



Annual Plan – Attachment #7 – B.5 Progress Report

B.5 Progress Report. Include a report on the progress the PHA has made in meeting the goals and objectives described in the previous 5-Year Plan.

1. Expand Assisted Housing Opportunities

- a. Apply for additional rental vouchers, as they are available.
 1. In November of 2019 we were awarded 15 Mainstream vouchers.
- b. Target expansion of VASH program, including full utilization of those Vouchers, as well as implementing project-basing of vouchers
 1. Additional efforts to reach full utilization continue to be a struggle because of the high turnover endemic in the VASH program.
 2. In October of 2019, we hired an occupancy specialist whom is assigned only the VASH program which has made significant improvements to the processing of VASH.
- c. Actively review FMR's and two-year tool to provide highest Payment Standard allowable to allow voucher holders greater flexibility in the use of their vouchers and reduce rent burden.
 1. In October of 2019 the FMR's were updated.

2. Improve Quality of Assisted Housing

- a. Utilize Capital Fund and grants to upgrade the 110 public housing units in accordance with Physical Needs Assessment and/or modernize.
 1. A new Green Physical Needs Assessment completed in January of 2019, and the 5-Year Action Plan developed in conjunction with completion of Physical Needs Assessment is part of this Plan.
- b. Explore opportunity for RAD Conversion.
 1. NHA will seek approval from board in 2021 to send out an RFP for a consultant to analyze whether the benefits to the housing authority and residents.

3. Collaborate with larger area PHAs to offer programs not currently available to Section 8 Voucher Participants such as Homeownership and Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS).

- a. NHA makes referrals to Holyoke and Greenfield HA's for participants interested in FSS, and to Holyoke HA's for participants interested in Home Ownership Program.

4. Improve Cost Efficiency and Resident Satisfaction

- a. Produce and/or Utilize Educational Videos for: Initial Briefings, Lease Orientation, HQS, Family Self-Sufficiency, Financial Education, and Lease compliance.
 1. Staff utilize a briefing video for HCV in addition to a formal presentation conducted by HCV Property Manager.





2. Financial Literacy Class was hosted at Florence Heights in 2019 in collaboration with partner agency CHD.
- b. Utilize Energy Audits/Evaluations to reduce energy and utility consumption/costs for agency and residents by utilizing energy efficient appliances and fixtures and education.
 1. NHA continues to seek additional ways to reduce energy.
 2. Newsletters sent out to PH residents include tips/education on reducing energy.
- c. Fine-tune its processes to help residents identify the critical needs and coordinate them across the supportive services through resident services
 1. NHA hosts monthly meetings with residents in addition to continually seeking feedback with our Family and Elderly Resident Services Coordinators assigned to properties.

5. Improve Community Quality of Life

- a. Utilize CORI and Online Rental Exchange to better screen applicants.
 1. Staff continues to utilize Online Rental Exchange and CORI for screening.
- b. Partner with local organizations/entities such as the Northampton Public Schools to provide after school enrichment programs at Florence Heights, family development.
 1. Grant was renewed in 2019 for Florence Heights and continues to host after school programs two days a week for children/families.
- c. Enforce policies that address Non-Smoking in Public Housing.
 1. Staff continue to provide ongoing education in the form of referrals to RSC team, newsletter tips, and smoking cessation classes/referrals. Lease violations continue to be sent by the property manager.
- d. Encourage development of Tenant Association at Florence Heights.
 1. RSC and Management Teams continue to discuss with residents the possibility.
- e. Develop Website for Agency to provide residents and the public with information about the NHA.
 1. Website has been active since 2019 and is updated monthly.
- f. Collaborate with city officials on grant opportunities to better our properties and would like to install playground at our federal family units.
 1. NHA continues to apply for various grants available including CDBG and CPC. NHA was awarded CDBG funds and CPC funds for several state properties and will continue to seek funds for federal.
- g. Install security cameras to help reduce crime activity and be able to share the with local police to help fight crime and increase the safety of our tenants.
 1. Capital Fund Grant for FY 23 and FY24 contains funding for installation at both federal developments.
- h. Encourage/support tenants at all properties to join/create a neighborhood watch organization.
 1. NHA is working with one state property in which the organization has been up and running for just under a year. NHA will utilize the RSC



team to connect properties/residents to create at federal properties if desired.

