

The Providence Housing Authority FY 2021 Annual Plan



**The Providence Housing Authority
FY 2021 Annual Plan**

HUD FORM 50075-ST

Annual PHA Plan <i>(Standard PHAs and Troubled PHAs)</i>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Public and Indian Housing	OMB No. 2577-0226 Expires: 02/29/2016
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Purpose. The 5-Year and Annual PHA Plans provide a ready source for interested parties to locate basic PHA policies, rules, and requirements concerning the PHA's operations, programs, and services, and informs HUD, families served by the PHA, and members of the public of the PHA's mission, goals and objectives for serving the needs of low- income, very low- income, and extremely low- income families.

Applicability. Form HUD-50075-ST is to be completed annually by **STANDARD PHAs** or **TROUBLED PHAs**. PHAs that meet the definition of a High Performer PHA, Small PHA, HCV-Only PHA or Qualified PHA do not need to submit this form.

Definitions.

- (1) **High-Performer PHA** – A PHA that owns or manages more than 550 combined public housing units and housing choice vouchers, and was designated as a high performer on both of the most recent Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) and Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) assessments if administering both programs, or PHAS if only administering public housing.
- (2) **Small PHA** - A PHA that is not designated as PHAS or SEMAP troubled, or at risk of being designated as troubled, that owns or manages less than 250 public housing units and any number of vouchers where the total combined units exceeds 550.
- (3) **Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Only PHA** - A PHA that administers more than 550 HCVs, was not designated as troubled in its most recent SEMAP assessment and does not own or manage public housing.
- (4) **Standard PHA** - A PHA that owns or manages 250 or more public housing units and any number of vouchers where the total combined units exceeds 550, and that was designated as a standard performer in the most recent PHAS or SEMAP assessments.
- (5) **Troubled PHA** - A PHA that achieves an overall PHAS or SEMAP score of less than 60 percent.
- (6) **Qualified PHA** - A PHA with 550 or fewer public housing dwelling units and/or housing choice vouchers combined, and is not PHAS or SEMAP troubled.

A.	PHA Information																										
A.1	<p>PHA Name: <u>Providence Housing Authority</u> PHA Code: <u>RI001</u> PHA Plan for Fiscal Year Beginning: (MM/YYYY): <u>07/01/21</u> PHA Inventory (Based on Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) units at time of FY beginning, above) Number of Public Housing (PH) Units <u>2,606</u> Number of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) <u>2,608</u> Total Combined Units/Vouchers <u>5,214</u> PHA Plan Submission Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual Submission <input type="checkbox"/> Revised Annual Submission</p> <p>Availability of Information. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the PHA's Plan, Plan Elements, and all information relevant to the public hearing are available for inspection on the PHA's website at www.provhousing.org. Signage announcing the comment period and public hearing notified the public that copies of documents can be obtain by calling a designated PHA contact. Notice about the availability of viewing the plan and related documents is posted at the PHA's Administrative Office located at 100 Broad Street, 2nd Floor and at Management Offices located at: 285-F Chad Brown Street; 144 Dodge Street; 31 Salmon Street; 100 Atwells Avenue; 243 Smith Street; 160 Benedict Street; 25 Tobey Street, 300 Hartford Avenue, and 100 Broad Street. PHA posts approved PHA Plans on its website and provides each resident council with a copy of its Plans</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PHA Consortia: (Check box if submitting a Joint PHA Plan and complete table below)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Participating PHAs</th> <th rowspan="2">PHA Code</th> <th rowspan="2">Program(s) in the Consortia</th> <th rowspan="2">Program(s) not in the Consortia</th> <th colspan="2">No. of Units in Each Program</th> </tr> <tr> <th>PH</th> <th>HCV</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lead PHA:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Participating PHAs	PHA Code	Program(s) in the Consortia	Program(s) not in the Consortia	No. of Units in Each Program		PH	HCV	Lead PHA:																	
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Lead PHA:																											

B. Annual Plan Elements

B.1 Revision of PHA Plan Elements.

(a) Have the following PHA Plan elements been revised by the PHA?

Y N

- Statement of Housing Needs and Strategy for Addressing Housing Needs
- Deconcentration and Other Policies that Govern Eligibility, Selection, and Admissions.
- Financial Resources.
- Rent Determination.
- Operation and Management.
- Grievance Procedures.
- Homeownership Programs.
- Community Service and Self-Sufficiency Programs.
- Safety and Crime Prevention.
- Pet Policy.
- Asset Management.
- Substantial Deviation.
- Significant Amendment/Modification

(b) If the PHA answered yes for any element, describe the revisions for each revised element(s):

Financial Resources

See Attachment B.1.a

Safety and Crime Prevention

The PHA augmented its security force by contracting with an outside security vendor to provide service for the period of March 19, 2020 – January 31, 2021.

(c) The PHA must submit its Deconcentration Policy for Field Office review.

See Attachment B.1.b.

B.2 New Activities.

(a) Does the PHA intend to undertake any new activities related to the following in the PHA's current Fiscal Year?

Y N

- Hope VI or Choice Neighborhoods.
- Mixed Finance Modernization or Development.
- Demolition and/or Disposition.
- Designated Housing for Elderly and/or Disabled Families.
- Conversion of Public Housing to Tenant-Based Assistance.
- Conversion of Public Housing to Project-Based Assistance under RAD.
- Occupancy by Over-Income Families.
- Occupancy by Police Officers.
- Non-Smoking Policies.
- Project-Based Vouchers.
- Units with Approved Vacancies for Modernization.
- Other Capital Grant Programs (i.e., Capital Fund Community Facilities Grants or Emergency Safety and Security Grants).

(b) If any of these activities are planned for the current Fiscal Year, describe the activities. For new demolition activities, describe any public housing development or portion thereof, owned by the PHA for which the PHA has applied or will apply for demolition and/or disposition approval under section 18 of the 1937 Act under the separate demolition/disposition approval process. If using Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs), provide the projected number of project based units and general locations, and describe how project basing would be consistent with the PHA Plan.

Hope VI or Choice Neighborhoods, Mixed Finance Modernization or Development, Demolition and/or Disposition, Conversion to Tenant-Based Assistance, Conversion of Public Housing to Project-Based Assistance Under RAD

The PHA anticipates issuing a Request for Proposals for a repositioning/redevelopment consultant to assist the PHA in developing a repositioning plan for its public housing portfolio. PHA plans to consider all strategies noted in HUD's Repositioning of Assets Initiative, including, Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, demolition and/or disposition under Section 18, conversion of public housing to tenant-based assistance, RAD, and any combination of recapitalization strategies that should be considered to preserve hard units for the low-income families the PHA serves.

