

PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
RESIDENT SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE MAY 2021 REPORT

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RESIDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

COVID 19 Updates:

The RSD's approach to COVID 19 has been to serve Residents through an interdepartmental approach.

- 1) **Emergency Resident Outreach Log (EROL)**-The EROL for all **public housing residents** started at the beginning of the crisis and has evolved with multiple phases. See current phases below:

PHASE 9: Continued identification and outreach to potential partners to support food delivery. Food Task Force and Delivery Service – RIFB Senior box deliveries continued through April, and **PHA food boxes available for emergencies**. In April there were **153 RIFB** (26 at Parenti Villa, 68 at Dominica Manor, and 59 at Dexter Manor) Senior boxes, and **0 emergency PHA food boxes** delivered.

PHASE 10: PHA continues to up-date the COVID 19 Hotline daily – In April there were **35 COVID follow up calls** to residents, **265 calls for vaccination questions and registration**.

PHASE 11: Covid vaccination outreach calls to high rise and elderly in family developments – *this is phasing out with decrease in clinics and increased use of CallMax for outreach.*

PHASE 12: Youth programs outreach

Program Updates:

Nicole Morillo was appointed the Associate Director of Resident Services in April.

All RSD staff performance reviews were completed in April.

The Resident Services Department is working to develop and refine Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to evaluate program flow within the agency, department, and with partners to date. The baseline tracking will continue through March 2021. In April, we had staff performance reviews, and began what will be an on-going evaluation of the Resident Services Department Referral KPI's.

	Family RSC's	Highrise RSC's	VOCA	SOR	CHW	ECM/ Financial Coach	LICSW	FSS	Wkforce Developer	TOTAL
Referrals to RSD from PM/Other Departments	21	8	52	3	57	18	3	0	0	162
Interdepartmental referrals within RSD for services	11	2	3	1	2	19	2	0	2	42
External referrals to outside agencies for services	7	9	6	0	0	14	0	4	0	40
Number of Residents following up on internal referrals	7	2	3	1	2	15	1	0	2	33

1) **WELLNESS PROGRAMS:**

Wellness Coordinator/SOR

- In April, the SOR Coordinator did not add new **Residents to his caseload or conduct follow up assessments.**
- The Coordinator received and followed up on 3 referrals from Security in April.
- On April 23rd a National Drug Take Back Day was organized for 3 PHA sites, with over 20 lbs. of unused or expired medication dropped off at the sites
- The Coordinator returned to the Dexter Manor office in April
- Partnership development with **CODAC** to partner with their pop-up van services to begin at the end of May/beginning of June. The pop-up clinic is designed to perform opioid assessments and help individuals get services and enroll for detox. The pop-up clinic is staffed by three nurses that perform high blood pressure, HIV, and hepatitis C testing. If the person is interested in detox, an assessment will be performed concerning SUD.

VOCA Coordinator

- **46 new clients** in April, for a total caseload of **214 Victims of Crime clients served** to date.
- **Second new FTE VOCA Coordinator, Julia Silva, started in April.**
- Continuous review of weekly Security Reports and weekly check-ins with the Institute of Nonviolence, Sojourner House, and the PHA Wellness Team.
- Weekly meeting with the Critical Response Team, who develop a Critical Response Plan for emergency and critical cases
- Two VOCA staff returned on-site to Dexter Manor in April
- Success story for the team during April was Leah featured in an RINPR story:

A domestic violence survivor's story of 'becoming whole again' during the pandemic (thepublicsradio.org)

Community Health Worker

- **4 new Residents** who completed a health screening tool with the Community Health Worker, for a **total of 48 Residents** who have completed screening in April
- Participated in the weekly Security Report review, and Critical Response Team
- Assisted Residents in applying for COVID-19 Relief funding from ONE/NB
- Participated in the National Drug Take Back day on April 23rd
- **Obtained Community Health Worker Certification from RIC**
- During April, the CHW has participated in all Covid vaccination events at the PHA

LICSW

- **18 new clients in April, 101 total clients to date**
- Spearheading Wellness Team presentation to RAB for April meeting
- Continued supervision of an MSW student from RIC, Grace Canton, who provides additional support to Residents
- Participated in the weekly Critical Response Team
- Conducted **2 trainings to the Security Department** Staff in April
- Partnership development with the **Providence Center**

