

PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESIDENT SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE AUGUST 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 for a seamless Customer Service experience.

- 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 – this function has blended COVID 19 response and regular operations.

RIFB Senior box deliveries continued through July, and **PHA food boxes available for emergencies**. In July there were **143 RIFB** (33 at Parenti Villa, 59 at Dominica Manor, and 51 at Dexter Manor) Senior boxes, and **0 emergency PHA food boxes** delivered. There are a **total of 172 Residents enrolled** (41 at Parenti Villa, 70 at Dominica Manor, and 61 at Dexter Manor), **and 11 on the wait list** (10 at Dominica Manor, and 1 at Dexter Manor).

At Parenti Villa 84 Food Pantry boxes were distributed.

PHASE 10: PHA continues to up-date the COVID 19 Hotline daily – Although this work has slowed down considerably, the High Rise RSC is continuing to lead the Covid Hotline project, and respond to residents with questions

PHASE 11: Covid vaccination outreach calls to high rise and elderly in family developments – pending

Program Updates:

- RSD staff will be reporting on outcomes from the start of the new fiscal year
- Kathy Morel was promoted from Community Health Worker to Employment Case Manager
- Stephanie Sousa was hired as a new Employment Case Manager to start in September
- Housing Preservation collaboration with Property Management
- RSD leadership onboarded the RSD grant writers with two funding opportunities: (1) refunding for VOCA, and (2) funding a year-round youth internship program through the City of Providence Office of Economic Opportunity

- Lead RSC, Bartola Ovalles, is organizing partners onsite at the high-rise developments; Oak Street had an information table at all High-rise developments in July. Bartola is organizing BCBS and URI-SNAP information tables for all high-rise developments in August/September. Additionally, a schedule is being developed for flu shot clinics in the Fall.
- See additional program updates within program categories below

1) **WELLNESS PROGRAMS:**

Wellness Coordinator/SOR

- Despite being out for 2 weeks In July, the SOR Coordinator conducted **3 risk assessments to his caseload and 2 follow up assessments.**
- The Coordinator received and followed up on 9 referrals (8 from Security and 1 from PM) in July and was able to contact 8 of the referrals.
- **Success story for Wellness team approach:** A High-rise RSC referred a 55-year-old female to the SOR Coordinator due to public intoxication. The SOR Coordinator and LICSW conducted multiple home visits in the month of July. The resident currently receives mental health and substance use disorder services at The Providence Center. During the home visits the resident reported that she had previously completed a detox program provided by the Salvation Army and attended AA meetings. Upon acknowledging that she is in relapse and needed assistance, the LICSW contacted her AA sponsor and The Providence Center case manager. The SOR Coordinator contacted rescue to have her transported to Roger Williams Hospital for detox. After a one-day stay, the resident checked herself into the Salvation Army 30-day program. As soon as she completes her 30-day detox treatment, the SOR Coordinator will help the resident enroll in an adult day care program and reconnect with local AA meetings

VOCA Coordinator

- **56 new clients** in July
- **VOCA Coordinators outreached to 62 residents** (54 Security referrals and 8 PM referrals)
- One survivor is not a DV volunteer at a local organization
- 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

- The CHW transitioned to her promotion to Employment Case Manager
- The CHW **outreached to 76 residents** identified in the July Security report and was able to have **direct contact with 30 residents**

- Participated in the weekly Security Report review, and Critical Response Team
- During July, the CHW has participated in 3 PHA Covid testing and 1 PHA vaccination events at the PHA

LICSW

- **11 new clients in July, total caseload is 31**
- Participates in the **bi-weekly Critical Response team meeting**
- Developed and completed 1 PHA staff training

2) WORKFORCE PROGRAMS:

OEO

- The City of Providence funded us to serve a total of 23 youth in a 6-week summer work experience program.
- The **One Providence Summer Youth Program started on 7/12/2021**; the group completed **25 hours of employability skills training** needed for workplace success, including **Communication, Critical Thinking, Engagement in Learning, Perseverance, and Teamwork** through work readiness.
- 30+ candidates were interviewed, 23 signed up, 20 attended the first week of job readiness. Out of the 20 that started on the first day, 19 continued to their 5-week summer internship. **Resulting in a 95% retention rate.**
- Student feedback: **“I loved my time being your intern, and I hope to see you again soon! I learned a lot and thanks again for making it as enjoyable as possible.”**

