



Reading Housing Authority
Agency Plan
Annual Plan for Year One of the Five-Year Plan
For Fiscal Year Beginning April 1, 2025

Providing the foundation for people to find a home of hope and achieve their aspirations

Reading Housing Authority
400 Hancock Boulevard
Reading, PA 19611



ANNOUNCEMENT & PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Reading Housing Authority is now taking public comment and input on the drafts of the following plans: 2025-2029 Five-Year Plan, 2025 Annual Plan, 2024-2028 Capital Fund Five-Year Action Plan, and the Administrative Plan. Interested parties may make an appointment to view the plans at a Reading Housing Authority administration or program office by calling 610-775-4813. The plans may also be viewed online at www.readingha.org.

The comment period ends at 2:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 19, 2024**, at which time a PUBLIC HEARING on the plans will be held at the Willis Center for Administration, 400 Hancock Boulevard, Reading PA 19611.

Comments should be addressed in writing to Stacey J. Keppen, President & CEO, 400 Hancock Blvd., Reading PA 19611 or by email to info@readingha.org. The agency will consider all comments before final actions are taken on the plans.

The draft plans have been prepared in accordance with regulations of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A Five-Year and Annual Plan are submitted to HUD by Public Housing Agencies. These plans outline the agency's financial conditions, goals and objectives, and important public housing policies. The Capital Fund Action Plan is a formula grant application that is submitted to HUD by Public Housing Agencies to carry out capital work items and management activities, to fund efforts including improvements to the physical properties. The Administrative Plan serves as the operating policy for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, containing regulatory requirements and operating policies that are permitted to be determined at the local level.

ANUNCIO Y NOTIFICACIÓN DE AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA

Reading Housing Authority ahora está aceptando comentarios y aportaciones del público sobre el reporte preliminar de los siguientes planes: Plan de Cinco Años 2025-2029, Plan Anual 2025, Plan de Acción de Cinco Años del Fondo Capital 2024-2028 y el Plan Administrativo. Las personas interesadas pueden hacer una cita para revisar los planes en la Oficina de Administración de Reading Housing Authority o de la Gerencia de la Propiedad llamando al 610-775-4813. Los planes también se pueden ver en línea en www.readingha.org.

El período de comentarios finaliza el **martes, 19 de noviembre de 2024 a las 2:00 p.m.**, momento en el que se llevará a cabo una AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA sobre los planes en el Willis Center for Administration, 400 Hancock Boulevard, Reading PA 19611.

Los comentarios deben ser dirigidos por escrito a Stacey J. Keppen, Presidente y Directora Ejecutiva, 400 Hancock Blvd., Reading, PA 19611 o por correo electrónico a info@readingha.org. La agencia considerará todos los comentarios antes de que se tome acción final sobre los planes.

Los planes preliminares se han preparado de acuerdo con las regulaciones del Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano de los Estados Unidos (HUD). Las Agencias de Vivienda Pública presentan un Plan de Cinco Años y Anual a HUD. Estos planes describen las condiciones financieras, las metas y los objetivos de la agencia, así como las políticas importantes de vivienda pública. El Plan de Acción del Fondo de Capital es una fórmula de solicitud de subsidio presentada a HUD por las Agencias de Vivienda Pública para llevar a cabo elementos de trabajo capital y actividades de Administración, para financiar esfuerzos, incluyendo mejoras a las propiedades físicas. El Plan Administrativo sirve como política operativa para el Programa de Vales de Elección de Vivienda, que contiene requisitos reglamentarios y políticas operativas que se permiten determinar a nivel local.

Providing the foundation for people to find a home of hope and achieve their aspirations