Renewal of Designated Housing for Elderly and/or Disabled Families

The PHA, in consultation with the RAB, has decided to seek a renewal of its elder-only designation of the Dominica Manor and Carroll Tower developments. See Attachment B.2

	<p><u>Update on Approved Disposition of Property</u> PHA has determined that the previously approved disposition of a small portion of land behind its elderly high-rise building known as Dominica Manor is unlikely to move forward and will explore other viable uses of the property.</p> <p><u>Non-Smoking Policies</u> The PHA anticipates collaborating with the Resident Advisory Board to create a program(s) that fosters smoking cessation, increases awareness of the dangers of smoking, and supports the PHA's non-smoking policy. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the PHA and residents have noted a resurgence in smoking and violations of the non-smoking policy.</p> <p><u>Project-Based Vouchers</u> The PHA anticipates that it will issue an RFP in early 2021 to project-based up to 100 of existing of its existing HCV voucher allocation (including Mainstream Program vouchers) as a strategy to deconcentrate poverty and provide program participants with access to units in neighborhoods of opportunity. The PHA anticipates exploring project-basing up to 30% (including 10% exception units) of its HCV allocation overtime.</p> <p><u>Other Capital Grant Projects</u> The PHA received a grant award, in the amount of \$974,400 from HUD, from the Lead-Based Paint Capital Funds Program to conduct lead-based paint testing and abatement at the following developments: Chad Brown; Hartford Park; and Manton Heights. With the assistance of a consultant, the PHA has developed a scope of work and will issue an RFP for abatement services in early 2021. PHA has also received an Emergency Health and Safety Grant from HUD to install CO2 detectors in scattered site family developments.</p> <p><u>Public Housing ACOP</u> The PHA will continue its review and updating of its public housing Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) in the coming year. In particular, PHA will consider changes to its transfer policy and its public housing lease.</p> <p><u>Administrative Plan for the Housing Choice Voucher Program</u> The PHA will continue its review and updating of its Administrative Plan that governs the operation of the Housing Choice Voucher Program.</p> <p><u>Units with Approved Vacancy for Modernization</u> PHA anticipates that eight (8) units will be approved for vacancy for modernization in the coming year.</p>
<p>B.3</p>	<p>Civil Rights Certification.</p> <p>Form HUD-50077, <i>PHA Certifications of Compliance with the PHA Plans and Related Regulations</i>, must be submitted by the PHA as an electronic attachment to the PHA Plan.</p>
<p>B.4</p>	<p>Most Recent Fiscal Year Audit.</p> <p>(a) Were there any findings in the most recent FY Audit?</p> <p>Y N <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(b) If yes, please describe:</p>
<p>B.5</p>	<p>Progress Report.</p> <p>Provide a description of the PHA's progress in meeting its Mission and Goals described in the PHA 5-Year and Annual Plan.</p> <p>See Attachment B.5</p>
<p>B.6</p>	<p>Resident Advisory Board (RAB) Comments.</p> <p>(a) Did the RAB(s) provide comments to the PHA Plan?</p> <p>Y N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(c) If yes, comments must be submitted by the PHA as an attachment to the PHA Plan. PHAs must also include a narrative describing their analysis of the RAB recommendations and the decisions made on these recommendations.</p> <p>See Attachment B.6.</p>

B.7	<p>Certification by State or Local Officials.</p> <p>Form HUD 50077-SL, <i>Certification by State or Local Officials of PHA Plans Consistency with the Consolidated Plan</i>, must be submitted by the PHA as an electronic attachment to the PHA Plan.</p>
B.8	<p>Troubled PHA.</p> <p>(a) Does the PHA have any current Memorandum of Agreement, Performance Improvement Plan, or Recovery Plan in place? Y N N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(b) If yes, please describe:</p>
C.	<p>Statement of Capital Improvements. Required for all PHAs completing this form that administer public housing and receive funding from the Capital Fund Program (CFP).</p>
C.1	<p>Capital Improvements. Include a reference here to the most recent HUD-approved 5-Year Action Plan (HUD-50075.2) and the date that it was approved by HUD. The PHA's 5-Year Action Plan was approved on 11/25/20.</p>

Instructions for Preparation of Form HUD-50075-ST Annual PHA Plan for Standard and Troubled PHAs

A. PHA Information. All PHAs must complete this section.

A.1 Include the full PHA Name, PHA Code, PHA Type, PHA Fiscal Year Beginning (MM/YYYY), PHA Inventory, Number of Public Housing Units and or Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), PHA Plan Submission Type, and the Availability of Information, specific location(s) of all information relevant to the public hearing and proposed PHA Plan. (24 CFR §903.23(4)(e))

PHA Consortia: Check box if submitting a Joint PHA Plan and complete the table. (24 CFR §943.128(a))

B. Annual Plan. All PHAs must complete this section.

B.1 Revision of PHA Plan Elements. PHAs must:

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**ATTACHMENT B.1.a.
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Providence Housing Authority Attachment B.1(a)
Statement of Financial Resources: Planned Sources and Uses

Sources	Planned \$	Planned Uses
1. Federal Grants FY 2021 grants		
a Public Housing Operating Fund	\$16,989,895	
b Public Housing Capital Fund	\$6,509,215	
c HOPE VI Revitalization	\$0	
d HOPE VI Demolition	\$0	
e) Annual Contributions for Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance	\$21,174,431	
f) Public Housing Drug Elimination Program including any Technical Assistance funds	\$0	
g) Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency Grants	\$316,000	
h) Community Development Block Grant	\$100,000 \$27,000 5,000 \$33,000	Doors to Safety HP Renovations Parenti Villa Cameras Chad Brown Rec. Facilities Reno.
	\$10,000 \$24,471 \$25,000 \$30,000 \$20,000 \$30,000 \$8,000 \$40,000	Codding Court Transfer switch Dexter Manor Panic Bar Manton Heights Discharge Exit Hartford Park Lot install CB Security Camera and WIFI MH Security Cameras BBCourt Hartford Park Tot Camera Anton Community Center
Other Federal Grants list below		
HUD Lead-based Paint Capital Funds Program	\$974,440	LBP testing and abatement at Chad Brown, Hartford Park and Manton Heights
HUD - Emergency Health and Safety Grant	\$128,000	Installation of CO2 detectors at scattered site family development units
Victims of Crime Act	\$81,402	Community Safety Coordinator
BHDDH State Opioid Response Grant	\$155,000	Joint project with Pawtucket HA to promote wellness and reduce opioid use
WIOA – Youth Comprehensive Program	\$234,306	Workforce readiness and employment for youth

FEMA Public Assistance Grant	\$50,209	Reimbursement for Pre-CARES Act pandemic response expenses
HUD Housing Counseling	\$20,533	
2. Prior Year Federal Grants (unobligated funds only) (list below)		
CFP 2020	4,709,000	
CFP 2019	\$2,753,580	
CFP 2018	\$952,502	
Mainstream Voucher Award 2018, 2020	\$1,088,000	
3. Public Housing Dwelling Rental Income	\$8,315,000	
Sources	Planned \$	Planned Uses
4. Other income		
Excess Utilities	\$86,700	
Investment Income	\$13,005	
Fraud Collection S8	\$15,500	
S8 Port Fees	\$42,000	
Miscellaneous Tenant Charges	\$52,000	
Misc .Income -Antenna Rental/Cox/Office space	\$315,000	

Sources	Planned \$	Planned Uses
4. Non-federal sources list below		
Amica Companies Foundation	\$15,000	Support of Emergency Food project program for residents of elderly/disabled developments
RI Foundation	\$75,000	Building Bridges to Support in the Wake of Covid-19 initiative
RI Foundation	\$40,000	Support of Emergency Food project program for residents of elderly/disabled developments
Rhode Island Department of Health	\$15,000	Crush Covid Campaign distribution of PPE and prevention information

Rhode Island Housing/Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council	\$155,370	Biking and walking pathway connecting Woonasquatucket Greenway and Manton Heights
HEN – One Neighborhood	\$55,000	Community Health Worker
Genesis Center – RIDE	\$38,000	Adult Education
Blue Cross Angels	\$35,000	Section 8 Landlord Engagement, Housing Search Counseling
Total Resources	\$65,746,559	

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ATTACHMENT B.1.b
DECONCENTRATION POLICY

Attachment B.1.b



11.12 The PHA's Deconcentration Policy

It is PHA's policy to provide for the deconcentration of poverty and to encourage income mixing by bringing higher income families into lower income developments and lower income families into higher income developments. The PHA may skip families on the waiting list to reach other families with a lower or higher income. This will be done in a uniform and non-discriminating manner.

