

PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
RESIDENT SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE APRIL 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 whenever possible.

- 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 including Outreach for the Leased Housing Department. 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 March, and **PHA food boxes available for emergencies**. In March there were **160 RIFB** Senior boxes, and **4 emergency PHA food boxes** delivered.

PHASE 10: PHA continues to up-date the COVID 19 Hotline daily – In March there were **40 COVID follow up calls** to residents, **164 calls for vaccination questions and registration**

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

PHASE 12: Youth programs outreach

Program Updates:

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.

	Family RSC's	Highrise RSC's	VOCA	SOR	CHW	ECM/ Financial Coach	LICSW	FSS	Wkforce Developer	TOTAL
Referrals to RSD from PM/Other Departments	62	7	43	5	82	24	10	0	0	233
Interdepartmental referrals within RSD for services	31	6	0	0	3	21	2	0	3	66
External referrals to outside agencies for services	27	9	0	0	1	55	1	3	0	96
Number of Residents following up on internal referrals	20	0	0	0	2	7	1	0	0	30

1) **WELLNESS PROGRAMS:**

Wellness Coordinator/SOR

- Added **3 additional Resident to his caseload in March and conducted 4 follow up assessments.**
- The Coordinator during February conducted 10 Zoom support meetings, Coffee and Conversation focused on alcohol abuse issues with a presentation from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- Planning return to Dexter Manor office in April
- Partnership development with **CODAC** to partner with their pop-up van services.

VOCA Coordinator

- **39 new clients** in March, for a total caseload of **168 Victims of Crime clients served**
- **Second new FTE VOCA Coordinator offer to Julia Silva**
- 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
- Planning Dexter Manor office space for two staff in April
- Partnership development with **Blackstone Advocacy Center**

Community Health Worker

- **12 new Residents** who completed a health screening tool with the Community Health Worker, for a **total of 44 Residents** who have completed screening.
- Participated in the weekly Critical Response Team
- Assisted Residents in applying for COVID-19 Relief funding from ONE/NB
- **During March, the CHW has participated in all Covid vaccination events**

LICSW

- **27 new clients in March, 83 total clients to date**
- Spearheading post Covid Wellness Team presentation to RAB for April meeting
- Continues to supervise an MSW student from RIC, Grace Canton.
- Participated in the weekly Critical Response Team
- Partnership development with the **Providence Center**

2) WORKFORCE PROGRAMS:

WIOA

- **WIOA Recruitment continues, 21 total youth enrolled.**
- Success Story: **Aneury Lantigua joined the WIOA youth program in September of 2020.** The Employment Case Manager (ECM) remembers having a conversation with Aneury, and he stated, "I have no idea what I want to do, I'm just filling this out to see where this goes," and the ECM remembers telling him not to worry about it; we would figure it out. Fast forward to today, Aneury has decided to become a Providence Fire Fighter and wants to follow in his cousin's footsteps and save lives. Not only does he want to work in Providence, but he wants to serve the community that's been a part of his life since infancy: The Manton Heights community. **Aneury's training proposal was approved, and with WIOA funding, he is now training to become a Certified EMT. This training will jump-start his career and provide the experience needed to give Aneury advancement once the Providence Fire Fighter Academy portal opens and he can apply.** He is set to **complete his training in June 2021.** Aneury was also hired permanently after his internship at Urban Greens Co-op.
- Staff participated in monthly WIOA provider meetings



Workforce Development Coordinator

- **25 residents received employment counseling**
- **4 new employer partners established, for a total of 20 YTD**
- Continuous follow-up with WIOA youth at their worksite and virtual weekly meeting with their worksite supervisors every Friday afternoon
- Lifespan partnership MOU is in development
- Connection with Sodexo has been made, we will be referring our residents for direct hire

- Continues to support JPP participants that are looking for employment

Financial Coach/Homeownership Program

- **Served 27 residents in February**
- The partnership with HarborOne Bank has enabled us to continue financial counseling services- **14 Financial Counseling**
- Residents sent to NeighborWorks for homeownership services- **13 Homeownership Counseling**
- Still in development: 3 previous financial counseling clients completed Twin Accounts Loan and are in the process of receiving their matched funds to pay debtors

FSS

- **\$120,558.56 escrow dollars disbursed**, and \$6,974.77 escrow dollars forfeited FYTD
- FSS staff have been scheduling progress report meetings with FSS participants outside. For the month of March **79 progress report follow up appointments** have been completed
- **42.85% of FSS participants showed an increase in Earned Income** in February with an average increase of \$12,573.67
- There have been 0 extension requests due to Covid in February
- The quarterly **Program Coordinating Committee (PCC)** meetings for the year were established, and outreach to **over 40 partners** was conducted and tracked on a Partnership Grid. **Over 30 partners attended** the first quarterly meeting on Thursday, March 4th

Adult Education Programs:

- **Genesis Center**-conducting on-line distance learning for Adult Basic Education classes. 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:

- Remote support to caseload clients: **Family RSC's have a combined caseload of 191 Residents**, and **High-Rise RSC's have a combined caseload of 80 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
- Program planning for One Providence Summer Youth Internship program, with a focus at Chad Brown Family Development