Streamlined Annual PHA Plan (High Performer PHAs)	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Public and Indian Housing	OMB No. 2577-0226 Expires 03/31/2024
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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, including changes to these policies, 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. The Form HUD-50075-HP is to be completed annually by **High Performing PHAs**. PHAs that meet the definition of a Standard PHA, Troubled PHA, HCV-Only PHA, Small 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 the most recent Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) and Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) assessments.
- (2) **Small PHA** - A PHA that is not designated as PHAS or SEMAP troubled, that owns or manages less than 250 public housing units and any number of vouchers where the total combined units exceed 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 exceed 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	PHA Name: <u>Reading Housing Authority</u> PHA Code: <u>PA009</u> PHA Type: ☒ High Performer PHA Plan for Fiscal Year Beginning: (MM/YYYY): <u>04/2025</u> PHA Inventory (Based on Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) units at time of FY beginning, above) Number of Public Housing (PH) Units <u>1615</u> Number of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) <u>645</u> Total Combined <u>2260</u> PHA Plan Submission Type: ☒ Annual Submission ☐ Revised Annual Submission Availability of Information. In addition to the items listed in this form, PHAs must have the elements listed below readily available to the public. A PHA must identify the specific location(s) where the proposed PHA Plan, PHA Plan Elements, and all information relevant to the public hearing and proposed PHA Plan are available for inspection by the public. Additionally, the PHA must provide information on how the public may reasonably obtain additional information of the PHA policies contained in the standard Annual Plan but excluded from their streamlined submissions. At a minimum, PHAs must post PHA Plans, including updates, at each Asset Management Project (AMP) and main office or central office of the PHA. PHAs are strongly encouraged to post complete PHA Plans on their official website. PHAs are also encouraged to provide each resident council a copy of their PHA Plans. How the public can access this PHA Plan: The Reading Housing Authority (RHA) Five-Year proposed Plan, plan elements and related information will be available at the RHA administrative office, Willis Center for Administration, 400 Hancock Blvd.; at Glenside and Hensler Homes, 1301 Schuylkill Avenue; Oakbrook Homes, 500 McClellan Street; and Eisenhower Apartments, 835 Franklin Street, Reading, PA. The complete draft plan will be posted on the RHA website at www.readingha.org. ☐ PHA Consortia: (Check box if submitting a Joint PHA Plan and complete table below) <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <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> <tr> <td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>					Participating PHAs	PHA Code	Program(s) in the Consortia	Program(s) not in the Consortia	No. of Units in Each Program		PH	HCV						
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B.	Plan Elements.
B.1	Revision of Existing PHA Plan Elements. (a) Have the following PHA Plan elements been revised by the PHA since its last Annual PHA Plan submission? 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. ☐ ☒ Homeownership Programs. ☒ ☐ Safety and Crime Prevention. ☐ ☒ Pet Policy. ☐ ☒ Substantial Deviation. ☐ ☒ Significant Amendment/Modification. (b) If the PHA answered yes for any element, describe the revisions for each revised element(s): Safety and Crime Prevention. Reading Housing Authority has added the position of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement Coordinator to the staff complement in effort to address drug-related and violent criminal activity, and to work with residents and resident councils in promoting safety in their communities. (c) The PHA must submit its Deconcentration Policy for Field Office review. Deconcentration and Other Policies that Govern Eligibility, Selection, and Admissions. RHA will determine the average income of all families in all covered developments on an annual basis. RHA will determine the average income of all families residing in each covered development (not adjusting for unit size) on an annual basis. Families will be selected from the waiting list based on preference points. Among applicants with the same preference points, families will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis according to the date and time their complete application is received by RHA. When selecting applicants from the waiting list, RHA will match the characteristics of the available unit (unit size, accessibility features, unit type) to the applicants on the waiting lists. RHA will offer the unit to the highest-ranking applicant who qualifies for that unit size or type, or that requires the accessibility features. By matching unit and family characteristics, it is possible that families who are lower on the waiting list may receive an offer of housing ahead of families with an earlier date and time of application or higher preference status. Factors such as deconcentration or income mixing, and income targeting will also be considered in accordance with HUD requirements and RHA policy.;
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. ☐ ☒ Conversion of Public Housing to Tenant Based Assistance. ☐ ☒ Conversion of Public Housing to Project-Based Rental Assistance or Project-Based Vouchers under RAD. ☒ ☐ 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 Project Based Vouchers. At the time of this writing, Reading Housing Authority has solicited consulting services to prepare and issue a Project-Based Voucher solicitation. It is anticipated that PBVs will be awarded during the 2025-2026 FY. It is projected that approximately 100 units shall become project-based upon completion, to be located in various locations throughout the jurisdiction. It is also projected that the PBV project will address the need for households who are homeless, households who have a disability, and households who qualify for 2-3 bedroom units, as each of these household groups experience difficulty in obtaining quality and/or affordable housing in the jurisdiction and as such, are consistent with the PHA Plan. Other Capital Grant Programs (i.e., Capital Fund Community Facilities Grants or Emergency Safety and Security Grants). Reading Housing Authority will apply for any available funding under the Emergency Safety and Security Grant program in order to address security camera needs and promote safety in the public housing program.
B.3	Progress Report. Provide a description of the PHA's progress in meeting its Mission and Goals described in the PHA 5-Year and Annual Plan. See attached - Progress Report
B.4	Capital Improvements. Include a reference here to the most recent HUD-approved 5-Year Action Plan in EPIC and the date that it was approved. The Reading Housing Authority Capital Fund Action Plan for Years 2023-2027 was approved in EPIC on 4/26/23.