- i. Resident services coordinator will added to federal property to coordinate communication between tenants and local service providers.
 - 1. Both developments were budgeted and had RSC staff onsite starting in 2019.

6. Attract, Retain and Develop Qualified Staff

- a. Offer career opportunities and benefits that successfully compete with other housing authorities as well as private and public employers.
 - 1. NHA has promoted several employees to management staff through review of their dedication, commitment, and documented success. Additionally, NHA continues to review its benefits package and remain competitive in the surrounding county.
- b. Foster workplace environment where employees feel supported and encouraged to pursue on-going professional development.
 - 1. NHA teams regularly host meetings and encourage staff to seek professional development.
- c. Provide access to training programs and certifications for all employees.
 - 1. Staff have been offered HAI trainings, Nelrod Calculation Trainings, and one-on-one training from manager and compliance senior manager.

7. Increase Public Awareness of Agency and Affordable Housing

- a. Promote housing programs through quarterly new landlord trainings.
 - 1. NHA is finalizing presentation and is working on hosting it's first training in 2020.
- b. Promote initiatives through comprehensive communications program.
 - 1. NHA has reorganized in-person traffic so that our section 8 reception area only receives HCV participants and landlords and our Public Housing Properties have offices. Additionally, NHA has started a newsletter for PH properties and is developing a voucher participant and landlord newsletter.
- c. Pursue opportunities for collaboration and partnership with local organizations and entities.
 - 1. NHA works collaboratively with the Center for Human Development and the Tenancy Preservation Program as well other local organizations to offer or coordinate the delivery of voluntary tenancy support and other services and supports to persons with disabilities.
 - 2. NHA leveraged resources from a partner organizations (Community Action of Pioneer Valley, Catholic Charities, Soldiers On, and Way Finders) to assist with the cost of securing units rent deposit, move-in costs, and/or furniture.



8. Additional Compliance and Asset Management

- a. NHA is refining its asset management of Public Housing providing more direct on-site management and maintenance of public housing assets.
 - 1. In July of 2019, we opened offices at our 6 main properties making all 7 of our developments have office and maintenance coverage.
- b. Provide quarterly educational opportunities for all staff to improve HUD compliance at Public Housing developments and for the Section 8 program.
 - 1. Staff have been offered HAI trainings, Nelrod Calculation Trainings, and one-on-one training from manager and compliance senior manager.
- c. NHA has launched the Landlord Portal and our goal is to have 100% of landlords signed-up and on ACH.
 - 1. NHA currently has 98% of landlords signed-up for ACH.

9. Excellence in the Administration of Programs

- a. Maintain 95% or better occupancy/utilization rate for each NHA housing program.
 - 1. NHA achieved 100% utilization of its VASH ineligibles in 2019 after executing additional MOU following approval from HUD.
 - 2. NHA has increased utilization by 1% between March 2019 and March 2020.
 - 3. Additional efforts to reach full utilization continue to be a struggle because of the high turnover endemic in the VASH program.
- b. Earn a High Performer designation through the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) and the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP).
 - 1. PHAS FY19 rating received: High Performer
 - 2. Section 8 and Finance team members attended a training in 2019 and achieved Standard Performer for SEMAP
- c. Ensure that the capital fund grants are being used for the public housing moderation based on the current updated GPNA 2019.
 - 1. A new Green Physical Needs Assessment completed in January of 2019, and 5-Year Action Plan developed in conjunction with completion of Physical Needs Assessment is part of this Plan.
- d. Explore opportunity for RAD Conversion.
 - 1. NHA will seek approval from board in 2021 to send out an RFP for a consultant to analyze whether the benefits to the housing authority and residents.