2) WORKFORCE PROGRAMS:

WIOA

- **WIOA Recruitment continues for out-of-school youth**
- Staff participated in monthly WIOA provider meetings
- Youth have been processed for their Lifespan Summer Internship
- WIOA Grantor conducted a PHA file audit on April 30th
- **50% of WIOA youth have acquired permanent employment**

Workforce Development Coordinator

- **31 residents received employment counseling**
- **4 new employer partners established, for a total of 24 YTD**
- Lifespan partnership MOU was finalized
- Continued partnership and participation with DCYF Youth Voluntary Extension of Care (VEC) Program -Academic and Career Engagement
- Engagement with City of Providence TAC Board Meeting
- Continues to support JPP participants that are looking for employment

Financial Coach/Homeownership Program

- **Served 10 residents in April**

- The partnership with HarborOne Bank has enabled us to continue financial counseling services

Homeownership Counseling

- Onboarded a new HUD Homeownership Counselor on April 12th
- Residents sent to NeighborWorks for homeownership services- 0
- In development: 1 Twin account had been successfully closed, and payment was received. The resident was able to settle National Grid past due accounts. 2 previous financial counseling clients completed Twin Accounts Loan and are in the process of obtaining their matched funds to pay debtors.

FSS

- **\$162,057.05 escrow dollars disbursed FYTD (for April \$41,498.17)**, and \$11,064.10 escrow dollars forfeited FYTD (for April 4,089.00)
- FSS staff have been scheduling progress report meetings with FSS participants outside. For the month of April **84 progress report follow up appointments** have been completed
- **52% of FSS participants showed an increase in Earned Income** in April with an average increase of \$14,568.20
- There have been 0 extension requests due to Covid in April
- April success story is A.A., a Hartford Park Resident who completed 5 years of the FSS. A.A. continues to work for Rhode Island Hospital, and with the \$23,892.05 escrow is able to pay off debts and save money to buy a house in the near future.

Adult Education Programs:

- **Genesis Center**-conducting on-line distance learning for Adult Basic Education classes. The ESL and Ged Classes are at capacity, along with a long waitlist. Due to the partnership, PHA residents do have priority. COVID-19 continues to impact our educational partners' ability to post-test. They are working on trying to provide testing virtually.
- **Progreso Latino**-Continues to serve PHA residents in achieving their Spanish GED through their regular programming sessions.

3) RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATION:

- On-site support to Residents began in April: **Family RSC's have a combined caseload of 163 Residents**
- **High-Rise RSC's have a combined caseload of 65 Residents, and have provided services to 208 unduplicated Residents FYTD**
- Monthly Safe Harbor follow up with 109 Residents across all AMPs. Most Residents are in compliance with the program, for on-time rent payments. Both PM and RSC's enter relevant information into a shared spreadsheet
- Manton Heights RSC is managing the **food distribution program with the YMCA that started April 12, 2021 in which 17 families 50 children between the ages of 2-18 are provided one hot meal and two cold meals every Monday and**

Thursday. Parents and children are very excited and happy that we have this program onsite.

- Program planning for One Providence Summer Youth Internship program, with a focus at Chad Brown Family Development
- Lead RSC is leading the Food Delivery Program to determine emergency need and organize safe delivery for the RIFB Senior boxes at Dominica Manor, Dexter Manor, and Parenti Villa.
- High Rise RSC is continuing to lead the Covid Hotline project
- Parenti Villa Food Pantry restarted in April

RSD Partnerships:

- **Boys and Girls Club**-The Boys and Girls Club have opened their program at 50 Laurel Hill Ave, and as well as Manton Heights and Chad Brown. They are limiting the children to groups/pods of 20.
- **Children's Friend**- Programming moved to other locations due to enrollment.
- **YMCA** -food distribution partnership at Manton Heights through August
- **Urban Greens** – Contracted to provide paid internship experience for WIOA youth.
- **Providence Public Library (PPL)** – is supporting on-going computer literacy through on-line teacher guided learning.
- **Progreso Latino**-is supporting adult HSE learning through on-line teacher guided learning
- **ONE**-Community Health Workers
- **RIFB**-Senior Box program at Dexter Manor, Dominica Manor, and Parenti Villa as well as Parenti Villa Food Pantry agreements for 2021
- **HarborOne**-financial coaching partnership.
- **JPP HUD**- these calls will continue quarterly, as HUD has requested continued engagement to build upon the PHA's lessons learned for JPP