B.5	Most Recent Fiscal Year Audit. (a) Were there any findings in the most recent FY Audit? Y ☐ N ☐ (b) If yes, please describe:
C.	Other Document and/or Certification Requirements.
C.1	Resident Advisory Board (RAB) Comments. (a) Did the RAB(s) have comments to the PHA Plan? Y ☐ N ☐ (b) 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.
C.2	Certification by State or Local Officials. 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.
C.3	Civil Rights Certification/ Certification Listing Policies and Programs that the PHA has Revised since Submission of its Last Annual Plan. Form HUD-50077-ST-HCV-HP, <i>PHA Certifications of Compliance with PHA Plan, Civil Rights, and Related Laws and Regulations Including PHA Plan Elements that Have Changed</i> , must be submitted by the PHA as an electronic attachment to the PHA Plan.
C.4	Challenged Elements. If any element of the PHA Plan is challenged, a PHA must include such information as an attachment with a description of any challenges to Plan elements, the source of the challenge, and the PHA's response to the public. (a) Did the public challenge any elements of the Plan? Y ☐ N ☐ If yes, include Challenged Elements.
D.	Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH).
D.1	Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH). Provide a statement of the PHA's strategies and actions to achieve fair housing goals outlined in an accepted Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) consistent with 24 CFR § 5.154(d)(5). Use the chart provided below. (PHAs should add as many goals as necessary to overcome fair housing issues and contributing factors.) Until such time as the PHA is required to submit an AFH, the PHA is not obligated to complete this chart. The PHA will fulfill, nevertheless, the requirements at 24 CFR § 903.7(o) enacted prior to August 17, 2015. See Instructions for further detail on completing this item.

Form identification: PA009-Reading Housing Authority Form HUD-50075-HP (Form ID - 1524) printed by Stacey Keppen in HUD Secure Systems/Public Housing Portal at 09/16/2024 02:47PM EST

**Certification by State or Local
Official of PHA Plans Consistency
with the Consolidated Plan or
State Consolidated Plan
(All PHAs)**

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development**
Office of Public and Indian Housing
OMB No. 2577-0226
Expires 3/31/2024

**Certification by State or Local Official of PHA Plans
Consistency with the Consolidated Plan or State Consolidated Plan**

I, Eddie Moran, the Mayor certify that the 5-Year PHA Plan for fiscal years 2025-2029 and/or Annual PHA Plan for fiscal year 2025 of the PA009 - Reading Housing Authority is consistent with the Consolidated Plan or State Consolidated Plan including the Analysis of Impediments (AI) to Fair Housing Choice or Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) as applicable to the City of Reading pursuant to 24 CFR Part 91 and 24 CFR § 903.15.

Provide a description of how the PHA Plan's contents are consistent with the Consolidated Plan or State Consolidated Plan.

The City of Reading, Pennsylvania Consolidated Plan for 2024-2028 identifies Reading Housing Authority as a key partner in addressing the affordable needs of the City of Reading. The Plan also notes that "there is not sufficient affordable housing available residents" and "(i)f the market rent trends continue, the amount of affordable housing available will continue to shrink". The Plan further states that "the city will work to offset this by increasing the inventory of affordable housing through the Reading Housing Authority's efforts to expand rental property owner participation in the Housing Choice Voucher program as well as other efforts by the city and nonprofit partners to address the growing need for affordable housing in the city."

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:	Eddie Moran	Title:	Mayor
Signature:		Date:	10-25-2024

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is authorized to solicit the information requested in this form by virtue of Title 12, U.S. Code, Section 1701 et seq., and regulations promulgated thereunder at Title 12, Code of Federal Regulations. Responses to the collection of information are required to obtain a benefit or to retain a benefit. The information requested does not lend itself to confidentiality. This information is collected to ensure consistency with the consolidated plan or state consolidated plan.

Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to average 0.16 hours per year per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. HUD may not collect this information, and respondents are not required to complete this form, unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

Form identification: PA009-Reading Housing Authority form HUD-50077-SL (Form ID - 1260) printed by Stacey Keppen in HUD Secure Systems/Public Housing Portal at 09/09/2024 04:03PM EST

Reading Housing Authority
PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY PLAN
Progress Report for Five-Year Plan 2020 - 2024

GOAL: Improve Resident Connections

Objectives:

- Evaluate our business model to ensure that it reflects the changing needs of our customers

Progress on goal: Like most organizations, RHA operations changed dramatically in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic through the implementation of efficiencies and technological improvements that were driven from necessity but have since become mainstream operating procedure. The organization continues to benefit from advances such as virtual meetings and electronic platforms for the submission and storage of digital information, which affords households who participate in the Public Housing and Voucher Programs increased direction and control in areas of program compliance.

- Develop a plan to operationalize our Impact, Mission & Values statements

Progress on goal: Although a formal plan has not been produced, efforts to operationalize the organization's impact, mission and values are evidenced in visual branding, management goal setting, and new employee orientation.

GOAL: Deliver Human Services

Objectives:

- Provide services that support a zero-eviction philosophy and help to meet the agency's mission

Progress on goal: During the Plan period, Service Coordination resources were expanded to ensure that resources to prevent eviction were available in all RHA campuses. Residents are provided with short-term professional casework services for reasons that when, left unaddressed, often lead to disruption of a successful tenancy. Interventions are recorded in areas associated with entitlements, rent arrearage/rent payment, mental health crisis intervention, in-home support services, older adult protective services, clothing assistance, health-related needs, and nutrition. While this objective does not ensure that lease terminations do not occur, it does ensure that, except in cases of violent or drug-related criminal activity, residents will be afforded the opportunity to work with a professional caseworker to remedy a lease violation before any steps are taken to dissolve a tenancy.

- Develop outcome-driven programming that responds to trends which negatively affect our communities

Progress on goal: While programs to support success in tenancy and beyond are embedded into RHA operations, they have been especially relevant in the post-pandemic environment. With the receipt of valuable funds under the Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) program, initiatives to support employment and education among RHA families were spotlighted during five days of "Glenside Proud" in 2022, delivering a job and resource fair, health promotion events including flu shots and exercise program, and social events to promote family connections. In 2023, a campaign to help older adults and persons with disabilities who reside in five mixed-occupancy communities was devised to help residents acclimate to technology including online rent payments, self-service kiosks for recertifications and a new package concierge system to address an increase in mail-order deliveries. Various additional programs were launched to address

challenges in areas associated with bedbugs, food insecurity, summer youth employment, parking, and others. A more recent addition is that of a Safety Program, intended to address the increase in drug-related criminal activity and combat the abundance of domestic violence incidents experienced by agency clientele.

- Partner with and help to develop strong, capable Resident Councils

Progress on goal: RHA continues to support and partner with duly elected resident councils in each public housing community by attending monthly officer and general membership meetings, and assisting with day-to-day operational needs. During the Plan year, the Citywide Resident Council, comprised of the elected officers of eight councils, engaged in various capacity-building initiatives, including a robust leadership development curriculum with the local community college.

GOAL: Build Operational Capability

Objectives:

- Improve focus on staff capacity, development, and collaboration

Progress on goal: The RHA Management Team has engaged in extensive professional development during the Plan years in order to improve skills in communication, leadership, goal setting, and effective supervision. A noteworthy highlight impacting more than one-half of the staffing complement has been the advent of a maintenance training program, which uses contracted and in-house expertise to teach new and seasoned employees building and plant management fundamentals, the organization's procedures and expectations surrounding quality standards, and more recently, the conduit for intensive preparations for NSPIRE.

- Make effective use of technology to improve customer service, enhance communication and reduce administrative burden

Progress on goal: The application of technology to day-to-day operations is perhaps the greatest shift in operations during this Five-Year Plan. In this period, new automation has included a Human Resource Information System, a consolidated Purchasing/Accounts Payable System, the launch of a new, interactive website, the transition of all maintenance work orders to a tablet-based system and the near elimination of paper filing in all housing program offices.

- Ensure policy-driven practice through the organization

Progress on goal: The Admissions and Continued Occupancy received a thorough overhaul in 2022, followed by extensive staff training that emphasized both organizational procedures and key areas including those imparted by the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA). The Administrative Plan is presently in review and will be made part of the upcoming Annual Planning Period. Various organizational policies were prepared, approved, and trained upon, impacting staff at both practical levels (company vehicles, key control, dress codes, etc.) to those with a broader impact (professional conduct, procurement, etc.)

