

Washington County CDA 5 Year Annual PHA Plan 2025-2029

Expand Housing Opportunities

PHA Goal: Expand the supply of assisted housing

Objectives: Create more housing choices to match the needs of a diverse workforce and to provide access to quality affordable housing for owners and renters alike.

- Apply for additional rental assistance programs as available.
- Administer a homeownership program in conjunction with federal, state and/or local resources.
- Create new assisted units utilizing the CDA's available Faircloth authority, including but not limited to the construction completion and RAD conversion of Bluestem Apartments.

PHA Goal: Improve the quality of assisted housing

Objectives:

- Maintain or improve voucher management using HOTMA program standards.
- Complete annual reviews of both the Administrative Plan and the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan.
- Convert remaining public housing units to rental assistance platform (tenant-based or project-based) to ensure long-term financial feasibility of units.

PHA Goal: Increase assisted housing choices

Objectives: Increase the opportunity to obtain stable housing for families, singles, seniors and persons with disabilities.

- Increase voucher payment standards as allowed by budget authority.
- Create partnerships with property owners/managers to increase interest in rental assistance programs.
- Continue to maximize utilization of Housing Choice Voucher budget authority.
- Utilize Moving to Work authority to increase housing choice for households.

PHA Goal: Contribute to the goal of ending homelessness

Objectives:

- Work with Washington County Community Services to build emergency housing for singles.
- Participate in community Heading Home Washington collaborative.
- Continue to fully utilize Mainstream, Family Unification Program, and VASH vouchers.

Increase Community Partnerships

PHA Goal: Increase Community Awareness

Objectives:

- Produce and distribute property owners/manager newsletter quarterly.
- Produce and distribute participant newsletter quarterly.
- Promote Agency at community events.
- Increase Agency presence on social media including Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
- Explore e-newsletter platforms for participant and property owner/manager newsletters.

PHA Goal: Increase Community Partnerships

Objectives:

- Increase partnerships with Service Providers to provide participants connections to community resources.
- Increase partnerships with property owners/managers to increase housing options for participants.
- Increase partnerships to leverage the amount of developable acreage for new commercial and industrial investment to increase jobs and tax base.

Promote Self-sufficiency and Asset Development of Families

PHA Goal: Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of assisted households

Objectives:

- Seek funding for Family Self Sufficiency Coordinator position to continue providing program to Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing residents.
- Provide Service Coordinator services in senior properties to increase independence for elderly or people with disabilities.
- Provide information to participants regarding services offered by the Career Force Center.

Ensure Equal Opportunity in Housing for All Americans

PHA Goal: Ensure equal opportunity and affirmatively further fair housing

Objectives:

- Undertake affirmative measures to ensure access to assisted housing regardless of race, color, religion national origin, sex, familial status, and disability.
- Undertake affirmative measures to provide a suitable living environment for families living in assisted housing, regardless of race, color, religion national origin, sex, familial status, and disability.
- Undertake affirmative measures to ensure accessible housing to persons with all varieties of disabilities.

2020-2024 Plan Accomplishments of Goals

Increase the availability of decent, safe, and affordable housing.

PHA Goal: Expand the supply of assisted housing

Objectives:

Create more housing choices to match the needs of a diverse workforce and to provide access to quality affordable housing for owners and renters alike.

- Apply for additional rental assistance programs as available.
- Administer a homeownership program in conjunction with federal, state and/or local resources.
- If accepted as a Moving to Work Agency, look at streamlining rental calculation and additional cost savings.
- To create affordable senior housing to enable seniors to live close to their families with the support that they need.
- Leverage private or other public funds to create additional housing opportunities.
- Facilitate creation of new affordable units.

Progress:

- Received additional rental assistance funding for Family Unification Program, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, and Mainstream Vouchers during plan period.
- Administered a homeownership program in conjunction with federal, state and/or local resources. Started offering Reverse Mortgage Counseling services.
- Accepted as Moving to Work Agency. Developed and submitted supplement plan.
- Leveraged CDBG and HOME funding for rental and homebuyer developments.
- 378 LIHTC units were constructed from 2020-2024. All of them were general occupancy (which would allow for senior households as well). An additional 271 LIHTC units were financed for new construction during this timeframe but are not yet complete with construction. Of those, 168 units are designated senior units.