The PHA will affirmatively market its housing to all eligible income groups. Lower income residents will not be steered toward lower income developments and higher income people will not be steered toward higher income developments.

Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, the PHA will analyze the income levels of families residing in each of its developments, the income levels of census tracts in which each development is located, and the income levels of the families on the waiting list. Based on this analysis, the PHA will determine the level of marketing strategies and deconcentration incentives to implement.

11.13 Deconcentration Incentives

The PHA may offer one or more incentives to encourage applicant families whose income classification would help meet the deconcentration goals of a particular development.

Various incentives may be used at different times, or under different conditions, but will always be provided in a consistent and nondiscriminatory manner.

11.14 Targeting

Per the QHWRA, in each fiscal year the PHA will reserve at least 40 percent of its new admissions for families who have incomes that do not exceed 30 percent of area median income as published by HUD.

The PHA will follow the statutory requirement that at least 40 percent of newly admitted families in any fiscal year be families whose annual income is at or below 30 percent of the area median income. To ensure that this requirement is met, the PHA will quarterly monitor the incomes of newly admitted families and the incomes of families on the waiting list. If it appears that the requirement to house extremely low-income families will not be met, the PHA will skip higher income families on the waiting list to reach extremely low-income families.

If there are not enough extremely low-income families on the waiting list, the PHA will consider outreach on a non-discriminatory basis to attract extremely low-income families to reach the statutory requirement.

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ATTACHMENT B.2
REQUEST FOR RENEWAL OF
DESIGNATED HOUSING



Attachment B.2

Request for Approval of a Renewal of the Providence Housing Authority's Elder-Only Designation of Dominica Manor and Carroll Tower

The Providence Housing Authority is requesting HUD approval of a renewal of the elder-only designation of two high-rise developments in its portfolio. The plan was first approved in 1995 and most recently approved for renewal on May 16, 2019 and is in effect until 7/30/21. The two developments for which PHA is seeking renewal of an elder-only designation renewal are as follows:

Development	HUD Project #	Address	# of Units	# of Units in Development for Designation
Dominica Manor	RI001-009	100 Atwells Avenue	204	100%
Carroll Tower	RI001-011	243 Smith Street	194	100%
TOTAL			398	

Dominica Manor is a 16-story, 204-unit building located in the Federal Hill section of Providence. As of 1/7/21, the development houses 222 residents. Twenty-five percent of the residents of Dominica Manor identify as Black/African American, 72% as White, 2.5% as American Indian/Alaska Native and 1.5% as Asian. Sixty-five percent of residents identify as Hispanic. Ninety-one percent of residents at Dominica Manor have annual incomes that are at or below 30% of the AMI.

Carroll Tower is a 15-story, 194-unit building located in the Smith Hill neighborhood of Providence. As of 1/7/21, the development houses 211 residents. Nineteen percent of the residents of Carroll Tower identify as Black/African American, 77% identify as White, 1% as American Indian/Alaska Native, 2.5% as Asian, and .5% Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander. Seventy-one percent of residents identify as Hispanic. Eighty-five percent of the residents at Carroll Tower have annual incomes that are at or below 30% of the AMI.

Residents of all PHA developments for elderly and disabled persons are served by a Spanish-speaking Resident Services Coordinator and have access to a range of programs as lunch time meal programs, health and wellness clinics, safety and security presentations, field trips, holiday

dinners, coffee hours, raffles, bingo and other recreational activities designed to promote wellness and prevent isolation. The Resident Service Coordinator provides referrals to a wide range of outside services, such as housekeeping assistance, medical transportation, and counseling that promote healthy aging in place for residents. In addition to the services PHA has traditionally provided to residents, PHA hired a Wellness Coordinator in 2019 using funds from a \$300,000 SAMHSA State Opioid Reduction and Housing Retention grant awarded by the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals; the PHA has received a renewal of funding for this program. The PHA's Opioid Reduction and Wellness Program, designed to prevent opioid abuse and promote general wellness among PHA residents, including elders, persons with disabilities and families, was implemented starting in an elderly/disabled development (Dexter Manor). PHA has since received additional funding to continue the program the program to provide services to its full portfolio during 2021. In 2020, PHA established the *Building Bridges to Support in the Wake of Covid-19*, new program staffed by a clinical social worker. This program funded by the Rhode Island Foundation, provides all residents with support and access to treatment for behavioral health needs related to the trauma of Covid-19.

Since the original designation, both developments for which PHA is seeking designation have well-served the special needs of the elderly community. Since 1995, these two developments have admitted only persons aged 62 or older. This designation has not negatively impacted non-designated units, nor has it prevented non-elderly disabled persons from accessing public housing. PHA has not encountered any difficulties since the original designation in 1995. The PHA has discussed this intention to renew the elder-only designation of these two developments with the Resident Advisory Board and has included it as an activity in the FY 2021 Annual Plan that is subject to a public comment period and public hearing.

As part of the PHA's past agreement with HUD for its designated housing plan, PHA agreed to ensure that the PHA's public housing stock holds ample units to house non-elderly disabled persons. With the designation, PHA has had the opportunity to serve all applicants on the waiting list. It is important to note that, in addition to Dominica Manor and Carroll Tower, PHA operates six other developments that offer housing to elderly and disabled persons, including Dexter Manor I, Dexter Manor II, Hartford Park Tower, Kilmartin Plaza, Parenti Villa, and Sunset Village. Including Dominica Manor and Carroll Tower, PHA's elderly/disabled developments contain 1,133 units and comprise 44% of the PHA's total housing stock. The renewal of the designation of Dominica Manor and Carroll Tower as elder-only will comprise 35% of all elderly/disabled units. The remaining six developments, totaling 739 units, will remain as "mixed population" developments with non-elderly disabled and elderly persons in residence.

As of 1/7/21, the PHA's waiting list for elderly/disabled housing was as follows:

	Number of Applicants	Percent of Waiting List
Elderly	269	17%
Non-Elderly Disabled	1301	83%
Total	912	100%

The current occupancy rate at Dominica Manor is 97.23% and the occupancy rate at Carroll Tower is 96.91%. These developments were consistently above an 97% occupancy rate in FY 2020. In the last six months, Covid-19 has increased vacancies in these and other PHA developments, and Covid restrictions and safety protocols to prevent the spread of the virus have resulted in temporarily slower unit turn-around times. PHA anticipates being at full occupancy in these developments in by the end of the 1st quarter of CY 2021; there is no lack of elderly applicants interested in leasing units in these two developments. In order to maintain occupancy rates in accordance with HUD standards, if a unit were vacant in an elderly-only designated site in excess of 21 days and there were no elderly applicants on the waiting list, PHA would admit an eligible near-elderly applicant to fill the vacancy. There are currently 562 applicants on the PHA waiting list for family housing who are near-elderly (50-61). If such a situation were to occur, PHA would identify applicants on the public housing waiting list that are near-elderly, choosing first someone 61 years of age, then 60, then 59 and so on until the vacancy is filled. This exception to the elder-only designation of Dominica Manor and Carroll Tower would be made only when there are no elderly applicants on the waiting list to fill the vacancy.

