



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

100 BROAD ST. | PROVIDENCE, RI 02903





INTRODUCTION | 5

MESSAGE FROM THE ED AND
BOARD CHAIR | 5

ABOUT PHA | 6

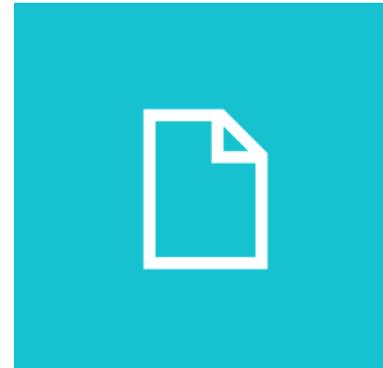


WHO WE ARE | 7

COMMISSIONERS | 7

LEADERSHIP TEAM | 8

RESIDENT ADVISORY | 9



HOW WE PLANNED | 10

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW | 10

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT | 11



WHERE WE'RE GOING | 15

MISSION, VISION, VALUES | 15

GOAL 1 | 16

GOAL 2 | 17

GOAL 3 | 18

GOAL 4 | 19



HOW WE'LL GET THERE | 20

IMPLEMENTATION | 20

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 | 21



APPENDIX | 22

CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT
SUMMARY | 22

THANK YOU | 23

INTRODUCTION | PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Founded in 1939, the Providence Housing Authority provides affordable housing to more than 12,000 residents in the City of Providence. The PHA administers 2,606 public housing units that house 5,613 residents. These units are designated as elderly/disabled, family, and scattered sites developments. It oversees the administration of more than 2,700 units of tenant based and project-based rental assistance Section 8 vouchers that allow low-income families to rent in the private market.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



NICOLAS RETSINAS
CHAIRMAN



MELISSA SANZARO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director of the Providence Housing Authority (PHA), we are very pleased to present the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan (the Plan) to the community. The authority has eighty years of experience in providing affordable housing throughout the City of Providence, doing so alongside our residents and collaborators from civic and social entities that were essential to our rich history and success.

The PHA's Board and leaders recognized the need to develop a plan that fortified the many things that worked well at the PHA and to establish a well-designed pathway to strengthen and grow our role as one of the state's largest housing providers.

Our real estate portfolio and the thousands of vouchers that we administer have been a long-standing presence in almost every neighborhood in Providence. Our approach has always been to look beyond housing and connect our residents with much needed social supports that promote successful tenancy. Although housing authorities across the country face daunting challenges with aging housing stock and insufficient funds to address their growing capital needs, the PHA's track record shows that we have a knack for taking on those challenges with vigor and are prone to lean into change and innovation for the sake of exceeding our commitment to public service.

The goals and strategies laid out in this Plan will help us navigate our new efforts to enhance and better leverage capital and social resources for our residents and participants and ensure equitable access to the vast opportunities offered in this great city and state.

The PHA is unique in that we not only serve the community but we ARE the community. Our staff, our residents, our neighbors and our stakeholders must play a part in achieving the goals laid out before us. As the PHA presents this plan, we ask you to "dream big" with us and it is our hope that the Plan inspires you to join us in a collaborative journey to sustain our mission in years to come.