PHA Goal: Improve the quality of assisted housing

Objectives:

- Convert Public Housing units to tenant-based rental assistance as a more stable financial platform while maintaining units as affordable rental housing, as detailed in the 2020 PHA Annual Plan.
- Until Public Housing units are converted, maintain or improve public housing management as determined by Public Housing Assessment System score.
- Maintain or improve voucher management as determined by Section Eight Management Assessment Program score.
- Perform customer and tenant satisfaction surveys; address relevant concerns.
- Complete annual reviews of both the Administrative Plan and the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan.

Progress:

- Converted 56 Scattered site PHA properties to tenant-based assistance.
- Utilized 36 units of available Faircloth authority to partner with a local non-profit developer to construct Bluestem Apartments, a new construction Faircloth to RAD development. The financing closed in March 2024 and construction completion is anticipated for spring 2025.
- Become a Moving to Work agency and are no longer required to submit the Section Eight Management Assessment Program score.
- Reviewed and revised the Public Housing and Continued Occupancy Plan and the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan as needed.

PHA Goal: Increase assisted housing choices

Objectives:

Increase the opportunity to obtain stable housing for families, seniors and persons with disabilities.

- Create affordable senior housing to enable seniors to live close to their families with the support that they need.
- Conduct outreach efforts to potential landlords interested in rental assistance programs.
- Increase voucher payment standards as allowed by budget authority.
- Offer Homestretch home buying education to public housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher residents.
- Continue to maximize utilization of Housing Choice Voucher budget authority.

Progress:

- Updated Property Owner/Manager handbook to better help owners/managers understand housing assistance programs and benefits of renting to assisted households. Created a more robust owner/managers web page to provide information to potential owners/managers for rental assistance programs.
- Increased payment standard in 2024 using 105% for 0-2 bedrooms to create more housing choice for participants. Used 100% payment standard for 3 bedrooms and larger.
- Promoted Homestretch education to participants through quarterly newsletter and online presence.
- Participated in regional Owner/Manager outreach to increase participation.
- Leveraged private or other public funds to create additional housing opportunities, including the new construction of Bluestem Apartments, which will utilize 36 of the PHA's Faircloth authority units to provide project based rental assistance through the Faircloth to RAD process.
- Continued to maximize utilization through voucher issuance as needed to fully utilize program.
- Opened waitlist for Public Housing, Mainstream and Housing Choice Vouchers.

PHA Goal: Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of assisted households

Objectives:

- Seek funding for Family Self Sufficiency Coordinator position to continue providing program to Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing residents.
- Provide Service Coordinator services in senior properties to increase independence for elderly or people with disabilities.
- Provide information to participants regarding services offered by the Work Force Center.
- Increase the amount of developable acreage for new commercial and industrial investment to increase jobs and tax base.

Progress:

- Received Family Self-Sufficiency funding to continue offering program to participants.
- Continue to support Service Coordinator services in senior properties. Received expansion funding to increase Service Coordinator hours at Raymie Johnson Estates.
- Publish and distributed quarterly newsletter to participants that included information on Career Force.
- Held first virtual and in-person Family Self-Sufficiency recruitment event.
- The Agency offers planning grants to cities to study development opportunities. Ten grants have been issued since 2020.

PHA Goal: Ensure equal opportunity and affirmatively further fair housing

Objectives:

- Undertake affirmative measures to ensure access to assisted housing regardless of race, color, religion national origin, sex, familial status, and disability.
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- Undertake affirmative measures to ensure accessible housing to persons with all varieties of disabilities.

Progress:

- Washington County CDA will continue to review and provide feedback on Comprehensive Plans to ensure they adequately describe a plan to meet affordable housing needs.
- As a member of the FHIC, jointly fund fair housing projects in the Twin Cities.
- Work with community organizations to explore development opportunities in Washington County for communities of color.
- Provide education to landlords and tenants on rights and responsibilities.
- Ongoing enhancement of Homebuyer Education & collaboration with public and non-profit agencies to expand information and services related to fair lending and foreclosure prevention.
- Encourage inclusive housing location policies for both private and Public Housing providers.