The overall long and short-term goals is to keep Dominica Manor and Carroll Tower elderly-only, unless there is absolutely no other applicant available except a non-elderly person. Once again, if this were to be the situation, every attempt would be made by the PHA to fill the vacancy with someone as close to 62 years of age as possible.

In addition to its public housing program, in FY 2019, PHA received 50 specialized Mainstream vouchers enabling PHA to offer additional access to affordable housing for persons with disabilities with a preference for disabled persons who are homeless, at risk of being homeless, or are returning to the community due to a discharge from an institutional living setting and would be homeless upon discharge. Since FY 2019, PHA has received an additional 75 Mainstream Program vouchers that provide additional housing opportunities for persons with disabilities.

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**ATTACHMENT B.3
CIVIL RIGHTS CERTIFICATIONS**

**PHA Certifications of Compliance with the PHA Plans and Related Regulations:
Board Resolution to Accompany the PHA 5-Year and Annual PHA Plan**

Acting on behalf of the Board of Commissioners of the Public Housing Agency (PHA) listed below, as its Chairman or other authorized PHA official if there is no Board of Commissioners, I approve the submission of the ___ 5-Year and/or Annual PHA Plan for the PHA fiscal year beginning 07/01/2021, hereinafter referred to as "the Plan", of which this document is a part and make the following certifications and agreements with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in connection with the submission of the Plan and implementation thereof:

1. The Plan is consistent with the applicable comprehensive housing affordability strategy (or any plan incorporating such strategy) for the jurisdiction in which the PHA is located.
2. The Plan contains a certification by the appropriate State or local officials that the Plan is consistent with the applicable Consolidated Plan, which includes a certification that requires the preparation of an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, for the PHA's jurisdiction and a description of the manner in which the PHA Plan is consistent with the applicable Consolidated Plan.
3. The PHA certifies that there has been no change, significant or otherwise, to the Capital Fund Program (and Capital Fund Program/Replacement Housing Factor) Annual Statement(s), since submission of its last approved Annual Plan. The Capital Fund Program Annual Statement/Annual Statement/Performance and Evaluation Report must be submitted annually even if there is no change.
4. The PHA has established a Resident Advisory Board or Boards, the membership of which represents the residents assisted by the PHA, consulted with this Board or Boards in developing the Plan, and considered the recommendations of the Board or Boards (24 CFR 903.13). The PHA has included in the Plan submission a copy of the recommendations made by the Resident Advisory Board or Boards and a description of the manner in which the Plan addresses these recommendations.
5. The PHA made the proposed Plan and all information relevant to the public hearing available for public inspection at least 45 days before the hearing, published a notice that a hearing would be held and conducted a hearing to discuss the Plan and invited public comment.
6. The PHA certifies that it will carry out the Plan in conformity with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
7. The PHA will affirmatively further fair housing by examining their programs or proposed programs, identify any impediments to fair housing choice within those programs, address those impediments in a reasonable fashion in view of the resources available and work with local jurisdictions to implement any of the jurisdiction's initiatives to affirmatively further fair housing that require the PHA's involvement and maintain records reflecting these analyses and actions.
8. For PHA Plan that includes a policy for site based waiting lists:
 - The PHA regularly submits required data to HUD's 50058 PIC/IMS Module in an accurate, complete and timely manner (as specified in PIH Notice 2006-24);
 - The system of site-based waiting lists provides for full disclosure to each applicant in the selection of the development in which to reside, including basic information about available sites; and an estimate of the period of time the applicant would likely have to wait to be admitted to units of different sizes and types at each site;
 - Adoption of site-based waiting list would not violate any court order or settlement agreement or be inconsistent with a pending complaint brought by HUD;
 - The PHA shall take reasonable measures to assure that such waiting list is consistent with affirmatively furthering fair housing;
 - The PHA provides for review of its site-based waiting list policy to determine if it is consistent with civil rights laws and certifications, as specified in 24 CFR part 903.7(c)(1).
9. The PHA will comply with the prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of age pursuant to the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.
10. The PHA will comply with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and 24 CFR Part 41, Policies and Procedures for the Enforcement of Standards and Requirements for Accessibility by the Physically Handicapped.
11. The PHA will comply with the requirements of section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, Employment Opportunities for Low-or Very-Low Income Persons, and with its implementing regulation at 24 CFR Part 135.
12. The PHA will comply with acquisition and relocation requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and implementing regulations at 49 CFR Part 24 as applicable.

13. The PHA will take appropriate affirmative action to award contracts to minority and women's business enterprises under 24 CFR 5.105(a).
14. The PHA will provide the responsible entity or HUD any documentation that the responsible entity or HUD needs to carry out its review under the National Environmental Policy Act and other related authorities in accordance with 24 CFR Part 58 or Part 50, respectively.
15. With respect to public housing the PHA will comply with Davis-Bacon or HUD determined wage rate requirements under Section 12 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act.
16. The PHA will keep records in accordance with 24 CFR 85.20 and facilitate an effective audit to determine compliance with program requirements.
17. The PHA will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act, the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, and 24 CFR Part 35.
18. The PHA will comply with the policies, guidelines, and requirements of OMB Circular No. A-87 (Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments), 2 CFR Part 225, and 24 CFR Part 85 (Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State, Local and Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments).
19. The PHA will undertake only activities and programs covered by the Plan in a manner consistent with its Plan and will utilize covered grant funds only for activities that are approvable under the regulations and included in its Plan.
20. All attachments to the Plan have been and will continue to be available at all times and all locations that the PHA Plan is available for public inspection. All required supporting documents have been made available for public inspection along with the Plan and additional requirements at the primary business office of the PHA and at all other times and locations identified by the PHA in its PHA Plan and will continue to be made available at least at the primary business office of the PHA.
21. The PHA provides assurance as part of this certification that:
 - (i) The Resident Advisory Board had an opportunity to review and comment on the changes to the policies and programs before implementation by the PHA;
 - (ii) The changes were duly approved by the PHA Board of Directors (or similar governing body); and
 - (iii) The revised policies and programs are available for review and inspection, at the principal office of the PHA during normal business hours.
22. The PHA certifies that it is in compliance with all applicable Federal statutory and regulatory requirements.

Providence Housing Authority

RI-001

PHA Name

PHA Number/HA Code

5-Year PHA Plan for Fiscal Years 20__ - 20__

Annual PHA Plan for Fiscal Years 20²¹ - 20²²

I hereby certify that all the information stated herein, as well as any information provided in the accompaniment herewith, is true and accurate. **Warning:** HUD will prosecute false claims and statements. Conviction may result in criminal and/or civil penalties. (18 U.S.C. 1001, 1010, 1012; 31 U.S.C. 3729, 3802)

Name of Authorized Official	Title
Nicolas Retsinas	Chairman, Board of Commissioners
Signature	Date

Civil Rights Certification
(Qualified PHAs)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Public and Indian Housing
OMB Approval No. 2577-0226
Expires 02/29/2016

Civil Rights Certification

Annual Certification and Board Resolution

Acting on behalf of the Board of Commissioners of the Public Housing Agency (PHA) listed below, as its Chairman or other authorized PHA official, I approve the submission of the 5-Year PHA Plan for the PHA of which this document is a part, and make the following certification and agreements with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in connection with the submission of the public housing program of the agency and implementation thereof:

The PHA certifies that it will carry out the public housing program of the agency in conformity with title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and will affirmatively further fair housing by examining their programs or proposed programs, identifying any impediments to fair housing choice within those program, addressing those impediments in a reasonable fashion in view of the resources available and working with local jurisdictions to implement any of the jurisdiction's initiatives to affirmatively further fair housing that require the PHA's involvement and by maintaining records reflecting these analyses and actions.