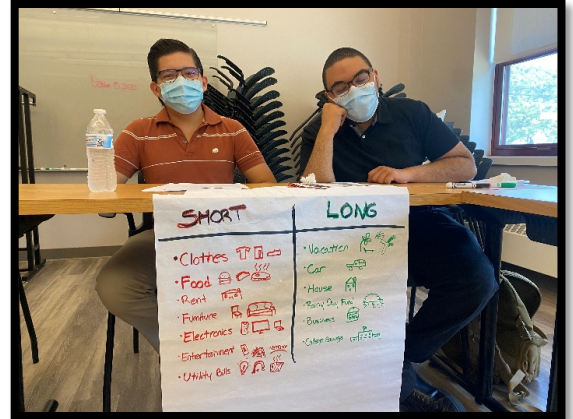


WIOA

- **WIOA Recruitment** continues for out-of-school youth.
- **In development: WIOA has been granted another program year. A budget of \$126k has been approved. The new contract is still pending.**
- The WIOA youth completed their job readiness training and are now working with the Workforce Development Coordinator to be placed in their internship.
- Staff participates in monthly WIOA provider meetings.

Workforce Development Coordinator

- **29 residents** received employment counseling.
- **3 new employer partners established, for a total of 31 YTD.**
- Established partnerships with local employers for WIOA youth- **Providence Animal Rescue League, Roger Williams Daycare Center, and Love Culture Salon.**
- In partnership with the Employment Case Manager, facilitated **the One Providence Summer Youth Program work readiness workshops.**
- 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 July**
- The partnership with HarborOne Bank has enabled us to continue financial counseling services

Homeownership Counseling

- **Served 9 new residents in July**
- In partnership with Washington Trust, **2 Pre-Purchase Counseling Workshops were hosted virtually.**
- **Facilitated budgeting workshops for the One Providence Summer Youth Program.**

FSS

- **\$0 escrow dollars disbursed in July** and \$0 escrow dollars forfeited in July
- FSS staff have been scheduling progress report meetings with FSS participants outside. For the month of July **92 progress report follow up appointments** have been completed
- **57.7% of FSS participants showed an increase in Earned Income** in July (with 42.3% having no increase in earned income) with **an average increase of \$21,693.33**
- There have been 0 extension requests due to Covid in July

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 possibly at some on-site locations at PHA. Due to the partnership, PHA residents do have priority. COVID-19 continues to impact our educational partners' ability to post-test.

- **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 July:
 - **Family RSC's have a combined caseload of 183 Residents**
 - **High-Rise RSC's have a combined caseload of 123 Residents**
- 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 follow up assistance to participating residents through assessing resident needs and referring to appropriate supports, to keep them on track with rent payments.
- The Manton Heights RSC continues to manage the **food distribution program with the YMCA that started April 12, 2021, in which 18 families 50 children between the ages of 2-18 are provided one hot meal and two cold meals every Monday and Thursday.** This program has remained very strong all 18 families continue to participate and very happy for the support of the YMCA providing these meals to their children
- **Manton Heights Success story:** A resident since 2016, went to the RSC a few years back he mentioned that he wasn't sure if he could get a loan for a house since he is disabled, and his wife was working part time at the time. Before the pandemic the RSC helped his wife get a full-time job and coached them with budgeting. They committed to saving money before and throughout the pandemic. They were approved for a house loan and went through the process to get the help they needed to get themselves a house. They are moving to their new home. The RSC is very excited for them because they focused, and they got what they wanted in life!
- **In July, the High-rise RSC's collaborated with Oak Street Health (see pictures below)** to do an outside educational workshop for residents to learn about programs and services offered at Oak Street Health. Oak Street provided coffee and donuts to residents as they handed out informational brochures
 - Dominica Manor had 25 residents attend
 - Parenti Villa had 5 residents attend
 - Kilmartin Plaza had 9 residents attend
 - Carroll Tower had 10 residents attend on a rainy day
 - Hartford Park Tower had 4 residents attend on a rainy day
 - Dexter Manor was cancelled due to bad weather

Dominica Manor Oak Street information session



Hartford Park Tower Oak Street information session



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
- **Lifespan** – MOU 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. Work with RSD grant writers to secure funding for Resident Services, with a priority on Wellness programs.
2. 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
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. RSD section of the PHA Website with OSD

COVID-19 Activities

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

Federal:

In July, OSD sent an updated version of the HUD notification to public housing tenants about the expiring eviction moratorium.