- Emphasize efficiency by managing risk, waste, and abuse

Progress on goal: Significant progress has been made in the areas of procurement, budgeting, and forecasting during the Plan period. Initiatives such as cycle counting, inventory audits, bulk ordering, and a heightened attention to vendor relationships and management has yielded the anticipated results. A considerable source of waste and abuse has been identified throughout the Public Housing Program's use of water, with progress both having been made and much work remaining to be done at the time of this writing.

- Strategically communicate the RHA history, state of the operation and potential to the larger community

Progress on goal: During this plan period, the organization has taken a concerted approach to this objective with the creation of a communications department. Through increased public messaging and relationship-building with elected officials and other grant-making bodies, RHA has been effective in greatly expanding the depth and breadth of services offered to program participants by securing fund from state, local, and philanthropic sources. Funds from non-traditional sources have yielded expanded security cameras, accessibility upgrades, and significant investments in public housing infrastructure.

READING HOUSING AUTHORITY

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

April 2025 – March 2030

Provide Housing Choice

Reading Housing Authority will expand its housing continuum to enable both residents and others in need of housing services to exercise *their choice* of housing options. It will supplement this continuum with the support services needed to exercise those options and *pursue the housing choices for their future*.

2024 – 2025 Objectives

- Launch a Project-Based Voucher Program and be positioned to pursue additional vouchers as available.
- Develop existing RHA-owned properties to create mixed income communities and generate incremental income.

Objectives for Future Consideration

- Develop a program to prepare and incentivize residents in their pursuit of market-rate options and/or home ownership to create available properties.
- Develop solutions to meet the housing needs of discrete populations.
- Participate with the City of Reading and other stakeholders to improve upon housing, redevelopment, and economic needs in the jurisdiction.
- Identify services we do well and explore opportunities to market them in the private sector or other housing-focused organizations to create greater independence from federal funding.
- Develop acquisition and development strategies to expand our private property options.
- Explore repositioning options for public housing aligned with HUD's RAD intentions.

Improve Customer Connections

Reading Housing Authority will *continue* to develop a range of *customer services* and a process for delivering them.

2024 – 2025 Objectives

- Launch the Oakbrook Center for Community Services and determine how to optimize the services it delivers. Replicate those services where indicated.
- Evaluate our business model for our affordable rentals to ensure that it reflects the changing needs of our customers and best practices in private-sector property management.

Objectives for Future Consideration

- Assess the needs of our customers, identify service gaps, and develop solutions to them (including resident access to services).
- Develop and launch a process to assess resident satisfaction.
- Conduct an assessment of our housing jurisdiction and develop solutions to identified needs.



Deliver Human Services

Reading Housing Authority will *continue to assess the human service needs it delivers to the people it supports* and develop the capability and capacity to *provide* them.

2024 – 2025 Objectives

- Explore additional funding to increase/improve human services.
- Expand our case management-based solution to our prevailing lease compliance issues. Consider partnering with other agencies to deliver this solution.
- Proactively improve the safety and security within our properties and programs.

Objectives for Future Consideration

- Integrate Foundation Housing and Services, Inc. into our larger operations.
- Improve and expand our service coordination activities into our voucher programs, affordable rentals, and outside RHA properties.

Build Operational Capabilities

Reading Housing Authority will build the *institutional knowledge, processes, and organizational capacity* needed to support its mission for the next 20 years.

2024 - 2025 Objectives

- Position our newly hired staff for success by addressing our staff retention, professional development, and collaborative activities. As part of this objective, RHA will:
 - Continue to provide resources that prepare our leadership for the challenges of people management.
 - Develop an organization-wide set of activities to provide our new hires with robust support for their first 90 days of employment.

Objectives for Future Consideration

- Define the current risks created by the people in/on our programs/properties we frequently encounter and prepare our people to address them.
- Positively address our staff retention.
- Create a formal succession plan for our organization.
- Create the ideal staffing profile for each division and develop a plan to implement that solution.