- Lead RSC is leading the Food Delivery Program to determine emergency need and organize safe delivery for the RIFB Senior boxes at Dominica Manor, Dexter Manor, and Parenti Villa.
- High Rise RSC is leading the Covid Hotline project: (see Covid Section of report)
- Parenti Villa Food Pantry restarting in April

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
- **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
3. FS Program Coordinating Committee (PCC), MOUs for partner agencies
4. Grant writer RFP for RSD –RFP was revamped for two grant writers: one focusing on Mental and Behavioral Health Wellness, and one on Workforce
5. Interviewed for a P/T HUD Housing Counselor
6. Planning for reestablishing Parenti Villa food pantry in April
7. Food taskforce recognition

COVID-19 Activities

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

Federal:

Participation in calls with HUD and reviewing federal guidance. OSD participated in a statewide PHA call with the HUD Boston office on April 8. As noted in further detail below, OSD also organized a meeting held on Wednesday, April 7th between members of the PHA resident Advisory Board and United States Senator Jack Reed. Nine residents participated.

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 began gathering documentation for an application for additional FEMA reimbursement for Covid costs associated with testing and vaccination clinics from May 2020 to the present, 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%.

City of Providence CDBG – The Mayor recommended and city council gave initial approval to a new CDBG COVID relief budget that includes \$112,000 for PHA to conduct COVID relief activities including testing and vaccination. Approval is likely to be finalized in May and funds awarded to PHA at that time – funds would be available to be spent until Sept 30, 2022.

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 worked 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.

All OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other Funding and Resource Development

New and pending applications:

ROSS –PHA received notice that it will receive funding, in the amount of \$478,500, for the support of two positions over three years. In the funding announcement, we noted that only three housing Authorities - Houston, Allegheny County (PA), and New York HA's ROSS partner received funding for three positions. We will request a file review with HUD to determine what factors resulted in PHA being awarded funding for two positions instead of three.

United Way of RI – OSD submitted a proposal to the UWRI for its Community Impact Fund grant program. PHA proposed an education and employment support program, *Pathway to Opportunity/Camino a Oportunidad*, focused on reaching the Black, Indigenous and Persons of Color (BIPOC) communities in Providence. PHA received notice in late March that it was not selected for an award in this funding round; we will request a de-briefing meeting so that we can learn how PHA might be more competitive in future requests for proposals.

City of Providence Community Development Block Grants- OSD submitted proposals during March: \$47,500 for education and workforce development support at the Anton Center; \$85,439 to support replacing sliding building entry doors at Carroll Tower and Dominica Manor; and \$25,000 for additional security cameras at Hartford Park, Kilmartin Plaza, and Coddington Court. The Mayor has included \$43,000 for the Anton Center programming and \$85,000 for the door replacement project in his draft City budget – this budget has been submitted to the City Council and is still under review.

RIHousing Bridging the Digital Divide Grant – Pending: OSD drafted and applied for just under \$63,000 to provide devices, internet service, digital literacy classes, and tech support to residents in partnership with the Providence Public Library. Generations on Line, a national nonprofit with a focus on digital literacy for seniors, was also incorporated as they are working with us to provide free digital learning applications on every device as well as a special guide that our residents can provide to caregivers and family members who they may rely on for help with their devices.

RI Office of Healthy Aging – OSD submitted a grant seeking funding, in the amount of \$7,083 to support new cameras at Carroll Tower in the following locations: elevators, lobby, building access station at front door, and in the courtyard. PHA has been awarded the requested funding, signed a contract with the State, and is awaiting a purchase order to proceed with the project. Installation of the cameras will be completed by 6/30/21.

Senate Legislative Grants OSD is in the process of completing the FY 2021 Legislative Grant proposal for the Kilmartin Plaza Planning Committee grant sponsored by State Representative Slater (\$1,500). The grant will go to fund outdoor events in adherence to current CDC pandemic guidelines and allow residents to support their annual gardening projects.

401 Gives – OSD is preparing the PCOC messaging for 401 Gives, a United Way sponsored day of charitable giving across the Ocean State.

United Way of Rhode Island 21 Day Equity Challenge – OSD staff participated in this initiative designed to raise awareness of unconscious bias, privilege, and structural racism and how individuals and organizations can play a role in fostering more just, inclusive, and equitable communities.

2021 People’s Garden Project (NRICD: Northern Rhode Island Conservation District) Grant– OSD signed the Participant Agreement Form for grant to initiate \$11,000 in funding for garden projects (construction of raised beds, purchases of garden supplies, etc.) starting on April 1st at Chad Brown, Coddington Court and Hartford Park. On April 13, first on-site visit to Chad Brown made to review current condition of the gardening area and logistics needed to have all three grounds in each development ready for the upcoming gardening season.

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 As of 4/13										

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

Messages reflected COVID vaccinations, Artist-in-Residence programming at Hartford Park, City vaccination notices for Section 8 residents, Senior Food Box distributions and much more.

PHA's Facebook reach continues to grow as we are now at 1,013 page "Likes" and 1,184 accounts following the PHA on Facebook right now. In the past two months, we also have a following of 158 users on Instagram, which we continue to grow as we build out our work on this platform.