RSD Planning Updates:

1. Re-vamping the MMR data collection from staff to streamline and more accurately reflect outcomes based on function (i.e.: Wellness programs, Workforce programs, Education programs, and Resident Service Coordination) and alignment to the 5-year Strategic Plan
2. TAAG data entry protocols
3. FSS Program Coordinating Committee (PCC), MOUs for partner agencies
4. Grant writer RFP for RSD –RFP was revamped for two grant writers: one focusing on Mental and Behavioral Health Wellness, and one on Workforce
5. Planning for reestablishing Parenti Villa food pantry in April
6. Food taskforce recognition

COVID-19 Activities

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

Federal:

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

OSD has been reviewing the updated COVID-19 waivers from HUD as issued in early May and coordinating with departments on their operational needs. Many COVID waivers have been extended until December 31, 2021 and PHA will continue to use those that assist efficient operations and ensure we are best able to meet the housing needs of our residents and participants.

Partners Locally:

We maintain PHA participation in the Central Providence and West End Health Equity Zone projects and with the current Accessing Home AmeriCorps program cohort of host sites.

Homes RI– OSD staff continue to participate in monthly Zoom meeting convened by Homes RI. These meetings highlight issues related to homelessness prevention and affordable housing, as well as developing advocacy strategies and building partnerships.

COVID-19 Funding and Resource Development

Recent funding notifications and updates

FEMA – OSD completed gathering documentation for an application for additional FEMA reimbursement for Covid costs associated with testing and vaccination clinics from May 2020 to May 15, 2021. PuroClean's high rise sanitation services, and NESS security guard services that were not covered by Cares Act funds. Testing and vaccination expenses incurred prior to 1/21/21 will be reimbursed at 75%; testing and vaccination expenses incurred after 1/21/21 will be reimbursed at 100%. FEMA requires PHA to provide the dates, hours, and overtime calculation for each person for whom we are seeking reimbursement of overtime and/or hazard pay; this section of the documentation package is more than 120 pages. OSD anticipates filing the application on May 17.

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

State of Rhode Island Community Development Covid Response Block Grants- We are waiting to hear back on two grants submitted to the RI Office of Housing and Community Development: \$154,655, for support of the *Workforce Development Coordination Initiative* that will assist public housing residents struggling to find work during the pandemic; and \$128,050 to address needed services for homeless Mainstream Voucher participants to assist them in securing housing and maintaining tenancies. If successful, this funding will be provided over a two-year period.

COVID-19 Communications and Resident Outreach

Covid 19 Testing and Vaccinations

OSD staff worked cross-departmentally to support messaging regarding vaccinations including announcements, informative handouts (including translations of vaccine fact

sheets), call scripting, mass messaging, and then provided event support by taking photographs and filling in as needed.



HUD Covid-19 Webinars

OSD participated in HUD's Covid-19 Best Practices webinars to keep abreast of initiatives being undertaken by PHAs and their partners across the country. PHA's efforts meet or exceed those of peers nationwide. Many

All OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other Funding and Resource Development

New and pending applications:

City of Providence Summer Youth Employment

OSD staff prepared a grant application, in the amount of \$65,552, in response to the City's RFP for the 2021 One Providence for Youth Summer Employment Program. If funded, this program would allow the PHA to provide workforce readiness workshops and coaching, as well as link 20 youth to paid summer internships for a fourth year. PHA anticipates a funding decision on or about May 25; the program would begin on July 5.

One Neighborhood Builders/Central Providence Health Equity Zone

OSD staff prepared a grant, in the amount of \$35,000, that would support a 15 hours per week of service coordination for residents of Hartford Park centered around family economic self-sufficiency.

United Way of RI Olneyville Fund

OSD staff is developing a proposal to the United Way for funds that would support the coordination of services and referrals for residents of Manton Heights who are seeking Wellness resources, including access to treatment and recovery services for substance use disorders and mental health needs. If funded PHA would apply an intergenerational strategy to serving residents with these needs as a means of fostering tenancy preservation. The maximum grant award from this source is \$20,000; the due date for applications is May 20.