READING HOUSING AUTHORITY
400 HANCOCK BOULEVARD
READING, PA 19611
610-775-4813
www.readingha.org

Reading Housing Authority
PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY PLAN
Violence Against Women Act Goals, Activities, Objectives, Policies and Programs – 2024-2029

Policies & Procedures

The following are excerpts from the Reading Housing Authority (RHA) *Admissions & Continued Occupancy Policy* (ACOP), approved by the Board of Commissioners on January 23, 2024:

RHA will post the following information regarding VAWA in its offices and on its website. It will also make the information readily available to anyone who requests it. A notice of occupancy rights under VAWA to public housing program applicants and participants who are or have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (Form HUD-5380, see Exhibit 16-1) A copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternate Documentation (see Exhibit 16-2) A copy of RHA's emergency transfer plan (Exhibit 16-3) A copy of HUD's Emergency Transfer Request for Certain Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking, Form HUD-5383 (Exhibit 16-4) The National Domestic Violence Hot Line: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-7873224 (TTY) (included in Exhibit 16-1) Contact information for local victim advocacy groups or service providers.

The VAWA information provided to applicants and participants will consist of the notices in Exhibit 16-1 and 16-2. Page 16-19 RHA will provide all applicants with information about VAWA at the time they request an application for housing assistance and at the time of the eligibility interview when such a claim is made by the applicant. RHA will also include such information in all notices of denial of assistance (see section 3-III.F). RHA will provide all tenants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see section 8-I.B) and at annual reexamination. RHA will also include such information in all lease termination notices (see section 13-IV.D). Completed self-certification forms (HUD-5382) that are received from Applicants or Tenants will be forwarded to the Director of Programs upon receipt. The Director of Programs shall serve as the Single Point of Contact for the ensuring organizational compliance, assessing the need for additional information, reaching disposition and determining methods for communications with persons who are exercising their rights under VAWA. In the absence of the Director of Programs, the President/CEO or his/her/their designee shall serve as the Single Point of Contact.

Whenever RHA has reason to suspect that providing information about VAWA to a public housing tenant might place a victim of domestic violence at risk, it will attempt to deliver the information by hand directly to the victim or by having the victim come to an office or other space that may be safer for the individual, making reasonable accommodations as necessary. For example, RHA may decide not to send mail regarding VAWA protections to the victim's unit if RHA believes the perpetrator may have access to the victim's mail, unless requested by the victim. When discussing VAWA with the victim, RHA will take reasonable precautions to ensure that no one can overhear the conversation such as having conversations in a private room. The victim may, but is not required to, designate an attorney, advocate, or other secure contact for communications regarding VAWA protections.

Any request for additional documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking following receipt of a form HUD-5382 will be made in writing by the Director of Programs. This communication will specify a deadline of 14 business days following receipt of the request, will describe the three forms of acceptable documentation, will provide explicit instructions on where and to whom the documentation must be submitted, and will state the consequences for failure to submit the documentation or request an extension in writing by the deadline. RHA will provide an extension to the 14 business days of 10 business days if requested. Upon receipt of one of these forms of documentation, RHA employees are prohibited from conducting further fact finding for the purpose of trying to verify the 'validity' of an applicant, tenant, or participant's victim status. RHA may only request additional documentation if there is conflicting information (i.e. two or more members of the same household submit conflicting documentation regarding who

is the perpetrator and who is the victim). RHA will provide 30 calendar days in order for the individual to provide additional documentation if such circumstances arise. Once the victim provides documentation, RHA will acknowledge receipt of the documentation within 10 business days.

If presented with conflicting certification documents from members of the same household, RHA will attempt to determine which is the true victim by requiring each of them to provide third-party documentation in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(e) and by following any HUD guidance on how such determinations should be made. When requesting third-party documents, RHA will provide contact information for local domestic violence and legal aid offices. In such cases, applicants or tenants will be given 30 calendar days from the date of the request to provide such documentation. If RHA does not receive third-party documentation within the required timeframe (and any extensions) RHA will deny VAWA protections and will notify the applicant or tenant in writing of the denial. If, as a result, the applicant or tenant is denied or terminated from the program, RHA will hold separate hearings for the applicants or tenants.

If RHA accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence (as determined by the victim) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, RHA will document acceptance of the statement or evidence in the individual's file.

If disclosure is required for use in an eviction proceeding or is otherwise required by applicable law, RHA will inform the victim before disclosure occurs so that safety risks can be identified and addressed.

