

City of Rockford 2014 CAPER

Public Housing

The following actions have been taken to address the needs of public housing:

Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) and Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) have created several partnerships to promote change and progress. These partnerships include the Northern Illinois Regional Partnership for implementation of a housing rehabilitation award, partnering with NWHomeStart to assist families in moving to home ownership. The Partnership was awarded \$2.5million to address housing stabilization in the neighborhoods around public housing.

RHA applied for the 2013 Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) with the WCHA as a co-applicant. RHA attempted to partner with the City of Rockford and others to submit a 2014 application; voted down by City Council in 2015. Activities listed in both applications continue to be implemented with willing partners and via other funding mechanisms.

WCHA was awarded an eligible organization entity by the Neighborhood Community Stabilization Trust (NCST) program, allowing the First Look program to acquire foreclosed homes, strategically in neighborhoods where the acquisition and rehab of one home will protect the rest of the neighborhood from encroaching neighborhood disinvestment, loss of property value and loss of property tax.

Rockford Housing Authority and its non-profit, Bridge Rockford Alliance, continued its effort to produce new, quality affordable units by completing 5 units funded by organizational equity. RHA and Bridge Rockford Alliance persistently search for ways to partner and provide affordable housing units in Rockford. WCHA's nonprofit component, Winnebago Homes Association (WHA), has purchased and rehabbed nine foreclosed homes. The rehab for some of the units was completed in partnership with Comprehensive Community Solutions to benefit the YouthBuild program.

RHA has provided Project Based Section 8 (PBS8) assistance to 19 WHA homes, including nine foreclosure acquisitions and rehabbed homes. They also provided PBS8 assistance to two WHA homes (which were foreclosure acquisitions and rehabbed units) in South Beloit to promote family mobility and opportunity.

RHA maintained 99% and WCHA maintained 100% funding utilization of their Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs to provide maximum housing assistance for families.

WCHA maintained a 99.67% annual occupancy rate of its public housing homes to provide maximum housing assistance for families. With exception of the Brewington High Rises, RHA maintained occupancy at or in excess of 98% at its public housing units to provide maximum housing assistance for families.

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RHA is a HUD-designated Standard Performer in its public housing program and a HUD-designated High Performer in its HCV program. WCHA is a HUD-designated High Performer Housing Authority, and a HUD-designated High Performer for its HCV program, which allows administrative and regulatory ease, grant preference, and increases the Capital Fund budget by 3%.

WCHA managed the Boone County Housing Authority and pro-rated a portion of its HCV program to Stephenson County, providing resident mobility and access to opportunity to three contiguous counties.

WCHA provided an 80 PBS8 program for its families, allowing it to target assistance both to revitalize neighborhoods through mixed finance programs and to target assistance to opportunity areas from families and maintain neighborhood stabilization.

RHA administered 216 Mod Rehab PBS8 program for its seniors, allowing it to target assistance both to revitalize neighborhoods through mixed finance programs and to target assistance to maintain neighborhood stabilization.

RHA administered 60 VASH vouchers allowing it to target assistance to veterans in need of affordable housing. RHA worked with the VA to increase the number of VASH vouchers so that more veterans are taken from homelessness to housing and obtained an additional 25 vouchers (pending receipt and not included in the 60 noted above). RHA also issued a RFI to project based veterans vouchers to extend additional units for veterans.

RHA administered 18 SRO vouchers for formerly homeless individuals, allowing it to target assistance both to revitalize neighborhoods through mixed finance programs and to target assistance to maintain neighborhood stabilization.

RHA administered 14 Homeownership vouchers allowing it to target assistance both to revitalize neighborhoods through mixed finance programs and to target assistance to maintain neighborhood stabilization.

WCHA provided a state funded Rental Housing Support Program for approximately 250 homes and families in four contiguous counties for resident mobility and access to opportunity.

RHA provided approximately 1,928 assisted housing homes for families through its public housing, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, and other mixed finance programs. WCHA provided approximately 400 assisted housing homes for families through its public housing, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, rural housing, and other mixed finance programs.

RHA and WCHA received federally-awarded capital funds, used for the maintenance and rehabilitation of public housing homes.

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WCHA was chosen as the PBS8 contract administrator for the 97 Westport apartments in Freeport, which are being rehabbed through the HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, increasing resident mobility and access to opportunity areas.

RHA has a robust Section 3 program that connects residents to employment opportunities and grows entrepreneurs so that residents are able to increase earning potential.

RHA is a lead applicant in the Promise Zone (PZ) application, with the city as co-applicant and WCHA as a partner. The goal of the PZ is to create an incentive for businesses to locate in the zone, improve employment, drive wealth creation, improve education and reduce crime and blight.

RHA and WCHA are partners in the Lenders Conference, initiated through the SC2 program to enhance the opportunity allowed with the Community Revitalization Act (CRA) for affordable housing rehab and resident homeownership opportunities.

WCHA and RHA are partners with the My Brother's Keeper program.

WCHA and RHA will explore opportunities to apply for the HOPE VI Main Street program.

WCHA has provided two new public housing homes in the HOPE VI impact area, through the use of Replacement Housing Funds. WCHA will continue to acquire and develop public housing homes through the RFP program.

WCHA received two renewals of its RHSP program totaling \$1,772,694, to assist approximately 250 families for three years.

WCHA has partnered with the Northwest Community Center to bring internet education programs to its community computer centers.

