**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**RESIDENT SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 2021 REPORT**

**Julie Piccolo, Director of Resident Services**

**Nicole Morillo, Resident Services Operations Manager**

**Peter Asen, Director of Strategy & Development**

**RESIDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT:**

***COVID 19 Updates:***

The RSD’s approach to COVID 19 has been to serve Residents through an interdepartmental approach whenever possible.

1. **Emergency Resident Outreach Log (EROL)**-The EROL targeting all **public housing residents** started at the beginning of the crisis and has evolved with multiple phases. There are 9 RSD staff who work most intensively with the emergency Covid testing and vaccine initiatives, and an additional 5 staff who participate as needed.

PHASE 9: Continued identification and outreach to potential partners to support food delivery

PHASE 10: Covid testing outreach

PHASE 11: Covid vaccination outreach calls to high rise

1. **Additional Resident Outreach:**

PHA continues to up-date the COVID 19 Hotline daily – In January there were 140 COVID follow up calls to residents, 665 COVID negative calls to residents.

Food Task Force and Delivery Service – RIFB Senior box deliveries continued through January, and ***there are PHA food boxes available*** ***for emergencies.*** In January there were 164 RIFB Senior boxes, and 2 emergency PHA food boxes delivered.

***Program Updates:***

The Resident Services Department is working to create 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.

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|  | **Family RSC’s** | **Highrise RSC’s** | **VOCA** | **SOR** | **CHW** | **ECM** | **Financial Coach** | **LICSW** | **FSS** | **Wkforce**  **Developer** | **TOTAL** |
| Referrals to RSD from PM/Other Departments | 91 | 5 | 31 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 160 |
| Interdepartmental referrals within RSD for services | 19 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 50 |
| External referrals to outside agencies for services | 22 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 0 | 23 | 15 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 89 |
| Number of Residents following up on internal referrals | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 15 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 39 |

1. **WELLNESS PROGRAMS:**

Wellness Coordinator/SOR

* Has added **2 additional Residents to his caseload January**.
* The Coordinator has restructured contact during January with 6 Zoom meetings, 8 outside meetings, and 18 calls to clients
  + The Coordinator has restructured ‘virtual bingo’ for residents to engage from home and to educate older residents on how to become tech savvy.
  + Coffee and Conversation has been restructured as a series of workshops to increase consistent attendance and participation.

VOCA Coordinator

* **27 new clients** in January, for a total caseload of **102 Victims of Crime clients**
* Continuous review of weekly Security Reports to offer remote services to residents, as well as weekly check-ins with the Institute of Nonviolence, Sojourner House, and the PHA Wellness Team.
* Leading development of a process for reviewing Security Reports with Wellness Coordinator for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to Resident Outreach. This has led to the development of a Critical Response Team, who develop a Critical Response Plan for the

Community Health Worker

* There were **2 new Residents** who completed a health screening tool with the Community Health Worker.
* The Community Health Worker has not only made outreach calls for Covid Testing but has participated at the testing sites.
* **During January, the CHW has participated in all Covid vaccination events**.

LICSW

* **18 new clients in January**
* Supervising an MSW student from RIC, Grace Canton who presented her role and the work she is doing to the RAB in January.
* **Coordinated with OSD the Wellness brochure that was sent to Residents**
* HIPAA Compliance for maintaining confidential data

1. **WORKFORCE PROGRAMS:**

WIOA

* 262 WIOA Recruitment calls made, and 7 out-of-school youth were successfully enrolled and 4 were made eligible
* **Cohort 2 Job readiness classes started on January 19th**
* Staff participated in monthly WIOA provider meetings
* **17 WIOA Participants-two interns have been offered a job once their internship hours are completed**

Workforce Development Coordinator

* **9 residents received employment counseling**
* **2 new employer partners established, for a total of 13 YTD**
* Continuous follow-up with WIOA youth at their worksite and virtual weekly meeting with their worksite supervisors every Friday afternoon
* **The WDC has connected with Lifespan to provide worksite experience for WIOA youth- currently in development, follow-up meeting in February**
* Assisted with the Parenti Villa vaccines calls
* Continues to support JPP participants that are looking for employment

Financial Coach/Homeownership Program

* **Served 15 residents**
* The partnership with HarborOne Bank has enabled us to continue financial counseling services
* Residents that have completed the initial steps of homeownership/financial goals with HarborOne are being sent NeighborWorks for additional homeownership services

FSS

* **$103,538.12 escrow dollars disbursed**, and $4,867.30 escrow dollars forfeited FYTD
* FSS staff have been scheduling progress report meetings with FSS participants outside. For the month of January **84 progress reports** have been completed
* A success story from January was a positive termination for client L.C. She worked hard to maintain employment during her FSS contract and Covid. She had an escrow over $17,000 and will be closing on a home in February
* There has been 2 extension requests due to Covid
* FSS staff participated in the pilot Covid vaccination calls for Carroll Tower.