Providence Housing Authority

RI-001

PHA Name

PHA Number/HA Code

I hereby certify that all the information stated herein, as well as any information provided in the accompaniment herewith, is true and accurate. **Warning:** HUD will prosecute false claims and statements. Conviction may result in criminal and/or civil penalties. (18 U.S.C. 1001, 1010, 1012; 31 U.S.C. 3729, 3802)

Name of Authorized Official
Nicholas Retsinas

Title
Chairman, Board of Commissioners

Signature

Date

**The Providence Housing Authority
FY 2021 Annual Plan**

**ATTACHMENT B.5
PROGRESS REPORT ON GOALS**

**FY 2021 Annual Plan
Progress Report on Goals
Attachment B.5**

Providence Housing Authority's Update on Goals and Objectives in Previous 5-Year Plan

Goal 1: Identify and Pursue Opportunities to Preserve and Expand Affordable Housing

Strategy 1.1: Assess Viability of Repositioning Components of the PHA's Real Estate Portfolio

During this reporting period, PHA participated in HUD's Repositioning Roundtable, participated in HUD's Repositioning webinars through the HUD Exchange and participated in three consultation sessions with HUD's Office of Repositioning consultant Shannon Lestan to explore the feasibility of PHA pursuing a repositioning strategy. These consultant sessions revealed the potential financial advantages of repositioning some components of the PHA's public housing portfolio. Also, in this reporting period PHA developed an RFP for a repositioning/redevelopment consultant to assist in the development of an agency-wide repositioning strategy. PHA anticipates releasing the RFP in February 2021.

Strategy 1.2: Utilize Existing and New Resources to Expand Affordable Housing Options

During this period, the PHA researched how other PHAs are utilizing their non-profit instrumentalities to expand affordable housing options. In the coming year PHA anticipates reviewing and revising bylaws and membership structures for its non-profit instrumentalities.

In this period, PHA awarded eight project-based vouchers to support the construction and revitalization of the Barbara Jordan II affordable housing development in the Upper South Providence neighborhood; it is anticipated that these units will come online in the next several years. In addition to the Barbara Jordan II Apartments, seven new units that were project-based in the last reporting period will come on-line in the coming year at King Street Commons as a result of PHA awarding project-based vouchers to the developer. Early in calendar year 2021, the PHA anticipates releasing an RFP to project-base an additional 50 to 100 vouchers; the PHA will place a two-fold emphasis in awarding vouchers: project-basing units in neighborhoods of opportunity to promote de-concentration of poverty and awarding vouchers to support new construction that leverages an overall increase in the stock of affordable housing in Providence.

Also, in this reporting period, PHA was awarded with 90 Mainstream Vouchers enabling it to provide housing opportunity to families in dire need of housing assistance. Fifteen of these vouchers were awarded through the Cares Act and 75 were awarded in response to the PHA's application for additional vouchers. Utilizing an Ameri-Corps Worker, PHA assists participants in housing search activities, including opportunities for participants to secure units in neighborhoods and communities of opportunity.

Strategy 1.4: Support Environmental Sustainability and Conservation in Response to the Effects of Climate Change

In this reporting period, PHA continued to work with RISE Engineering to devise and implement energy cost savings strategies. This partnership resulted in the replacement of three boilers at Dominica Manor at no cost to PHA. The project was funded through a public or system "benefits charge" that appears on

all utility customers' energy bills. This charge goes into a trust fund, which is administered in Providence by National Grid to provide co-payments, lump-sum payment discounts or other incentives for customers to make energy improvements. The value of the boiler replacement was \$350,000. The PHA, using Capital Funds, also replaced three boilers at Dexter Manor – an investment that will foster energy conservation.

In this reporting period, PHA pursued options for the generation of solar energy in collaboration with other RI PHAs through the Public Housing Association of RI (PHARI). The PHA and PHARI have selected a vendor and the PHA Board of Commissioners have authorized the Executive Director to participate in contract negotiation. Upon approval of a contract by other partner PHAs and HUD and pending approval by the RI Public Utilities Commission, an offsite solar farm will likely be online sometime in calendar year 2022.

Goal 2: Provide Safe and Healthy Communities with Pathways to Vibrant Futures

Strategy 2.1: Enhance Security on PHA Properties

The Covid-19 pandemic presented significant challenges to providing security services for PHA properties, particularly high-rise developments, as the agency instituted remote operations. To meet this challenge, the PHA contracted with a vendor to augment personnel to provide increased stationary and roving patrols of high-rise developments. In February 2021, PHA will revert to pre-Covid levels of security personnel. Throughout this reporting period, the PHA worked in close contact with the Providence Police Department and its Public Housing Unit (PHU) to ensure the security of residents living in family developments; fluctuating levels of staffing due to officers being impacted by Covid-19 required some adjustment in how PPD responded to non-emergency requests for services. Throughout 2020, the PHA Security Department researched policies and procedures in place in other PHAs and public serving agencies and created and implemented new protocols governing contact with the public to prevent exposure to Covid and protect the safety of both residents and staff. Also, in this reporting period, PHA developed a new community safety and security survey that it will implement in mid- 2021; the results of this survey will guide the review and revision of the agency's security policy in 2022.

In this reporting period PHA evaluated the safety and security benefits of replacing sliding building entry doors in its high-rise developments and secured Community Development Block Grant funding to pilot a new system in three of its five high-rise developments. Replacement of the doors in two pilot sites will take place in calendar year 2021.

Throughout the reporting period, the PHA's Facilities Maintenance Department undertook beautification projects designed to communicate ownership by an invested property manager and resident community that does not tolerate criminal activity. These projects included extensive mulching, tree trimming and new plantings at the PHA's Kilmartin Plaza, Dominica Manor, and Codding Court developments. In addition, PHA completed a new tot lot at the Hartford Park development and continued planning for the execution of the Manton Bike and Walking Pathway project; the project is scheduled to begin construction in Spring 2021. Also, in this period, PHA completed plans for an outdoor meeting area at the Hartford Park development, a vendor has been selected and construction is scheduled to begin in Spring 2021. During this period, the PHA developed plans for constructing a young adult fitness park at the Chad Brown/Admiral Terrace Apartments; due to unforeseen costs, the PHA was not able to move forward with construction. As a replacement project to meet the fitness needs of young adults, PHA will replace the floor in the gymnasiums at both the Chad Brown/Admiral Terrace and the Manton Heights developments.