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. More recently we have been providing input to the city of Providence on its Guaranteed Income pilot program, in which 110 low-income families in the city will receive \$500 per month for a year, and how the program may impact the rent and housing subsidies of public housing tenants.

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 – In July, PHA received notice and deposit of \$315,567.72 as reimbursement for Covid-19 expenses associated with testing and vaccination clinics from May 2020 to May 5, 2021, PuroClean's high rise sanitation services, and NESS security guard services that were not covered by Cares Act funds.

COVID-19 Communications and Resident Outreach

Covid 19 Testing and Vaccinations

OSD staff continued to work cross-departmentally to support messaging regarding Covid testing 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.

In July and early August, we worked on new messaging to remind residents that indoor mask restrictions still apply in PHA public spaces and that the rise of the Delta variant makes adherence to these rules even more important. We are also updating signage and banners at the developments to ensure that residents and visitors are aware of continued restrictions.



HUD Covid-19 Webinars

OSD continued to participate 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.

All OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other Funding and Resource Development

Recent funding notifications and updates

State of RI Office of Housing and Community Development – We were provided notification that our request for \$154,655 for workforce development services to support residents who are seeking employment will be awarded from the state of RI with CDBG-COVID funds. The grant is expected to have a two-year term and support addition of a new member to the PHA's resident services team. We are still waiting for a final contract for this funding as of August 16.

Victim of Crime Act 2021- OSD assisted RSD in delivering a grant reapplication for VOCA Community Safety Coordinator and direct services funding.

New and pending applications:

HUD Emergency Health and Safety Grant – Working with the Facilities Management Department, OSD developed and submitted a grant application to HUD, in the amount of \$4 million to address mold issues at units in family units at Hartford Park. This application is still pending.

HAI – PHA submitted two grants to the Housing Authority Insurance Group (HAI) for funding to install fire suppression canister device above stoves in all family units (\$30,217) and fire suppression safety burners in all high rise and elderly/disabled units (\$148,460). This application is still pending.

State of Rhode Island Community Development Covid Response Block Grants- While we did hear back on our other request for workforce development funding as noted above, we were informed that our request for \$128,050 to address needed services for homeless Mainstream

Voucher participants to assist them in securing housing and maintaining tenancies is still under consideration.

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.

Nan McKay 2021 Housing Awards – OSD submitted an application to Nan McKay & Associates, for its annual Resident Service Award. This award recognizes leaders in the affordable housing industry whose community outreach and similar efforts improve the future of the families they serve. PHA’s application focused on its inter-departmental and inter-agency team approach to the Covid-19 epidemic. The Hartford Park and Carroll Tower Residents’ Associations, the RAB, and the City of Providence Office of Healthy Communities provided letters of support for our application. The award winners will be announced in August.

Communications and Resident Outreach

Mass Messaging

OSD has selected a new vendor, Rave Mobile Safety, for its mass messaging operations. During July, OSD worked with the vendor to migrate PHA information to the new software system and Department staff received training on the use of the system. PHA launched its first mass messaging with Rave on July 1st.

	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	25 Month total for June	30 Month Total for July							

** 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: emergency response (elevators down at Hartford Tower and Parenti), COVID vaccinations and Rapid testing, social gatherings, nomination notices for residents to become a member of the Resident Advisory Board or the Board of Commissioners, Senior Food Box distributions and much more.

PHA's Facebook reach continues to grow as we are now at 1,152 page "Likes" and 1,348 accounts following the PHA on Facebook right now- an increase of about 70 followers in a single month. From July 20 to August 16, our posts had a combined reach of more than 8,900, with the vast majority of that coming from a single post about our studio waitlist opening that was viewed more than 8,000 times and shared 80 times.

RAB communications and report

OSD staff members continued to do regular individual check in calls with RAB members to identify resident community concerns and needs and to provide information and updates. Monthly RAB meetings is on hiatus until September 15. OSD continued a series of two RAB monthly group conference calls (one in English, one in Spanish) in July.

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

- Violation of parking policies;
- Understanding the benefits of and how to use the new rent payment system
- 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.