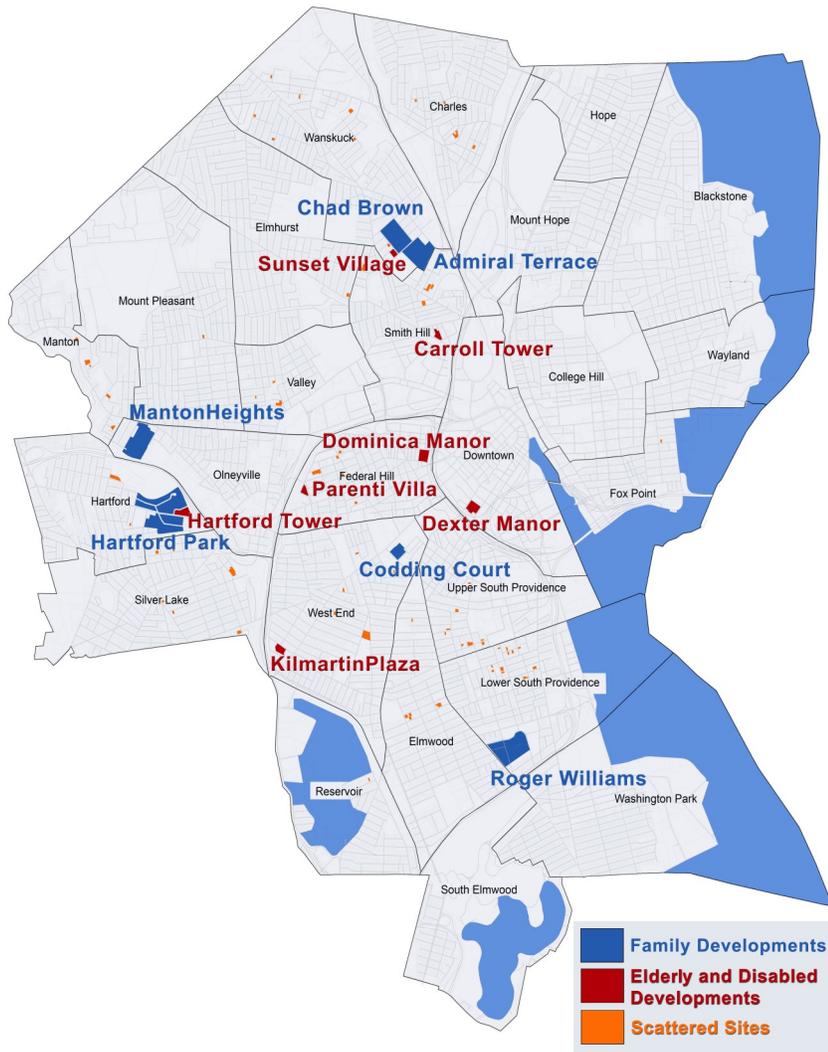
Respectfully,





PHA PROPERTY LOCATIONS

The map below shows the locations of our public housing developments throughout Providence.



Family Developments

Name	Units	Neighborhood
Admiral Terrace	153	Wanskuck
Chad Brown	198	Wanskuck
Codding Court	120	West End
Hartford Park	388	Hartford
Manton Heights	330	Olneyville
Roger Williams	40	Southside
Scattered Sites	244	Citywide

Elderly/Disabled Developments

Name	Units	Neighborhood
Dexter Manor I & II	291	Downtown
Hartford Park Tower	120	Hartford
Kilmartin Plaza	106	West End
Parenti Villa	194	Federal Hill
Sunset Village	24	Wanskuck

Elderly Only Developments

Name	Units	Neighborhood
Carroll Tower	194	Smith Hill
Dominica Manor	204	Federal Hill

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners drove the process of updating our mission, vision, and goals for this Strategic Plan. Through their leadership and passion, they have provided the direction necessary to guide PHA to success. The Board of Commissioners is comprised of three (3) residents from the PHA who are appointed by the Mayor from a list of nominees chosen by residents in open elections. The Mayor also directly appoints six (6) additional members. Two (2) Board members are elected by the Providence City Council from among its members.



Nicolas Retsinas
Chairman



Thomas Ryan
Vice Chairman



Roger Giraud
Commissioner



Jessica Cigna
Commissioner



Eddie Peguero
Commissioner



Vivian Medina
Commissioner



Rochelle Lee
Commissioner



Hon. John Iglizzi
Commissioner



Hon. Mary Kay Harris
Commissioner



Lonzie Doggett
Commissioner



Larry D'Alfonso
Commissioner

PHA DEPARTMENTS DIRECTORS

The Providence Housing Authority includes ten departments that manage various aspects of the PHA's work. Each department worked with interdisciplinary teams of PHA staff to develop action steps and metrics for measuring success in each goal area. The inclusive process for involvement will translate into a stronger implementation process, as our team collectively knows where we are going and how we plan to get there. The PHA leadership team has both content expertise and many years of leadership experience to carry our Plan to fruition and lead us forward through this journey with the help of our dedicated staff members.