In this reporting period, the PHA's Property Management and Legal Departments developed strategies for enforcing clear standards of behavior in PHA developments and used legal resources to address standards, while employing tools and protocols for tenancy preservation whenever possible. PHA developed a Standard Operating Procedure for enforcing housekeeping standards when resident housekeeping threatens the health and safety of other residents. To support tenancy preservation and to build skills in recognizing and safely responding to residents in crisis, 42 members of the Property Management and Resident Services Departments received training in Mental Health First Aid and Trauma-informed Practices in September 2020. PHA anticipates making this training available to additional members of these Departments, as well as to members of the Leased Housing and Facilities Maintenance Departments in the coming year.

Strategy 2.2: Promote Access to Effective Economic Opportunity, Education, and Health Services for Residents and Participants

The Covid-19 pandemic presented enormous challenges in the promotion of economic, educational, and health services for residents and participants. A key goal of the PHA in 2020 was to protect vulnerable elders and persons with disabilities from exposure to the virus. To foster sheltering in place during the pandemic, the PHA established the *Emergency Food Task Force*, an interdepartmental team that procured, packaged and distributed shelf-stable boxes of food, meant to last for a month, to needy residents of developments for the elderly and disabled. In addition to the *Task Force* distributing 5,000 emergency food boxes, it also distributed 7,000 Military Ready to Eat Meals and 900 frozen meals from March through December 2020; more than 500 residents benefitted from the work of the Task Force. This initiative was supported financially by grants from the Rhode Island Foundation, Amica Companies Foundation, Providence Community Opportunity Council (a PHA non-profit affiliate), the City of Providence, and PHA resources. In addition to the PHA team, PHA partnered with Family Service of Rhode Island; the agency provided 106 residents over the age of 60 with fresh meat, vegetables, cleaning supplies and PPE through its *Be Safe Plus* program. PHA also partnered with Centro Inovacion de Mujer Latina; the agency provided Latino residents with culturally appropriate food products. The PHA's partnership with the YMCA of Greater Providence resulted in that organization providing 239 emergency food boxes to needy families. Also, the PHA teamed up with several members of the Providence City Council to bring fresh meats, vegetables and staple food items to residents in developments for families and elderly/disabled persons. Throughout the pandemic, the PHA continued its partnership with the Food Bank of Rhode Island for the *Elder Food Box Program*, a long-standing initiative that provides food to at risk elders. The Elder Food Box program provided an additional 1,749 food boxes to 200 needy elders. Throughout the pandemic, PHA and its partners provided emergency food to more than 1,000 unduplicated households.

Increasing access to health services was a key concern of the PHA, and the agency developed and implemented strategies to provide residents with access to on-site Covid-19 testing. PHA shared these strategies and mentored other PHAs in the area as they developed testing programs for their communities. Through partnerships with the RI National Guard, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and Lifespan Healthcare and collaboration among all PHA departments, PHA designed and implemented large-scale testing events in which 2,942 tests were administered through 1/21/21. Although these tests were administered primarily to residents, employees and community members were also able to access testing. The testing program has been successful due to the extensive outreach to residents by staff and support for residents post-testing in cases where a resident tested positive. This testing program continues in calendar 2021 and PHA is exploring an expansion of existing partnerships and

establishing new ones to bring vaccination initiatives on-site for PHA residents, particularly for elders and persons with pre-existing health conditions.

The PHA forged a partnership with the RI Department of Health to bring the *Crush Covid Campaign*, an initiative designed to provide children and families with PPE and Covid-19 prevention information, to all its family developments. PHA staff created and delivered over 600 *Crush Covid* gift bags resulting in the distribution of over 15,000 protective masks to parents and children. In addition to the *Crush Covid Campaign*, the State of RI provided the PHA with 10,000 KN95 facemasks which staff will distribute to high risk residents in January and February of 2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic wreaked economic havoc for many PHA residents who saw reductions in work hours and job losses. The PHA mobilized resources and developed new internal partnerships between the Resident Services and Property Management Departments to provide financial counseling, assistance in completing unemployment insurance applications, and referrals to food pantries and other resources needed by families in financial crisis. In addition, the PHA established a new partnership with HarborOne Bank to provide financial counseling to prepare families enrolled in the Job Plus Program to successfully transition from the Earned Income Disallowance to income-based rent as the Jobs Plus program came to an end on September 30, 2020. In addition to financial counseling, PHA staff also provided job search, workforce development and employment-related support for JPP families and other families impacted by the Covid-19 economic downturn.

During this reporting period, PHA was awarded with several grants that supported access to health care services, including grants from the Central Providence Health Equity Zone (HEZ), Rhode Island Foundation, the RI Bureau of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH), and the RI Department of Public Safety. A grant from the Health Equity Zone provided continuation funding for a PHA Community Health Worker to outreach to and link residents of some of the most underserved and under-resourced areas of the City to health care services. The PHA's Manton Heights and Hartford Park family developments and the elderly/disabled Parenti Villa, Dominica Manor, and Kilmartin Plaza developments are within the target area of the HEZ.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many residents are struggling with heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. A September 2020 ROSS Community Needs Survey conducted by PHA, in which over 600 families participated, revealed that 30% of respondents reported stress, anxiety, and depression as major, unmet health care issues. Our work with elders and persons with disabilities indicated a similar level of need in those communities concerning these issues. In June 2020, the PHA was awarded a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to implement *Building Bridges to Support in the Wake of Covid-19*, an initiative designed to provide support and coordination of referrals for persons with Covid-19 related behavioral concerns by a licensed clinical social worker. The Covid-19 pandemic has also exacerbated the opioid epidemic in Rhode Island, making the need for access to treatment more urgent. BHDDH awarded PHA with continued funding to support its State Opioid Reduction (SOR) Program in public housing. The SOR program provides residents with substance use disorders, particularly Opioid Use Disorder, and co-occurring mental health disorders with access to treatment and support necessary for families to retain housing when a member is struggling with addiction issues.

Also, in this reporting period, the RI Department of Public Safety awarded a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Program grant to support the continuation of the PHA's VOCA Coordinator position. With an increase in domestic violence and child abuse during the pandemic, this funding allowed PHA to provide vulnerable residents who are victims of crime with access to counseling, support, and safety measures critical to

safety and well-being. All the grant-funded programs noted above are part of the PHA's Wellness Resource Center – a multi-disciplinary team approach to meeting the complex needs of PHA residents.

Often when PHAs consider workforce development programming, these considerations do not include persons with disabilities. During 2019, Resident Advisory Board members noted that many residents with disabilities have a desire to work but are hesitant to pursue employment out of fear of losing valuable benefits. In 2020, PHA incorporated this resident concern into an action item within its new strategic plan and committed to disseminating information about employment opportunities and benefits (SSI/SSDI) to persons with disabilities. The PHA and the Sherlock Center have signed a MOU in which the Center committed to serve on the PHA Program Coordinating Committee and providing outreach trainings for residents in 2021.

Strategy 2.3: Increase Outreach to and Engagement with Youth

In this reporting period, the PHA was awarded its first Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant from the City of Providence to pilot a youth employment model. Building on the experience of its successful summer youth employment and Jobs Plus Providence (JPP) programs over the course of the past three years, PHA designed a program that assesses workforce readiness, identifies training and educational needs, builds skills necessary for successful employment, places youth in employment internships and assists in placement in permanent employment. With the unknown duration of the Covid-19 epidemic, PHA staff designed a hybrid model for the program that combined virtual components with small, in-person group sessions. The first cohort of 35 students has been enrolled with outreach for the next cohort expected to be complete in February 2021. The end date for the pilot program is 6/30/21; this WIOA grant includes a one-year follow-up period to assess youth employment outcomes.