1. **ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS:**

* **Genesis Cente**r-conducting on-line distance learning for Adult Basic Education classes and phoneline conferences to work collaboratively on outreach and recruitment for programs. In progress is updating the MOU for the Adult Education Consortium. The Genesis Center is operating month-by-month with level funding until a State budget is approved.
* **Progreso Latino**-Continues to serve 10 PHA residents in achieving their Spanish GED.
* **iCAP**-the PHA is continuing to work with employer partners like Urban Greens to offer internship opportunities during the contextualized learning program.

1. **RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATION:**

* Remote support to caseload clients: **Family RSC’s have a combined caseload of 203 Residents, and High-Rise RSC’s have a combined caseload of 116 Residents.**
* Safe Harbor follow up with 109 Residents across all AMPs. An SOP was developed with Property Management to ensure communication and support for Residents in this project
* 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**.**
* RIFB agreements for Senior Box program and Parenti Villa Food Pantry are updated
* High Rise RSC is leading the Covid Hotline project: (see Covid Section of report) The RSC for the Covid Hotline project also reported that in January, a resident from HT passed away. When he called her daughter for update on her mother’s recovery from Covid, she gave him the news, but also thanked the PHA for the help her mother got through the years of living here and offered to donate some of her mother's clothes (new) and some meal replacements for diabetics.

***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.
* **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 who are part of the consortium have participated at the PHA Covid Testing sites.
* **RIFB**-Senior Box program at Dexter Manor, Dominica Manor, and Parenti Villa as well as Parenti Villa Food Pantry agreements for 2021
* **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 5-year strategic goals
  2. TAAG data entry protocols
  3. Grant writer RFP for RSD – deadline for responding is January 22, 2021. Since there were no responses, the RFP was revamped for two grant writers: one focusing on Mental and Behavioral Health Wellness, and one on Workforce.
  4. FSS reestablishing the Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) together with the RIH FSS Coordinators
  5. Posted to hire a 2nd FTE VOCA Coordinator
  6. Planning for reestablishing Parenti Villa food pantry
  7. Food taskforce recognition

**OFFICE OF STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT**

***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. Working with the other PHA departments, OSD updated the COVID-19 waivers given the newest PIH Notice and posted them publicly.

State:

We have been in ongoing communication with the Rhode Island Department of Health and continue participating in state-wide coalitions and special committees formed to address critical mission-related work in the state.

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. OSD staff has further extended participation with the 02907 HEZCAT by joining the priority planning subcommittee. This group is assigned to develop a plan of action to address issues/concerns raised from a HEZCAT survey taken by the residents of the community. Among the three main needs addressed, OSD will be involved in identifying tasks and solutions to improve the social cohesion and wellbeing of the 02607 community.

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

OSD, together with Resident Services, convened a meeting on 1/6 with Skills for RI’s Future with RSD to learn about the organizations current programming and the potential for a heightened level of partnership with PHA.

***COVID-19 Funding and Resource Development***

Recent funding notifications and updates

**FEMA –** OSD staff has been in contact with RIEMA concerning PHA seeking additional funding from FEMA to cover Covid-19 expenses not covered by Cares Act Funds and has learned FEMA is continuing to accept applications. OSD is gathering PHA expense records concerning PuroClean’s high rises sanitation services, NESS services and costs associated with on-site Covid testing and vaccinations programs. **CDBG-CV –** OSD is planning one or two proposals to the state’s CDBG-Covid response RFP to address needed services for homeless mainstream voucher participants, and for workforce development services for public housing and section 8 residents who have lost or struggled to find work during the pandemic. In addition, the City of Providence has its own CDBG-Covid response RFP out and we are putting together a proposal to support continued vaccination and COVID testing efforts.

***COVID-19 Communications and Resident Outreach***

Covid 19 Testing and Vaccinations

OSD staff developed materials about PHA developments, resources, and amenities for use by the RI DOH as PHA works collaboratively to bring testing and vaccination programs onsite to our developments. We also worked cross-departmentally to support messaging regarding vaccinations including announcements, informative handouts (including translations of Pfizer Vaccine fact sheet), call scripting, mass messaging, and then provided event support by taking photographs and filling in as needed.

OSD staff participated in the RI Department of Health’s Intensive Covid 19 Community Workshop on 1/15. The workshop provided valuable information concerning various types of Covid-19 testing, types of vaccines and how they work, the State’s plans for vaccinating the public, obstacles to engaging residents in testing and vaccination programs, and strategies for improving participation.

***All OTHER ACTIVITIES***

***Other Funding and Resource Development***

New and pending applications:

**ROSS** – The 2020 ROSS application was filed on November 17 and is seeking $717,750 in funding to continue our family development RSC program for an additional three years. The current grant which funds this program will run out this spring.

**United Way of RI** – PHA has been invited to submit a full proposal to the UWRI for its Community Impact Fund grant program. PHA is proposing an education and employment support program, *Pathway to Opportunity/Camino a Oportunidad*, focused on reaching the Black, Indigenous and Persons of Color (BIPOC) communities in Providence. OSD staff drafted the grant narrative and budget in January. Applications are due on 2/17. If successful, PHA would receive nearly $150,000 over a two-year period to support a FTE bilingual employment case manager. UWRI is expected to announce funding decisions in early April.