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:

- Concerns about residents and visitors not taking mask wearing seriously;
- Concerns about residents gathering in lobbies in some developments;
- Violation of parking policies;
- Illegal dumping by outsiders; and
- Residents struggling with mental health, especially depression and addiction issues due to the pandemic.

The March RAB meeting on 3/17 featured a presentation by Catholic Charities about their outreach services and a PHA staff presentation by Michelle Booth about the Annual Plan.

OSD made the concerted effort to send the RAB members a copy of the FY2021 Annual Plan along with an overview/summary presentation two weeks ahead of the meeting. Both documents were translated into Spanish. Our goal was to give RAB members enough time to review and give feedback on the FY 2021 Annual Plan; the effort resulted in RAB members providing 27 comments which were included in the submission of the Annual Plan/Capital Plan.

On Thursday, March 18 the Wellness Center hosted a Naloxone training to RAB members interested in learning how to use NARCAN kits to prevent opioid overdoses. The objective is to have as many RAB members as possible trained and equipped with the kits to use for any possible overdoses in their developments.

OSD invited Senator Jack Reed for a special meeting with RAB members including our Deputy Executive Director, Melissa Sanzaro and, the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners Nic Retsinas. The senator addressed issues raised by our RAB members regarding affordable housing, accessing immediate medical attention for seniors (telehealth), concerns and discussion regarding with MTM senior medical transport, the Kennedy Hub Plaza controversy and easement on pandemic guidelines for Rhode Island in the coming future.

YMCA Food Drive at Manton Heights - OSD staff trained to participate in providing packaged meals to families with children in the development. Each child in a household receives a day's worth of food (a quart of milk, three entrees, bread and three fruits). The program will run throughout the summer on Mondays and Thursdays.

Fire Safety

OSD has reinstated PHA's fire safety training for residents mandated to attend when a noncompliance has been issued. Due to the pandemic, trainings will be one on one (no classes or group sessions) held via virtual conferencing or by phone. The first training session occurred on November 16 by phone. For the month of March, a total of seven residents received one-on-one fire safety training. OSD staff translated the training manual into Spanish and made the necessary changes to facilitate a one on one phone/virtual communication. OSD continue to monitor fire incident alerts on a weekly basis.

Policy efforts

City and state policy – On April 13, the RI House of Representatives and RI Senate both gave final passage to legislation to ban housing discrimination based on a lawful source of income – the bill was sponsored by Providence Representative Anastasia Williams and Pawtucket Senator Meghan Kallman. On Thursday, April 15, Governor Dan McKee signed the bill in a small ceremony at the United Way of Rhode Island and it is going into effect immediate. Our office is working on a strategy to notify landlords in Providence about this new law, and will work to partner with fair housing advocates in the community in this effort. We will also share information with voucher holders going forward about the law and how to contact the Housing Resources Commission to report discrimination.

Strategic Planning and Plan Implementation

OSD staff completed the formal strategic plan status report and the document has been provided to Board members. The report has also been disseminated to Department Directors. In April OSD is reviewing quarterly updates on strategic plan progress submitted by all departments.

Collaboration with Security Department

OSD facilitated a ZOOM meeting between the PHA's Security Department and the Lowell to explore ways in which the LHA is addressing Covid issues and to learn about their general crime prevention initiatives, systems for tracking and reporting statistical data, use of camera systems, and collaborations with law enforcement. OSD staff also met with Rhode Island

College's Professor Rick Reamer on March 29 to discuss internship opportunities that would support PHA initiatives to enhance safety and security on PHA properties.

Other Initiatives

Collaboration with RSD – State Opioid Reduction Program – OSD staff continued to serve as the PHA liaison to BHDDH, our funder, and coordinated meetings of PHA/PawtHA partnership, provided statistical data concerning opioid use and overdose rates, and authored monthly reports to BHDDH.

ConnectHome PVD – OSD and Security team staff met with partners at ONE Neighborhood Builders to explore expansion of Olneyville's free Wi-Fi service into Manton Heights and if connections through the OSHEAN network could be made to Hartford Park and Parenti Villa as well. Collaborating on resource development for this project is on-going.

Project Based Vouchers – OSD is working to develop a new potential request for proposals for project-based vouchers to issue in the coming months, incorporating lessons learned from the last RFP that was issued in late 2018.

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. April 15, we have approved 27 landlord incentives totaling \$15,000 with 25 of them going to new landlords, three 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.

HUD Repositioning – OSD staff participated in HUD's March 17 *Public Housing Repositioning: Preservation Strategies* webinar to keep abreast of repositioning tools potentially available to PHA. OSD staff also participated in HUD's *RAD Repositioning Convening* event on March 24 that involved housing authorities on the East Coast.

Annual Plan: OSD provided a presentation about the Annual Plan to the Board of Commissioners on March 25 and subsequently submitted the Annual and Capital Plans, along with an application to renew the elderly-only designation of Carroll Tower and Dominica Manor, to HUD. PHA held a meeting with regional HUD staff to provide further information on the elderly-only designation request.