RAB Nominations/Elections

OSD notified all public housing households of the opportunity to be nominated to serve as a Resident Advisory Board member and/or have one's name forwarded to the Mayor for consideration to serve as a PHA Resident Commissioner. Notification consisted of contact by mass messaging, a flyer included in the rent mailer, and via posters on display in Management offices and kiosks. Nomination forms are due to OSD by 8/16/21. If PHA receives more than three nominations in any development, an election will be held to choose RAB members from those developments.

Resident Activities Update

Peoples Garden Project - OSD and PM staff and resident volunteers tended vegetable garden plots at Coddling Court and Chad Brown. To encourage healthy eating habits, expose residents to new foods, and show how residents can use fresh produce, PHA staff demonstrated how to make pesto from basil grown in the Coddling Court garden. Currently the gardens at both developments are doing well. Gardeners are harvesting kales, cucumbers, squash, eggplants, tomatoes and more. Under the NRICD grant, Chad Brown received a much-needed water tank to facilitate and efficiently water their garden.

Chad Brown

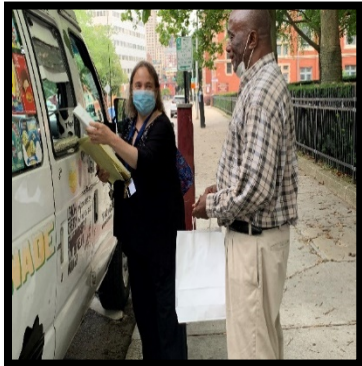


Coddling Court



Sunset Village- At Sunset Village, OSD staff and resident volunteers continue to tend flower beds in two areas of this development.

Social Gathering Events at Dominica Manor, Parenti Villa and Dexter Manor- OSD along with the support of our RAB members, Philip Morris, Patricia Sousa, and Rebecca Wills organized an ice cream truck to deliver free frozen treats to the residents of their developments. More than 50 households from each development were served. The events were designed to provide an opportunity for residents especially the new ones to the building to meet and greet the RAB members and the neighbors. Additionally, OSD took the opportunity to distribute nearly 200 gift bags containing masks, hand sanitizers and other PHA Wellness supplies for residents to remain safe from COVID. Our goal is to bring a sense of community and morale boost despite the continued impact caused by the pandemic.



Other OSD updates

State Opioid Reduction Grant – OSD staff continued to gather and track program activity outcome data from both Providence and Pawtucket Housing Authorities and author monthly reports to the funder (BHDDH). OSD is working with RSD and Finance to complete a budget revision to fully expend grant funds by 9/30/21. Due to restrictions on gatherings imposed by Covid-19, we have funds remaining in line items for outreach events and training, these funds will be re-programmed to purchase additional Nalox Boxes for installation at PHA sites as a measure to prevent opioid overdoses.

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 submitted 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 provided assistance to Departments in completing 4th Quarter reports, reviewed reports, and compiled results and comments into a performance tracking spreadsheet. We also have worked with each department to establish preliminary action plans for year 2 which began in July.

Project Based Vouchers – PHA received 11 proposals seeking 101 project-based vouchers in response to the June PBV RFP. Six proposals are for existing units and five are for new construction/substantial rehab projects. OSD reviewed all applications to determine which

met threshold requirements and requested supplemental information necessary for evaluating and scoring the proposals. OSD has prepared a briefing presentation for the RFP Review Committee; the Committee will meet via Zoom on 8/18 to preliminary review the RFPs and develop a timeline for proposer presentations, score applications and develop a recommendation for the Board of Commissioners in September.

Also, during July, OSD worked with representatives of Joseph Caffey Development LLC to compile information needed for a subsidy layering review that HUD must conduct prior to an approval of an Agreement to Enter into HAP Payment (AHAP) for 8 project based vouchers awarded to the development by the Board of Commissioners in 2020.

Emergency Housing Vouchers – OSD is working to support the efforts of the Admissions office and Leased Housing program to stand up the new 42-unit Emergency Housing Voucher program. We are developing procedures for the use of EHV service funds including a special EHV landlord incentive program; and developing procedures to support program participants to eliminate barriers to housing by providing security deposit assistance; furniture; assistance in paying debt to utilities; and moving cost assistance. OSD is also developing a new chapter for the PHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan to govern the EHV program.