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

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

Senate Legislative Grants OSD completed the FY 2021 Legislative Grant proposal for the following: Kilmartin Plaza Planning Committee grant sponsored by State Representative Slater (\$1,500), Parenti Villa Planning Committee (\$2,000) and Dominica Planning Committee by Senator Sam Bell (\$1,500). The grant will go to fund outdoor events in adherence to current CDC pandemic guidelines, digital literacy with the purchases of computer tablets and allow residents to support their annual gardening projects.

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

Communications and Resident Outreach

Mass Messaging

We coordinated with several departments across the agency to send mass message calls and text messages through CallMax:

	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021
Total number of “bulletin” messages sent	4	38*	67*	115*	75*	56	45	43	62	27	47

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

	Apr 2021	May 2021	June 2020	July 2021	Aug 2021	Sept 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Mar 2021
Total number of “bulletin” messages sent	37 As of 4/13	45 As of 5/13									

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

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

PHA’s Facebook reach continues to grow as we are now at 1,059 page “Likes” and 1232 accounts following the PHA on Facebook right now. In the past two months, we also have a following of 158 users on Instagram, which we continue to grow as we build out our work on this platform.

PHA Website

OSD is spearheading a refresh of the PHA's website (www.ProvHousing.org) with vendor EpikSolutions. The refresh will include an updated look and newly organized content once completed.

RAB communications and report

OSD staff members continued to do regular Zoom check in calls with RAB members to identify resident community concerns and needs and to provide information and updates. OSD continued a series of two RAB conference calls (one in English, one in Spanish) each month in the first week of the month and then a full RAB meeting on the third Wednesday of the month. OSD promptly advises Departments of any issues identified in RAB contacts.

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

- Violation of parking policies;
- Illegal dumping by outsiders; and

The April RAB meeting on 4/21 featured a presentation by Martha Crippen, Director of Attorney General Peter Naronha's Consumer Protection Unit. Ms. Crippen educated RAB members and PHA staff about a wide range of consumer protection issues, including how to protect oneself from identify theft and scams. In addition to this presentation, OSD provided updates about the PHA's Covid-10 vaccination and testing programs.

OSD invited Senator Jack Reed for a special meeting On April 7 with RAB members; Executive Director, Melissa Sanzaro and Chairman of the PHA's Board of Commissioners Nic Retsinas also attended this meeting. The senator addressed issues raised by our RAB members regarding affordable housing, accessing immediate medical attention for seniors (telehealth), concerns and discussion regarding with MTM senior medical transport, the Kennedy Hub Plaza controversy and easement on pandemic guidelines for Rhode Island in the coming future.

Resident Activities Update

Sunset Village- A storage closet was assembled in first floor laundry room to store recently purchased gardening supplies. Residents expressed a need to have their own gardening tools so that they will not have to depend on maintenance to lend them theirs. Therefore, affording them self-sufficiency and flexibility as to when and time they can garden. A get together to open the season for the gardening group is being planned for May.



Carroll Tower- An outdoor gathering with refreshments by the Providence Canteen Event on May 12 had a successful outcome. Approximately 70 residents were served free snacks and refreshments in the outdoors. The event was to celebrate the coming of Spring and to bring a sense of normalcy and morale boost to the residents from the social isolation brought upon by the pandemic.

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

Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Residents

OSD began a partnership with CaptionCall, an organization that provides no cost phones with features needed by residents who are deaf or hard of hearing, including amplification and closed captioning of audio. CaptionCall has also partnered with the RI Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. OSD is arranging dates for CaptionCall to provide information tables (outside and in compliance with Covid safety requirements) at all PHA locations. Information tables at Dexter Manor and Dominica Manor resulted in 20 residents being provided with these specialized phones. Information tables are scheduled for Carroll Tower on May 12 and Hartford Park on May 24; information tables will continue in June and July at other PHA locations.

Youth Police Initiative

OSD met with RSD staff involved in YPI to review the results of the last PHA YPI session and discuss ideas for strengthening the program and developing a follow-up component. OSD also met with NAFI's Jay Paris to discuss PHA's most recent YPI session, the status of YPI's current programming, the status of a leadership program in development when the pandemic broke and next steps YPI communities are taking. Jay reported that he expects YPI to return to live session in late summer or early fall and reported that other communities have been successfully conducting sessions via Zoom, noting that remote sessions are not NAFI's preference for a program seeking to build police-community relationships. Jay recommends that it would be helpful for PHA, NAFI and PPD to meet to discuss how to pursue YPI in the future.