Executive Director: *Melissa Sanzaro*

Human Resources: *Kim Dawley, Director*

Security: *Daniel Murphy, Director and Tina Perrault, Associate Director*

Strategy & Development: *Peter Asen, Director*

Resident Services: *Julie Piccolo, Director*

Information Technology: *Nancy Mattes, Director*

Facilities Management: *Allan Pacific, Director and Mark Theroux, Associate Director*

Legal Counsel: *Louise Marcus*

Property Management & Tenant Selection: *Michelle Rocchio, Director and Jackie Martinez, Associate Director*

Finance, Accounting, & Budgeting: *Linda Poole, Director and Lee Lamothe, Associate Director*

Leased Housing: *Donna de la Rosa, Director and Vanessa Galarza, Associate Director*

RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD

The PHA Resident Advisory Board (RAB) serves in a leadership capacity. Members are resident volunteers elected by their respective developments who provide feedback and a touch point for our staff and partners regarding life at the PHA. The RAB experienced transformational growth since the last strategic planning process, in both the number of members and also as far as the integral role they play as leaders in our community. The RAB's involvement in this process included surveys and focus groups, with members offering diverse and honest opinions about the current state of the PHA and their hopes for the future.



“The PHA and the RAB are partners. We work together on issues to make our communities better places.”

Deborah Wray, RAB member



RAB Members include:
Larry D'Alfonso (President),
Antonio Rivera, Carlos Martinez,
Cecil Vega, Deborah Wray,
Diana Freeman, Elizabeth Gillins,
Francisco “Jimmy” Lara, Ivette Morengo,
Jorge Nurena, Lonzie Doggett,
Lourdes Morales, Maria Mendez,
Margaret Kehyeiah, Patricia Sousa,
Philip Morris, Rebecca Willas,
Stanley Moten, Terry Allen, and
Vivian Medina.

HOW WE PLANNED | AN OVERVIEW

The Providence Housing Authority engaged in an extensive process over the past year to develop this Strategic Plan (the Plan). The three central goals of the process were to develop a Plan which:

- Builds upon PHA’s organizational strengths and successes to support organizational growth, affordable housing, and contribute to the prosperity of the City of Providence;
- Establishes yearly milestones which identify, communicate, and monitor progress of key priorities to assist in the advancement of the Strategic Plan; and,
- Communicates organizational priorities.

THE PROCESS

At the start of planning, the PHA knew it could not create a path forward without assistance. The Bronner Group, LLC (Bronner) joined the PHA as a consultant to shepherd us through the process.



STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

Key stakeholder groups were surveyed between September 20th and October 9th, 2019. Building managers and resident leaders teamed up for a friendly competition to see which development had the highest percentage of responses.

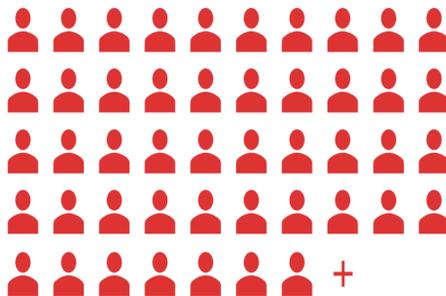
Employee Survey

123 Responses



Resident Survey

473 Responses



HCV Participant Survey

113 Responses



Landlord Survey

94 Responses



Vendor Survey

36 Responses



RESPECTFUL

“It was very important to us that this process be inclusive, equitable and representative of a diversity of voices.”

~ Kim Dawley, Human Resources



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Key stakeholders including PHA Employees, HCV/Section 8 Participants, Community/City Government Partners and Resident Advisory Board Members were interviewed between September 10th and October 4th.