When a tenant, participant or applicant invokes their VAWA rights in ways unrelated to emergency transfers, including but not limited to when a participant asks Recipient to remove a perpetrator from the household and bifurcate the lease, when an applicant notifies Recipient that adverse information impacting eligibility is related to their status as a survivor of VAWA violence/abuse, and when a participant notifies RHA that an alleged failure to comply with the lease is related to their status as a survivor of VAWA violence/abuse, RHA shall respond in a manner that complies with VAWA and, where applicable, the Department's general implementing regulations and any program-specific implementing regulations. All RHA staff who interact with and/or who make housing-related decisions concerning tenants, participants, and/or applicants shall be trained in VAWA and related RHA policies and procedures. Front-line staff who receive information from a tenant, participant or applicant which contains a request, a statement or an inquiry that either specifically or indirectly appear to represent a tenant, participant or applicant's victimization related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will immediately refer to his/her/their manager. The Manager will supply the tenant, participant or applicant with RHA's Notice of Occupancy Rights Under the Violence Against Women's Act (Form HUD-5380) and the Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternative Documentation (Form HUD-5382), when a tenant or applicant notifies an employee that he or she is seeking to exercise a right under VAWA. The Manager will also state that the tenant or applicant may complete either the Form HUD-5382 or provide one of the other forms of documentation enumerated at 34 USC § 12491(c) and 24 CFR § 5.2007(b)(1), and that is the right of the participant to choose which form of documentation to submit. When receiving information by means other than in person, the Manager shall inquire as to how the tenant/participant/applicant wishes to receive copies of Form HUD-5380 and HUD-5382. Page 16-23 The Manager will then inform the Director of Programs of the name, date and program type, and any general information related to the tenant, participant or applicant. Upon receipt of this information, the Director of Programs shall serve as the Single Point of Contact with the tenant/participant/applicant until which time a disposition upon the claim is reached. Upon disposition, the Director of Programs shall direct the Manager to enact the provisions outlined in the disposition. All other subsequent terms of eligibility and/or continued occupancy shall be monitored by the Manager and completed by front-line staff in accordance with usual business practices and in accordance with the terms outlined in the respective policy. In the event that such time as indicated under this policy has fully elapsed and RHA has not received the proper form or another eligible source of validation, or RHA has not received additional information sufficient to cause RHA to proceed differently, RHA will proceed with the outstanding circumstances in accordance with all other policies. When a tenant of the Public Housing Program requests an emergency transfer, the transfer request shall be processed consistent with the RHA Emergency Transfer Plan and all other terms outlined in the RHA Procedures relative to VAWA. Upon disposition that a resident is eligible for a transfer under this plan, the resident shall be placed

upon the RHA Waiting List for Emergency Transfers. All other terms outlined under this section of the policy shall apply.

Goals, Activities & Programs

Victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking will be offered assistance from the RHA Department of Resident Services. Resident Services is the department that helps residents with needs that may affect their quality of life. Services are free, voluntary and confidential.

Professional caseworkers assist victims in a myriad of ways, including:

- Connecting to Safe Berks (www.safeberks.org), formerly Berks Women in Crisis, which provides a safe haven and ongoing support systems for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Exploring options for behavioral health services, including outpatient therapies, support groups and formal case management networks
- Addressing the economic impact of victimization related to rent payment, basic needs and other financial obligations
- Linking to services to support their role as parents, caretakers and providers
- Providing support for economic self-sufficiency goals, including employment, education, and financial literacy, in conjunction with the Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency Program
- Addressing physical health needs by facilitating relationships with emergency medicine when needed, the local Federally Qualified Health Center and outpatient medical providers, and educating and connecting on insurance options or issues
- Providing education on community resources to address obstacles in accessing supports, such as transportation

Victims may also be assisted by the RHA Neighborhood Safety and Engagement Coordinator, who can:

- Provide direction or answer questions about Protection from Abuse Orders (PFAs)
- Help residents understand what Police Officers can do to help them and what they must do under the law, making contact with police less stressful and more productive.
- Assist with interpreting documents from law enforcement agencies and court systems
- Assist in understanding protections afforded by the RHA "No Trespassing List"
- Ensure that evidence that may be gained from RHA's expansive security camera system is retrieved and made available for investigation and as applicable, prosecution, of perpetrators

Lastly, individuals served by Reading Housing Authority benefit from the RHA Community Policing Program, under which two full-time Reading Police Department officers provide dedicated services in patrol, investigation and community relations initiatives. Victims of domestic violence benefit from the intensity of these services by having the option of a more personal relationship with the same police officer each time they need to contact one on a non-emergency basis. This prevents those affected by domestic violence from having to retell their story from the beginning, reducing potential revictimization.