case management, and integrating prevention education concerning opioids and other substance use in existing youth programs. PHA expects long-term impact to include: establishing referral partnerships with service providers with bi-lingual and bi-cultural capacities; increasing opportunities for diverse members of the PHA community to access culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate SUD treatment and behavioral health services; and decreasing PHA community stigma concerning substance use disorders and mental health treatment by engaging the community in an awareness campaign and engaging community allies, including community agencies, organizations, and faith communities.

Manton Heights Legislative grant

Staff is developing a FY 2021 Legislative grant proposal for the Manton Heights Planning Committee sponsored by State Representative Hull for a grant in the amount of \$3,000. If approved this grant will fund community building events and digital literacy.

Notifications for non-COVID focused grants

City of Providence Summer Youth Employment

OSD received notification that PHA was awarded a *2021 One Providence for Youth Summer Employment Program* grant in the amount of \$65,552. This funding will allow PHA to provide workforce readiness workshops and coaching, as well as link 25 youth to paid summer internships for a fourth year. PHA expects the program to begin on July 5 or about and last for six weeks.

City CDBG- While we have not yet received formal notification letters, the City has finalized a CDBG budget for next year that includes \$43,000 in community center funding for the Thomas Anton center (resident services) and \$85,000 to support the replacement of sliding entry doors at Dominica Manor and Carroll Tower. Requests for security camera funding for Codding Court were not included.

RIHousing Bridging the Digital Divide Grant – PHA was not awarded the \$63,000 we requested for internet connected devices for public housing residents. We are pursuing smaller scale pilots with legislative grants and will be getting 20 tablets in the coming month to distribute to high rise residents.

Senate Legislative Grants OSD completed the FY 2021 Legislative Grant proposal for the the following: Kilmartin Plaza Planning Committee grant sponsored by State Representative Slater (\$1,500), Parenti Villa Planning Committee (\$2,000) and Dominica Planning Committee by Senator Sam Bell (\$1,500). The grant will go to fund outdoor events in adherence to current CDC pandemic guidelines, digital literacy with the purchases of computer tablets and allow residents to support their annual gardening projects.

Communications and Resident Outreach

Mass Messaging

We coordinated with several departments across the agency to send mass message calls and text messages through CallMax:

	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021
Total number of "bulletin" messages sent	4	38*	67*	115*	75*	56	45	43	62	27	47

* In part because messages were sent twice in an English and Spanish version or floor by floor notices about COVID testing.

	Apr 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	Aug 2021	Sept 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Mar 2021
Total number of "bulletin" messages sent	37 Month ending 4/13	45 Month ending 5/13	20 Month ending 6/13								

* In part because messages were sent twice in an English and Spanish version or floor by floor notices about COVID testing

Messages reflected the following: COVID vaccinations and testing, outdoor gathering and gardening events, WOIA Recruitment Training/Internship, Senior Food Box distributions and much more.

PHA's Facebook reach continues to grow as we are now at 1,078 page "Likes" and 1263 accounts following the PHA on Facebook right now. From May 19 to June 15, our FB posts have had a total reach of 982 users.

PHA Website

OSD is spearheading a refresh of the PHA's website (www.ProvHousing.org) with vendor EpikSolutions. The refresh will include an updated look and newly organized content once completed.

RAB communications and report

OSD staff members continued to do regular Zoom check in calls with RAB members to identify resident community concerns and needs and to provide information and updates. OSD continued a series of two RAB conference calls (one in English, one in Spanish) each month in the first week of the month and then a full RAB meeting on the third Wednesday of the month. OSD promptly advises Departments of any issues identified in RAB contacts.

We have worked to address issues identified by RAB members on an ongoing basis, such as

- Violation of parking policies;
- Illegal dumping by outsiders;
- Elevator and laundry machine breakdown; and
- Ways to rebuild a sense of community in the midst of the pandemic and in its wake.

The May RAB meeting on May 19 featured a presentation by the PHA's Wellness Resource center and updated members about the services PHA provides in the areas of health outreach and education, substance abuse prevention and recovery, mental health, and recovery from victimization by violence crime. OSD provided updates about the PHA's Covid-10 vaccination and testing programs.

Resident Activities Update

Peoples Garden project _OSD staff, FM and PM staff and resident volunteers in May and early June to prepare garden plots and beds and plant vegetables at Codding Court and Chad Brown.

Codding Court



Chad Brown



Sunset Village- OSD organized an outdoor gathering and gardening event on May 21st. Residents readied garden areas for another year and activity and planted perennials. Residents enjoyed the company of neighbors with cold drinks and other refreshments.



From Left to right – Hartford Tower outdoor gathering; a Caption call event; and Sunset Village

Hartford Park Tower- OSD assisted the Hartford Park Tenants Association in bringing an outdoor gathering with refreshments by the Providence Canteen Event on May 24 had a successful outcome. Approximately 70 residents were served free snacks and refreshments in the outdoors. The event was to celebrate the coming of Spring and to bring a sense of normalcy and morale boost to the residents from the social isolation brought upon by the pandemic.

Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Residents

OSD continued a partnership with CaptionCall, an organization that provides no cost phones with features needed by residents who are deaf or hard of hearing, including amplification and closed captioning of audio. CaptionCall has also partnered with the RI Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. OSD is arranging dates for CaptionCall to provide information tables (outside and in compliance with Covid safety requirements) at all PHA locations. Information tables at Carroll Tower, Hartford Park, and Parenti Villa resulted in 22 residents being provided with these specialized phones. Information tables will be scheduled at Kilmartin Plaza and Sunset Village in June.

Other OSD updates

Youth Police Initiative

OSD and RSD developed a proposal for a year-long internship in which a 2nd year Masters-level social work student would assist PHA in researching and implementing best practices for strengthening the YPI program and developing a follow-up component. PHA will submit the proposal to Rhode Island College's School of Social Work to secure an intern for the fall 2021 and winter 2022 semesters.

Strategic Planning and Plan Implementation

OSD met with Departments in May and early June to draft actions for Year 2 of the PHA's Strategic Plan, including reviewing which Year 1 actions will continued to be pursued in Year 2, considering actions scheduled for Year and identifying additional actions made necessary by the Covid-19 experience. Once Year 2 actions are approved, OSD will work with Departments to develop metrics that track performance in carrying our actions and measuring achievement of strategies and goals.

Project Based Vouchers – In an effort to support the expansion of affordable housing for low-income families, OSD has issued PHA's request for proposals for project-based vouchers, incorporating lessons learned from the last RFP that was issued in late 2018. OSD conducted a pre-proposal workshop for interested parties on June 14 with 13 people registering or attending; proposals are due to PHA by 3pm on July 16th.

Landlord Incentives – OSD is working closely with Leased Housing to issue landlord incentives to attract and support our landlords and increase success of hard to house residents in finding housing. Through the end of April, we have approved 34 landlord incentives totaling \$18,500 with 30 of them going to new landlords, five receiving incentives for housing a formerly homeless family through the mainstream voucher program, and two incentives for a landlord leasing a new unit in an area of opportunity. Four incentives were issued in May 2021.

Emergency Housing Vouchers – OSD is working with Leased Housing and an interdepartmental team on preparing for the beginning of the new Emergency Housing Voucher program. PHA was issued 42 emergency vouchers and will be able to begin issuing these to homeless families in individuals in July, upon completion of an MOU with the RI Continuum of Care. OSD Director Peter Asen serves on the Continuum of Care board of directors.