Stakeholder Interviews

49 Responses



LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.”

~ Henry Ford



On April 13, 2019 the Board of Commissioners and PHA’s senior leadership team met to reflect on the organization’s rich 80 year history and to discuss the future of the PHA, determining how they wanted to lead the organization forward.

Later that year, Bronner facilitated a Vision Setting Retreat with those same leaders, where participants identified a set of core values, drafted preliminary mission and vision statements, and identified nine preliminary goals for the organization to prioritize.

Our Board of Commissioners provided the PHA team with a guiding light through this process and into the next phase of planning—implementation.



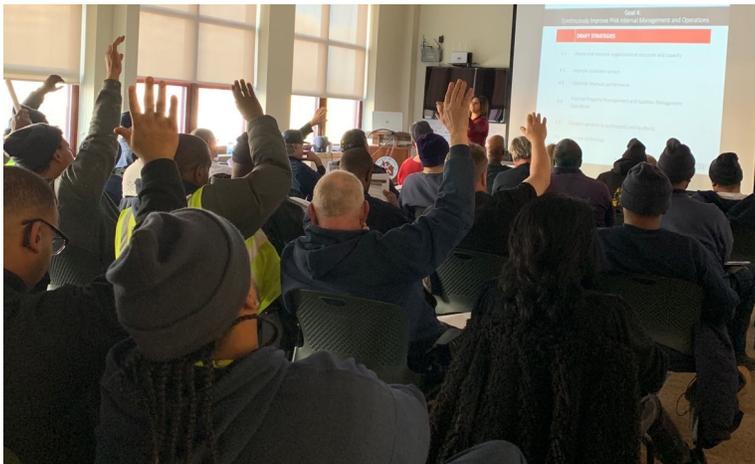
WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

Bronner Group, LLC representatives facilitated working group meetings from January 13 to 15, 2020 and on Tuesday January 21st. During these meetings staff collaborated on strategy and action planning.

Held **19 one-hour meetings** to discuss each strategy.



Prioritized actions and drafted metrics for **160 action items**.



CREATIVITY

“The Strategic Planning Process highlighted that our team is ready to work. We’re creative and willing to try new things to lead our communities forward.

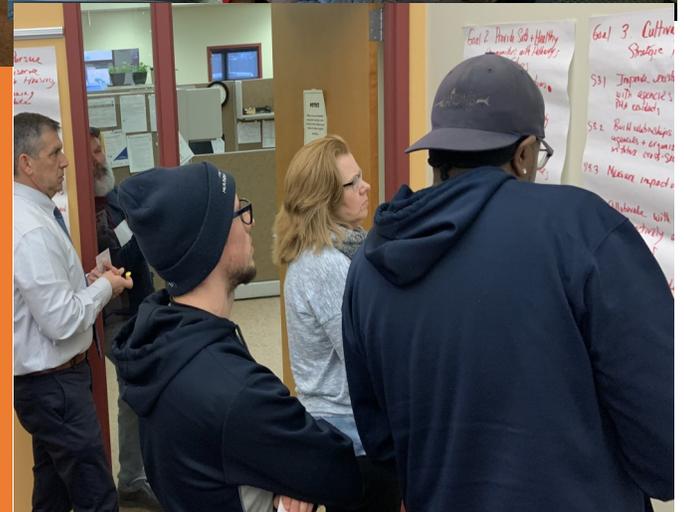
Together we will succeed!”

~ Jackie Martinez, Property Management

OWNERSHIP

“Everyone [on staff] got a chance to participate and contribute to the strategic planning process.”

~ Michelle Booth, Strategy & Development



INNOVATION

“This process allowed our whole team to jump in and share their thoughts. They brought creativity and a can-do spirit to the challenges in front of us and an understanding that things may change because we’re constantly evolving.”