In the summer of 2020, PHA hosted Year 3 of the *Providence One Summer Youth Employment Program*; 18 youth participated in this program that combined work readiness activities and lifeskills components. The program was conducted using a hybrid model of Zoom sessions and small, in-person group sessions.

In the fall of 2020, PHA piloted, *Dreams to Reality*, a program combining basketball with leadership and lifeskills development components in the Chad Brown Apartments; this development is located in a neighborhood that experienced increased levels of violence in the Spring and Summer of 2020. The pilot will conclude and be evaluated in early 2021.

Strategy 2.4: Improve Environmental Health of PHA Units and HCV Units

In the reporting period, the PHA created a scope of work for its Lead-Based Paint remediation project in family developments and developed an RFP to secure a vendor to conduct the scope of work. PHA anticipates advertising the RFP in early calendar 2021.

Strategy 2.5: Increase Resident Services for Elderly and Disabled Residents

Throughout the reporting period, the PHA continued its partnership with the Food Bank of Rhode Island to bring the *Senior Food Box Program* to at-risk elders. This program served 177 elders monthly throughout the period. In March of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic brought stay-at home orders that necessitated the provision of food to the PHA's most vulnerable communities - elders and persons with disabilities. Many residents did not have family or friends who could safely bring food supplies to them;

consequently, the PHA created the *Emergency Food Box Program* that provided residents with boxes of shelf stable food from March through December 2020. In total, the PHA's Emergency Food Task Force distributed 555 emergency food boxes each month in the above time period.

In an effort to identify elder and disabled residents in need of services during the pandemic, staff from Resident Services, Property Management and the Office of Strategy and Development instituted wellness check calls to all elderly and disabled residents, noting needs and changes to emergency contact information in an Emergency Response Outreach Log (EROL). Staff compared data in EROL with that contained in Property Management and Resident Services software and updated data as necessary.

Strategy 2.6: Support Violence Prevention Strategies

Throughout the reporting period, the PHA's Security Department worked in close collaboration with the Providence Police Department (PPD), as well as its specialized Public Housing Unit, to develop and implement measures to protect resident safety during the pandemic and a period of social unrest in the summer of 2020. In March of 2020, the PHA like many other housing agencies and community organizations transitioned to working remotely in serving its residents. This decreased presence of PHA staff onsite at high-rise buildings in particular (all high-rise building have on-site property management offices), coupled with fewer security staff available to work onsite due to medical risk, necessitated the augmentation of the PHA's security force for high-rise developments. PHA contracted with an outside vendor, New England Security Solutions, to provide a heightened level of security services. This augmented security force resulted in a low level of security incidents in PHA high-rise buildings.

Since the beginning of this program in 2019, the PHA Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Program Coordinator has served over 158 unique victims of crime, providing support and referrals to sources of treatment to foster recovery.

Throughout the reporting period, the PHA's Office of Strategy and Development increased contact with Resident Advisory Board (RAB) members by holding monthly formal meetings by Zoom and telephone and conducting check-in group and individual outreach calls during the month. These meetings and calls served to quickly identify and address security and quality of life issues and fostered close collaboration with tenant associations and RAB members to build a sense of community and ownership in PHA developments.

In this reporting period, PHA staff participated in a community effort to re-establish the RI Chapter of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), an international program used to build community capacity to resolve conflict and prevent violence. A member of the PHA's Office of Strategy and Development (OSD) served as a trainer, and another OSD staff member and three members of the RAB participated in a 16-hour Zoom training along with members of the Providence community. Following the initial training, PHA participants expressed an interest in further training in the Spring and Summer of 2021 that would allow them to serve as trainers and bring the program to PHA developments if requested.

Goal 3: Cultivate, Enhance and Evaluate Strategic Partnerships

Strategy 3.1: Build Relationships with Prospective Organizations to engage in Future Cross-Sector Planning Efforts

In this reporting period, the PHA's General Counsel actively cultivated relationships with other PHAs by maintaining an active participation in the Housing Development Law Institute.

Since the PHA's last Annual Plan submission, PHA established a relationship with the new Superintendent of the Providence Public School District (PPSD). In 2020, the PPSD was put into receivership by the Rhode Island Department of Education. In the coming year, PHA will seek to explore ways in which it could become a formal partner with PPSD and play a meaningful role in improvements in the public school system that will benefit PHA parents and children.

Strategy 3.2: Measure Impact of Partnerships

In this reporting period, the PHA's General Counsel developed a standard template for all MOUs/MOAs with community partners; 90% of PHA MOUs/MOAs have been converted to this template that includes more specific scopes of services and performance indicators. The PHA's Resident Service Department has developed a system for tracking all MOUs and MOAs with partners.

Strategy 3.3: Collaborate with Key Partners to Proactively Address and Prevent Homelessness

The PHA's Director of the Office of Strategy and Development serves as an active member of the RI Continuum of Care (COC), and this membership helps inform the PHA about trends and needs concerning homeless individuals and families. In response to identified needs, the PHA applied for and received additional 90 Mainstream Vouchers in this reporting period - 15 from the Cares Act and 75 as a result of the PHA's application for additional vouchers. PHA works closely with community partners to assist families in leasing-up these new vouchers. To support the leasing-up of the new Mainstream vouchers, the PHA employs an Ameri-Corps community worker to outreach to landlords to recruit them to participate in the program and to assist Mainstream voucher holders in conducting housing search activity and locating available units for leasing

Like other communities across the country, low income families served by the PHA have been hard-hit by the economic fall-out of the Covid-19 pandemic and many Providence families are at risk of homelessness due to non-payment of rent. The PHA's Property Management Department worked closely with residents and the United Way of RI (UWRI) to aid in the completion of applications to the UWRI's Cares Act-funded *Safe Harbor Program*. To date, the PHA's efforts have resulted in 109 families receiving funding to cure six months of rental arrearage – a total of \$140,526. In addition to outreach to the public housing community, the PHA has publicized the *Safe Harbor Program* to HCV participants and landlords by posting information on its website and sending information via mass messaging to participants. In addition to the *Safe Harbor Program*, PHA staff from the Resident Services and Property Management Departments, in an effort to foster housing and family stability, have conducted extensive outreach to residents with rental arrearages to offer assistance with budgeting and developing repayment agreements to prevent tenancies from being jeopardized due to non-payment.

Strategy 3.4 Improve Existing Partnerships with Agencies Already Serving PHA Residents

To educate community partners about the PHA's new 5-Year Strategic Plan, PHA created and disseminated a publication outlining its updated mission, vision, values and goals to over 150 organizations and individuals. In Spring 2021, PHA will begin conducting virtual presentations about Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025. In addition to community partners, the PHA considers its employees to be among its most important existing partners and notes that they played a key role in helping to develop

the agency's new strategic plan. PHA distributed its Strategic Plan publication to all 240 employee partners.

Throughout the pandemic, PHA has outreached to and collaborated with its community partners to find solutions to obstacles to providing programs and services to PHA residents. PHA is particularly pleased that programming provided by the Providence Boys & Girls Club has been able to resume, albeit in a modified format, in our family developments.