**BCBSRI Blue Angel** – The PHA applied for year 2 funding under our existing grant with BCBS of RI to support work with Section 8 participants, specifically MainStream Voucher holders, and landlords as a means to increase access to housing and promote mobility to neighborhoods of greater opportunity. We were awarded $60,000 which is a $10,000 increase in funding from last year to cover the costs of our AmeriCorps member, landlord incentives, technical assistance, and other supports.

**Additional Proposals Underway –** OSD is currently working on proposals to the City of Providence’s CDBG program for the Thomas Anton Community Center as well as facilities improvements, and to RI Housing for its digital access program. More info will be forthcoming on these proposals next month.

***Communications and Resident Outreach***

*Mass Messaging*

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

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|  | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 | August 2020 | Sept 2020 | Oct 2020 | Nov 2020 | Dec 2020 | Jan 2021 | Feb 2021 |
| Total number of “bulletin” messages sent | 4 | 38\* | 67\* | 115\* | 75\* | 56 | 45 | 43 | 62 | 13  *\*As of 2/13* |

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

Messages reflected COVID testing and vaccinations, WIOA workforce programming, a call for talent at Hartford Park, and much more.

PHA has reached a Facebook social media milestone of 1,002 page “Likes” and there are 1,173 accounts following the PHA on Facebook right now. The next focus is to build a stronger Instagram following, which we have begun working on in the past couple months. Follow us there @ProvHousing.

RAB communications and report

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

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

* Concerns about residents and visitors not taking mask wearing seriously;
* Concerns about residents gathering in lobbies in some developments;
* Residents crowding in elevators; and
* Residents struggling with mental health, especially depression and addiction issues due to the pandemic.

The January RAB meeting on 1/20 included information sharing about Covid-19 vaccinations, an overview of the Annaul Plan proicess and RAB role, and a presentation by a Rhode Island College interns mowring with RSD’s Building Bridges to Support program.

OSD strive to empower RAB members to participate in our virtual meetings by offering computer tablets on loan. As a result, several our members have learned how to use a tablet and to attend zoom meetings.

OSD staff attended a Zoom community meeting on 1/15 concerning planned changes in the Kennedy Plaza transportation hub. The meeting was convened by organizations seeking to have reconsideration of the plan due to the concerns about disparate impact the changes may have on members of the community using public transportation. OSD staff did not speak at the meeting; a member of the RAB spoke.

Fire Safety

OSD has reinstated PHA’s fire safety training for residents mandated to attend when a noncompliance has been issued. Due to the pandemic, trainings will be one on one (no classes or group sessions) held via virtual conferencing or by phone. The first training session occurred on November 16 by phone. To date, four residents have received fire safety training. Six residents will be scheduled to receive safety training talks in February. OSD staff continue to monitor fire incident alerts on a weekly basis.

***Policy efforts***

City and state policy - PHA has provided information and input to inform the City Council’s consideration of an ordinance that would ban housing discrimination against tenants based on a lawful source of income, including a section 8 voucher. PHA provided information to a recent City Council committee hearing on the issue.

On the state level, we have shared the Board’s support of legislation to address the same issue with the RI General Assembly and expressed concern about legislation that would change the requirements for what elderly housing would need to be able to power with emergency generators, and proposed alternate solutions to address the concern of elderly residents who have to deal with power outages.

We also provided input this past month on a proposed city ordinance that would require better security planning at elderly housing in the city.

***Other Initiatives***

Collaboration with RSD –

* State Opioid Reduction Program – OSD staff continued to serve as the PHA liaison to BHDDH, our funder, and coordinated meetings of PHA/PawtHA partnership, provided statistical data concerning opioid use and overdose rates, and authored monthly reports to BHDDH.
* Jobs Plus – OSD staff continued to participate in monthly calls with HUD staff concerning the Jobs Plus Program and PHA’s experience with the Initiative.

Strategic Planning– OSD staff complied Quarters 1 and 2 Department reports into a PHA-wide Strategic Plan status report and provided a presentation to the Board of Commissioners on January 28 that highlighted areas of success and challenges, provided the status of completion of Year 1 strategies and actions, and solicited input from members about the status report format that would be most helpful for the Board to receive.

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

Landlord Incentives – OSD is working closely with Leased Housing to issue landlord incentives to attract and support our landlords and increase success of hard to house residents in finding housing. As of February 12, we have approved 22 landlord incentives totaling $11,500 with 16 of them going to new landlords, two receiving incentives for housing a formerly homeless family through the mainstream voucher program, and one incentive for a landlord leasing a new unit in an area of opportunity.

Partnership with the Leased Housing- Services for Residents– OSD staff drafted a social service resource directory for use by Leased Housing Program Representatives. The guide includes program descriptions and contact information for key agencies providing services in the areas of adult education, child protection, disability rights and services, discrimination and civil rights, domestic violence, elder issues, employment, ESL, financial counseling, food insecurity, fuel assistance, healthcare services, homelessness, immigration and citizenship, legal services, literacy, overdose prevention, tax preparation (free), veteran’s services and victim compensation. In February, OSD anticipates providing training to staff about using the directory and making referrals to organizations. This project is part of a strategy to increasing services to Leased Housing participants.