Allan Pacific, Facilities Management

THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Throughout the strategic planning process, there was involvement from the Board of Commissioners, leadership team, and staff at all levels of the organization showing how the PHA embodies its core values like equity, accountability, and respect.

The PHA’s Executive Director and Office of Strategy and Development consistently provided information on the process, updates, and opportunities for input. From surveys to report-out presentations, small group meetings, and large town halls, this process reflects who we are – a team.

Our process developed a Strategic Plan that is responsive, forward thinking, and reflective of those who will be responsible for its implementation.

More than **130 PHA staff** participated, including **50 from Facilities Management.**



INSPIRATION



José Martinez grew up at Hartford Park. Now, he works in the PHA’s Facilities Management department.

After one of the town hall style strategic planning sessions where we learned about site demographics, José took initiative and asked the PHA for permission to start a youth basketball league at Manton Heights to engage more young people in activities on-site. With a little help from staff across the agency, he was able to run a 10-week program for our youth this past fall.

“I lived here. I work here. So I get it—how our kids feel and that they need something to do and someone to look up in a positive way. This was a way for me to contribute, give back to the organization, and be that role model for someone.”

ACCOUNTABILITY

“Strategic planning can typically mean excel budgets and numbers for a Finance Department. This process has been delightfully different, and has allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of departmental outcomes.”