Goal 4: Continuously Improve PHA Internal Management and Operations

Strategy 4.3: Leverage Technology

Stay at home orders and the ongoing threat of the Covid-19 pandemic required PHA to move to a remote model of business operation for most of this Annual Report period. The PHA's IT Department successfully adapted equipment and hardware to accommodate the need for staff to work from home or in reconfigured workspaces at the PHA.

During this reporting period, the PHA's IT Department also assessed the current use and function of technology systems and worked to improve use of existing software and hardware. The PHA hired a vendor to conduct a cyber-security assessment, including identification of best practices and recommendations for what to include in a security plan; the assessment report is anticipated to be completed in Spring 2021. In this time period, PHA also continued to work with a vendor who monitored the PHA's virtual environment and resolved alerts 24/7/365 and established a disaster recovery system.

The IT Department also purchased tablets for Facilities Maintenance staff for use in implementing its new protocol for conducting building and unit inspections under the PHA's *Comprehensive Inspection Program* (CIP) in accordance with the Nspire inspection model. Maintenance foremen have been trained in the use of the tablets and software; other staff will be trained in Spring 2021.

Strategy 4.4: Improve Customer Service and Publicize Customer Service Excellence

In an effort to make communication with PHA staff working remotely more accessible to residents during the pandemic, the PHA established specialized phone numbers and e-mail addresses for each property that directly linked callers to designated PHA triage teams comprised of a Property Management, Facilities Maintenance, and Resident Service Department staff member.

Throughout the pandemic, a team of PHA staff from the Property Management and Resident Services Department, along with staff from the Office of Strategy and Development, made outreach calls to public housing residents. PHA staff were able to reach over 90% of our public housing residents through these calls to provide information and assess wellness.

The Covid-19 pandemic demanded new ways of providing services and communicating with residents, program participants, and landlords when face-to-face interaction was no longer practical. To facilitate recertification in both the HCV and Public Housing Programs, PHA instituted remote recertifications. To conduct meetings with residents and program participants, telephonic and Zoom meeting were utilized. PHA also contracted with a vendor to provide access to a mass messaging system that allowed PHA to communicate by voicemail and text messages in English and Spanish with residents, program participants, and landlords. This use of technology has been well received.

In effort to make the public housing application process and wait list management system more user friendly for applicants, PHA established an online waiting list management system this reporting period. Applicants express appreciation that they can file an application for public housing or update application information without having to come to the PHA's Tenant Selection Office.

Strategy 4.5: Enhance Services to HCV Participants and Landlords

During the pandemic a team of PHA staff from the Property Management, Leased Housing, and Resident Services Departments, made outreach calls to HCV participants. PHA staff were able to reach over 83% of our HCV participants through these calls to provide information and assess wellness. In one call, a PHA staff member noted a participant expressing suicidal ideation; she immediately engaged interventive services to assist the participant and successfully prevented any harmful action.

In this reporting period, PHA engaged an Ameri-Corps worker to research potential strategies to promote de-concentration of poverty. This worker has conducted outreach to landlords not currently engaged in the program to raise their awareness of the program and to engage landlords owning properties in neighborhoods of opportunity. The Ameri-Corps worker provides housing search assistance and housing choice mobility counseling for participants and has played a key role in assisting Mainstream Voucher Program participants to successfully lease units in the reporting period.

Also, in this reporting period, PHA undertook several initiatives designed to strengthen its relationships with landlords, recruit new landlords to the program, and provide resources to increase knowledge of landlord responsibilities within the HCV program. One significant initiative is the development of a landlord portal within the PHA's website that will be a source of information and allow landlords to do business with PHA electronically; PHA anticipates launching the portal in Spring 2021. Last year the PHA teamed-up with several City Councilors to conduct outreach/listening sessions with landlords and surveyed landlords about topics of interest to them around which PHA could develop workshops. In this reporting period, PHA designed and delivered four workshops on the following subjects: Reasonable Accommodations; Best Leasing Practices; HCV Program Overview; and Inspections. Seventy-six landlords attended these workshops; 24 landlords contacted staff post-event to notify PHA of units available for leasing and to make further inquiries about the HCV program. These workshops continue to be accessible on the PHA's website and on YouTube. Quarterly training topics for Spring 2021 include Financial Responsibilities and Incentive Programs for Landlords. Also in this reporting period, the PHA piloted an incentive program in late 2020 designed to: 1) Attract new landlords to participate in the HCV program; 2) Attract landlords to lease to Mainstream Voucher Program participants; and; 3) Bring units to the program that are located in neighborhoods with low rates of poverty concentration. Since October 2020, 11 new units have become available to HCV voucher holders with a total of \$7,000 in incentive payments issued to landlords. The landlord incentive payments were funded by a grant received by the PHA to support landlord outreach and engagement.

Strategy 4.6: Optimize Financial Performance

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges for preventing arrearages and fostering housing stability. PHA has been an active participant in the *Safe Harbor Program* administered by the United Way of RI. In this program eligible residents have access to funding to cure rental arrearages. As a result of the PHA's participation and assistance to 109 families in completing applications, the PHA received arrearage payments totaling \$140,526.

During this reporting period, PHA's Finance and Facilities Maintenance staff have worked closely to ensure the availability of goods and services needed for repairs, special projects, and unit turnover. As members of the Vendor Task Force, they met every six weeks to identify major projects and identify and develop solutions to obstacles to having goods and services available. To increase understanding of the PHA's procurement policy and procedures, the PHA's Procurement Manager provided training to all PHA staff involved in the purchase of goods and services. Increased planning and the availability of goods and services supported the completion of maintenance work orders in a very challenging period. Despite the challenge of the pandemic, PHA's Facilities Maintenance Department completed 27,431 work orders in the fiscal year that ended on 6/30/20.

In this reporting period, PHA has worked to develop, pursue and track a grant writing strategy to fund priority areas that include wellness programming, workforce development, Covid-19 response, housing search assistance, and landlord incentives. In this reporting period, PHA secured over \$1.1 million in grant funding to support these priority areas through grant writing by staff from the Office of Strategy and Development. The PHA has developed and advertised an RFP for a grant writer who will focus on grant writing to support Resident Services Department initiatives; the PHA anticipates awarding a contract in February 2021.

Since the submission of its last Annual Plan, the PHA applied and was approved for participation in HUD's Nspire pilot inspection program. In preparation for participation in the HUD pilot project, PHA's Property Management and Facilities Maintenance Departments collaborated to develop new protocols for unit inspections for PHA's new Comprehensive Inspection Program (CIP). The protocols were piloted briefly prior to PHA moving to remote operations. The pilot of CIP will resume when Covid restrictions are lifted and the pilot protocols will be evaluated and revised as necessary.

In this reporting period, PHA's Finance Department evaluated ways in which to improve PHAS scoring and implemented strategies for improvement. Although due to the pandemic PHAs will retain their scores from the previous fiscal year, it is important to note that PHA's PHAS score for the finance component would have been calculated as 99 as a financial score for the fiscal year that ended 6/30/20.

The Providence Housing Authority
FY 2021 Annual Plan

ATTACHMENT B.6
RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD
COMMENTS

The Providence Housing Authority FY 2021 Annual Plan

**RAB COMMENTS TO BE INCLUDED AFTER
EXPIRATION OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

The Providence Housing Authority
FY 2021 Annual Plan

ATTACHMENT B.7
CERTIFICATION BY STATE OR LOCAL
OFFICIALS