WCHA provides five computer centers providing technology and internet education, employment, and children's programs to its affordable housing programs and to the general public. RHA provides eight computer labs for the same purposes. RHA and WCHA have conducted significant upgrades to their computer centers.

WCHA worked with Congressional legislators with Moving to Work (MTW) legislation and the Small Housing Authority Reform Proposal (SHARP) to provide affordable housing resources to communities and families.

RHA and WCHA have maintained strong community partnerships for the greatest opportunity of resources for assisted families and overall communities and families through such organizations as YouthBuild, Habitat for Humanity, NWHomeStart, Rock River Training, Goodwill, Rockford Career College, Rock Valley College, OSF School of Nursing, Regional Area Mobilization Project for disabled

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support and advocacy programs, Lifescapes, RAMP, the Rockford Park District, the City of Rockford, the County of Winnebago, the WDI, and other employment services.

WCHA is a partner with the RHA's Homeownership partner program to create and enhance supportive partnerships for homeownership opportunities, along with other housing providers.

RHA and WCHA promote resident health through their smoke free housing policies.

WCHA operates a congregate home for disabled families. They also have disabled set-aside homes at Collier Garden, Champion Park, and Johnston Garden apartments in Rockford, Rockton, and South Beloit. WCHA has 29 PBS8 homes for disabled-only families at Johnston Garden in South Beloit to encourage resident mobility to opportunity areas and access to supportive services of family choice. RHA has 27 PBS8 units for disabled-only families at Jane Addams in Rockford. RHA has ADA accessible units in each of its 11 AMPs.

WCHA leased the Washington Park Community Center from the Rockford Park District for its administrative offices in the HOPE VI impact site and to provide a computer technology center for the community, and provides the WPCC for free and in partnership to the RPD for its site offices, community rooms, gymnasium, exercise rooms and children's lunch, dinner rooms, and site for RPD programs to serve the Rockford community.

WCHA provided free office space to Lutheran Social Services RSVP to help them maintain an office and services in Boone County despite funding cuts. LSSI RSVP reciprocated by providing bilingual services and community daily access to the housing authority's computer lab station.

RHA provided below-market rate leased space to Lydia Urban Academy, an urban alternative school, to ensure RHA children graduate from high school.

WCHA and RPD provided free office space to the NAACP Rockford office for access to affordable housing families and for the overall community.

RHA and WCHA sponsored the annual Back to School drive in partnership with the RPD, providing educational support to families in the HOPE VI impact area.

RHA and WCHA partnered with *Transform Rockford* community and neighborhood discussions and programs to advance affordable housing.

WCHA provided public housing homes with the 150 homes at the Collier Garden development in Rockford, the 50 homes at the Johnston Garden development in South Beloit, the 50 homes at the D'Agnolo Garden in Rockton, and the 52 homes at the Champion Park development in Rockford.

WCHA administrated the 31 affordable housing homes at the Ken-Rock Elderly apartments in Rockford.

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RHA and WCHA maintained all housing to the required Housing Quality Standards, lead paint reduction hazards, and the Uniform Physical Characteristics Systems

The following actions have been taken to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership:

WCHA partnered with RHA, the Housing Authority of the City of Freeport (HACF), Rock River Training (RRT), Workforce Connections and Rockford Health Systems to develop a program to provide jobs training, homeownership opportunity and home rehab, as part of the HACF Workforce Development Institute (WDI), with 11 graduates and one RHA resident hired by WCHA, and one RHA resident hired by RHA. WCHA hired one HACF resident as part of the WDI program to support resident mobility and opportunity

RHA and WHA partnered with Bridge Rockford, CCS, NWHomeStart, and others for the Attorney General's Foreclosure Settlement grant, which provides homeownership and neighborhood rehabilitation programs in Boone, Winnebago, and Stephenson counties.

RHA now has active resident councils at all of its sites. The councils are receiving training and have access to resources previously not available to them. It is believed these resources will best help the residents achieve sufficiency via peer based support and leadership. Both WCHA and RHA have a resident commissioner serving on the Board of Commissioners. These roles allow for the residents to stay informed, participate, empower, and let their voices be heard. It also offers the opportunity to get a better understanding of public meetings, the Board, and its functions.

Specific to its RHA's Fairgrounds Development and the Choice Planning initiative, more than 80 initiatives from the community have been identified and focused so that the residents of Ellis Heights receive equal and open access to these efforts. Bridge Rockford Alliance purchased a long time vacant building within the neighborhood and entered into a redevelopment agreement with a local foundation to rehabilitate this building into a much needed neighborhood teen/community center. This building will provide a home base for many of the neighborhood initiatives born from the Choice Neighborhood planning efforts.

WCHA is a partner with the RHA's Homeownership partner program to create and enhance supportive partnerships for homeownership opportunities.

WCHA received funding for two Family Self Sufficiency Program Coordinators, who assist families with homeownership, education, employment, and other self-sufficiency programs. The FSS Coordinators serve a minimum of 75 families in the public housing and HCV programs. RHA received funding for three Family Self Sufficiency Program Coordinators, who assist families with homeownership, education, employment, and other self-sufficiency programs. The FSS Coordinators serve a minimum of 122 families in the public housing and HCV programs.

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RHA is a Standard Performing Agency and WCHA is a HUD-designated High Performer Agency. There are no known troubled PHAs in Winnebago, Boone, and Stephenson counties, and therefore no actions were taken to provide assistance to them.