~ Erica Mandeville, Finance

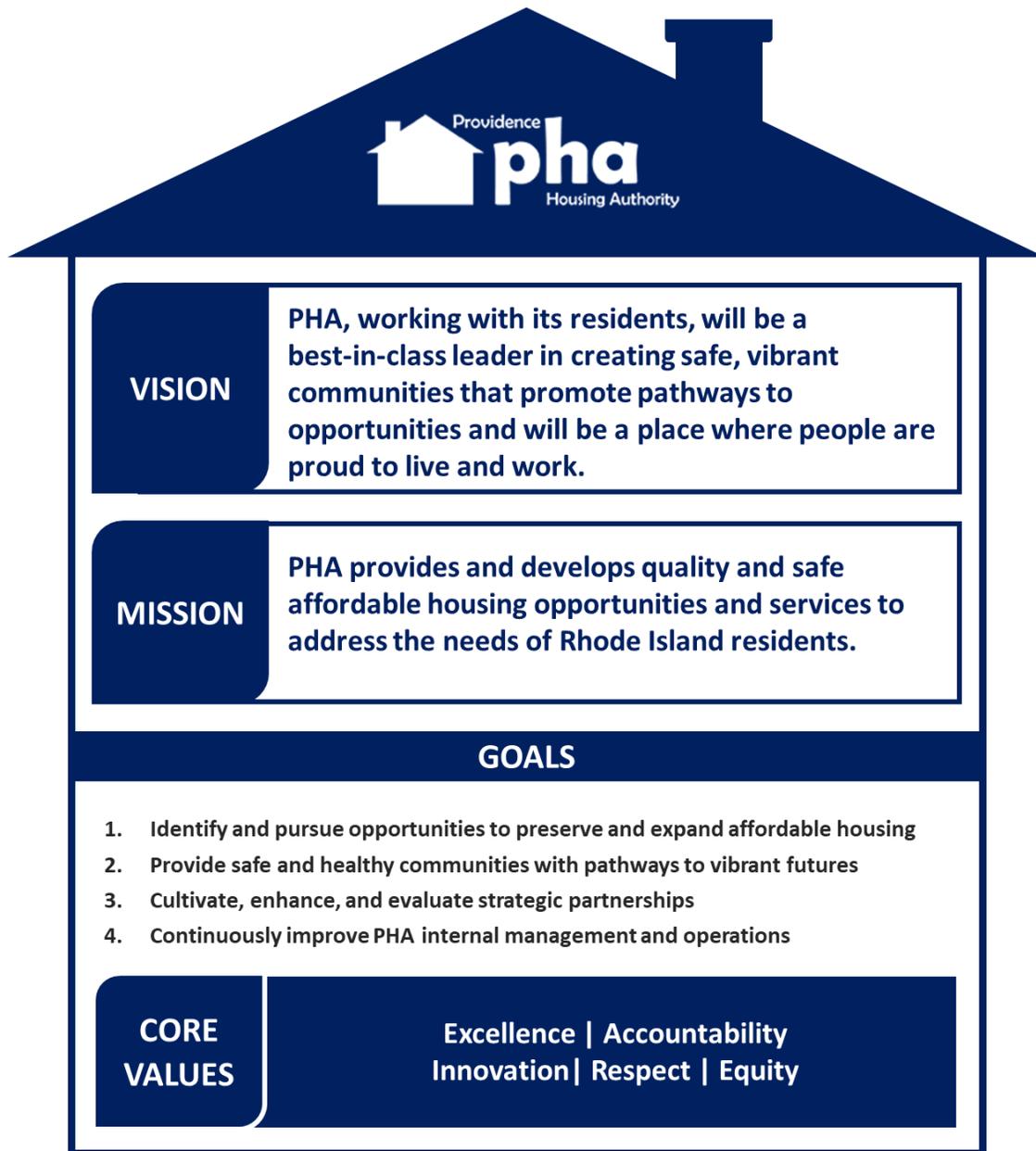


WHERE WE'RE GOING | MISSION, VISION, VALUES

This Strategic Plan contains four Goals, driven by our dedication to our core values:

Excellence, Accountability, Innovation, Respect, and Equity.

Each Goal contains strategies and specific action items to measure PHA's success.



Identify and Pursue Opportunities to Preserve and Expand Affordable Housing

STRATEGIES

1

Assess Viability of Repositioning Components of the PHA's Real Estate Portfolio

2

Utilize Existing and New Resources to Expand Affordable Housing Options

3

Ensure Meaningful Engagement of PHA Residents in Preservation and Expansion Efforts

4

Support Environmental Sustainability and Conservation in Response to Effects of Climate Change



Provide Safe and Healthy Communities with Pathways to Vibrant Futures

STRATEGIES

1

Enhance Security on PHA Properties

2

Promote Access to Effective Economic Opportunity, Education, and Health Services for Residents and Participants

3

Increase Outreach to and Engagement with Youth

4

Improve Environmental Health of PHA Developments and HCV Units

5

Increase Resident Services for Elderly and Disabled Residents

6

Support Violence Prevention Strategies



Cultivate, Enhance, and Evaluate Strategic Partnerships

STRATEGIES

1

Build Relationships with Prospective Organizations to Engage in Future Cross-sector Planning Efforts

2

Measure Impact of Partnerships

3

Collaborate with Key Partners to Proactively Address and Prevent Homelessness

4

Improve Existing Partnerships with Agencies Already Serving PHA Residents



Continuously Improve PHA Internal Management and Operations

STRATEGIES

1

Improve Housing Operations and Cross-Department Collaboration



2

Assess and Improve Organizational Structure and Capacity

3

Leverage Technology



4

Improve Customer Service and Publicize Customer Service Excellence

5

Enhance Services to Participants and Landlords

6

Optimize Financial Performance



HOW WE'LL GET THERE | IMPLEMENTATION

The Providence Housing Authority Strategic Plan is more than just a plan for our future. To ensure the Plan could be successfully implemented, we created a detailed Action Plan with an accompanying implementation framework that guides us forward while allowing us to pivot as needed. Learn more about our action and implementation phase on our website.

STAY INFORMED | [HTTPS://PROVHOUSING.ORG/STRATEGIC-PLAN-2020-2025/](https://PROVHOUSING.ORG/STRATEGIC-PLAN-2020-2025/)



WHO IS PART OF ACHIEVING OUR GOALS?

We all have a role to play in achieving the PHA's strategic vision for the future. We know we can't do it alone. Help us reach our goals and make Providence a better home for all!