Artist-in-Residence

On May 7, PHA unveiled the mural, *Past and Future* created by artist-in-residence Angela Gonzales, also known professionally as Agonza, with a speaking program and reception at Hartford Park.



Bike and scooter program – OSD met with Spin, the company that runs the local scooter program and will soon be introducing a bike rental program, to learn about opportunities for residents to access low-income plans. We also connected Spin to the Workforce development team as a potential employer for residents.

Strategic Planning and Plan Implementation

OSD worked with Departments as they reviewed their performance in meeting Strategic Plan goals in Quarter 3. OSD compiled and reviewed Quarter 3 Strategic Plan status reports entered data into our master tracking spreadsheet and consolidated the reports into charts summarizing achievement status in each goal area.

Designated Housing Renewal

PHA received notice from HUD that the PHA's request to renew the designation of Carroll Toer and Dominica Manor as Elder-Only has been approved. The approval period is for 7/1/21 – 6/30/23.

Collaboration with RSD –

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

ConnectHome PVD– OSD and Security team staff met with partners at ONE Neighborhood Builders to explore expansion of Olneyville's free Wi-Fi service into Manton Heights and if connections through the OSHEAN network could be made to Hartford Park and Parenti Villa as well. Collaborating on resource development for this project is on-going. Engineers working with ONE Neighborhood Builders recently visited Manton Heights to walk through one of each of the several types of buildings in the development and determine how many devices would be needed in each building to have a strong development-wide wireless network.

OSD and Executive leadership also met with POAH, a local affordable housing provider, and two members of the Providence City Council on May 13 to learn more about POAH's planned wireless network at its Oxford Gardens development and to discuss possible collaborations around digital access.

FCC Emergency Broadband Initiative

OSD participated in a HUD/FCC webcast announcing the FCC's new initiatives that provides up to a \$50 per month discount on broadband services and a one-time discount of \$100 toward the purchase of a tablet, laptop or desktop device. Any public housing resident is eligible to participate in this program. Residents must apply to a participating Internet provider; applications are available starting May 12. The discount will remain in place from May 12 until the end of the pandemic declaration and OSD is disseminating information about this program to residents.

Project Based Vouchers – OSD is working to develop a new potential request for proposals for project-based vouchers to issue in the coming months, incorporating lessons learned from the last RFP that was issued in late 2018. As a part of that effort OSD and members of the PBV RFP Committee designed and disseminated a survey seeking feedback from advocates, landlords, and residents or potential residents of affordable housing, and received 42 responses by the deadline, and is incorporating the insights and community needs identified in the survey responses into a final RFP together with partners across departments in the Leased Housing Strategy Committee.

Landlord Incentives – OSD is working closely with Leased Housing to issue landlord incentives to attract and support our landlords and increase success of hard to house residents in finding housing. Through the end of April, we have approved 30 landlord incentives totaling \$16,500 with 28 of them going to new landlords, three receiving incentives for housing a formerly homeless family through the mainstream voucher program, and two incentives for a landlord leasing a new unit in an area of opportunity.

On May 6, OSD attended a training conducted by Attorney Michael Crane for Rhode Island landlords on the new source of income nondiscrimination law, and we are exploring ways to use this law as an opportunity to reach out to new potential landlords and make them aware of our incentives and the positives other benefits of working with the Section 8 program.

HUD Repositioning– OSD staff participated in HUD's April 14 *Public Housing Repositioning: Environmental Review Process* webinar to keep abreast of repositioning requirements.

Exploring Cross-Sector Partnership Models

OSD participated in an April 14 webcast provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services concerning innovative partnerships between housing providers and services agencies. The webcast focused heavily on partnerships serving homeless populations.

OSD participated in CLPHA's *Housing Is 2021 Summit* held virtually May 4 – 6. This year's Summit had an emphasis on developing cross-sector partnerships and featured a range of topics, including: Supporting Residents with Substance Use Disorders; Revisiting Eviction Prevention Practices Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic; Unlocking Educational Opportunities for Low-Income Adults; and Measuring Racial Equity. The slide decks from Summit sessions can be accessed on the Shared Drive under CLAPHA 2021 Summit.