GET INVOLVED! | [HTTPS://PROVHOUSING.ORG/CONTACT](https://PROVHOUSING.ORG/CONTACT)



FUNDERS



RESIDENTS & PARTICIPANTS



NONPROFIT PARTNERS



GOVERNMENT AGENCIES



LANDLORDS



VENDORS

HOW WE'LL GET THERE | IMPACTS OF COVID-19

In the Spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began its viral attack on the world. Life as we knew it changed as stay-at-home orders were issued. PHA's long-standing model of in-person and on-site customer service was halted as the organization immediately began planning how to shift operations to protect residents, staff members, and the community at-large from the coronavirus. The PHA nimbly adapted to the pandemic both in its daily operations but also in its implementation of its Strategic Plan realigning deadlines and priorities to meet the ever-changing demands placed on the organization due to the pandemic.

A PHASED COVID RESPONSE

Phase 1

- Offices Went Virtual
- Wellness Calls
- Disinfecting 2x/day
- Increased Security
- Limitations on Visitors
- Emergency Work Orders Only

Phase 2

- Phase 1 PLUS
- Suspension of Evictions/Fees
- Established COVID Hotline
- Food Task Force & Distribution
- On-site COVID Testing Began

Phase 3

- Phase 1 & 2 PLUS
- Phased Return to On-Site Work
- Critical Infrastructure Projects
- Re-Align Strategic Plan
- Align Response to Prevention



ALIGNING OUR RESPONSE TO OUR STRATEGIC PLAN



Outreach to residents and participants via mail, phone, email, social media, and a new mass messaging system.



Strengthen existing and new resident leaders.



Safely provide access and connections to basic needs including food, on-site COVID testing and eviction prevention programs.



Work cross-departmentally to adapt processes and programs, including our Strategic Plan, to address the pandemic.

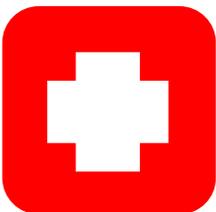
APPENDIX | CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

ABOUT BRONNER GROUP LLC

Founded in 1987, Bronner is a unique professional services firm focused exclusively on government and the public sector. Consultants and subject matter experts selected to join Bronner come from a range of backgrounds to delve deep into the operational and programmatic challenges facing government agencies – and help solve them. They worked closely with the PHA to develop this Assessment and facilitated the PHA’s planning process.

QUALITY AND CURRENT STOCK OF HOUSING

- Over 80% of public housing residents reported being satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the physical condition of homes and range of housing options.
- More than 60% of landlords rated HCV residents as “the same,” “somewhat better,” or “much better” residents than market rate tenants.
- Section 8 participants identified that following supports would have been helpful for their housing search: financial assistance with fees, support with the housing search process, and practice communicating with landlords.
- While stakeholders acknowledged that PHA is committed to making properties more beautiful, livable, and less institutional, they also noted that the portfolio is aging and needs extensive renovations.



HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITY

- Section 8 participants and residents of senior/disabled developments felt safer than residents in family developments.
- Efforts by Providence Police Department’s Public Housing Unit, PHA security, and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) coordinators have improved safety.
- 80% of PHA employees reported feeling safe at work.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

- Community partners expressed a desire for PHA to expand role in addressing homelessness.
- Section 8 participants and residents in family developments expressed interest in financial literacy and economic empowerment services, while residents of senior/disabled developments were most interested in health and wellness services.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Participants across the three major programs reported generally positive experiences with customer service by the PHA Residence Services department.
- Public housing residents expressed greater satisfaction with PHA customer service than Section 8 participants.

APPENDIX | EXPRESSING OUR APPRECIATION

The PHA would like to thank each and every stakeholder who participated in the creation of this plan who exhibited their commitment to our mission by being thoughtful and honest throughout the planning process and to our Board members, staff, and residents who dedicated hours of their time to prioritize, refine, and focus the Plan to the areas that would benefit those we serve.





PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY

NICOLAS RETSINAS, BOARD CHAIRMAN

MELISSA SANZARO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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