

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

READING
HOUSING
AUTHORITY

“EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY”

22 Frank D. Tanner Drive
Reading, MA 01867
(781) 944-6755

FROM THE CHAIR:

It is with great pleasure that I share with you the activities and accomplishments of the Reading Housing Authority over the past year.

The start of the New Year has seen some improvement in our economy; however, we remain cautious during this somewhat unstable time. The pressure on the real estate market has continued to create a critical challenge for poor and lower income families to find, keep and maintain their housing. As the real estate values escalated over the past few years, it was certainly felt most dramatically at the low-income levels. Rental units have been at a greater premium once again in this area and participants have experienced difficulty in locating affordable units. Previously, landlords had been able to ask for and receive a high rent, which historically prices the poor and lower income families out of the rental market. Again, we are beginning to see a change in the rental market area with increase inquiries from landlords who are experiencing more difficulty renting units, therefore, willing to negotiate rents within the range of Fair Market Rents established each year by HUD.

The Reading Housing Authority (Authority) strives to assist these families to seek and obtain housing that is decent, safe and sanitary. In an effort to ameliorate this impact, the Authority will continue its efforts to develop new units and purchase affordable units when the opportunity arises. The Authority most recently has begun a careful search for a multi-family home in our area with the hope of adding additional family affordable units to our present inventory in the upcoming year. We continue to support private developers and the Town in their efforts to set aside units for low/moderate income families in their proposed developments. We reach out to owners of multi-family units who would like to work with us to serve our clients.

As always, the Authority goes beyond the bricks and mortar and provides assistance to families, elderly and handicapped persons to obtain the services they need. We continue to work closely with Mystic Valley Elder Services and other home care agencies to meet the needs of the elderly residents as they strive to remain independent and age in place. The addition of our local nurse advocate, Alyse Warren, will be someone that elder residents and RHA staff can rely on in greater numbers in order to have seniors remain in their homes. With budget cuts affecting all of us, we strive to maintain our programs, work with other supportive agencies and still offer a safe and decent place for our seniors, disabled and families in need. On behalf of the Board, we want to thank Executive Director, Lyn Whyte and her staff for their continued dedication, commitment and service to the Reading Housing Authority. We look forward to working with them as we meet the new challenges that lie ahead.

Respectfully,



Kevin Mulvey

Kevin Mulvey, Chair

ORGANIZATION:

Organized in 1963 to address the housing needs of the Town's low and moderate income residents, the Reading Housing Authority (Authority) is "*a public body politic and corporate*" duly organized and authorized by Massachusetts General Laws (MGL), Chapter 121B, s.3. The Authority receives its funds from the State and Federal government to assist our clients with their housing needs. Although the Authority does not receive any local funding, five unpaid Reading residents compose the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Selectmen appoints four of these board members and one is the Governor's appointee. Each member serves for a 5-year term. The Board is responsible for the overall operation of the Authority. The day to day responsibility is delegated to the Executive Director.

The Board meets regularly and has scheduled their monthly meetings for the first Monday of each month. The Annual Meeting of the Board is currently scheduled for the month after the Selectmen makes their annual appointment of a Board member. As of December, 2016, the Board Members and their term of office are as follows:

Kevin Mulvey
67 Whittier Road

Chair
Term expires 6/30/2018

Diane Cohen
173 Hillcrest Avenue

Vice_Chair and State Appointee
Term expires 5/03/2021

Richard Robbins
42 Dudley Street

Treasurer
Term expires 6/30/2020

Madeline J. Hodgdon
4-7 Frank Tanner Drive

Ass't. Treasurer and Tenant Representative
Term expires 6/30/2017

Timothy J. Kelley
84 Woburn Street

Member
Term expires 6/30/2019

Lyn E. Whyte
41 Shore Road, Saugus

Secretary and Executive Director

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

The Board contracts an Executive Director who manages the day-to-day operations of the Authority. Within State and Federal guidelines and other budgetary limits, the Executive Director hires the supporting staff necessary to achieve the goals and responsibilities of the Authority's programs. The Executive Director, Lyn Whyte, has been in place since August 28, 2001.

Administration:

Lyn E. Whyte	Secretary and Executive Director
Catherine Sutherland	Office Manager
Iris Perez-Feliciano	CHA Federal Program Coordinator for RHA
Emily LaMacchia	State Housing Manager
Vacant	Part-time Program Assistant

Maintenance:

Frank Veglia	Maintenance Supervisor
Joseph Costello	Maintenance Staff
Edward Bennett	Maintenance Staff

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AFFILIATIONS:

Home Care:

Jacqueline Carson	Sanborn Home Care Director
Daniel J. O'Leary	Director, Mystic Valley Elder Services
Jane Burns	Town of Reading, Elder Services Administrator
Kerry Valle	Town of Reading, Case Worker

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS:

Reading Cooperative Bank

Eastern Bank

AFFILIATIONS:

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO)

Massachusetts Chapter of National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (MassNAHRO)

New England Regional Council of National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NERC/NAHRO)

Section 8 Administrators Association

North Shore Housing Executive Directors' Association (NSHEDA)

Adult Literacy Committee of Reading/Wakefield YMCA

CONSULTANTS:

Accountants: Fenton, Ewald & Associates

Legal: Latham Law Offices, LLC & DHCD Legal Counsel, Lori McBride

CONTRACTORS:

Hiltz Waste Disposal

Mystic Painting

Avon Plumbing Supply

J.F. Burns, Inc.

Hodson S M Co Inc

Banner Glass Shelmar

Mystic Landscaping

American Alarm

Automatic Laundry

Home Depot

MAINTENANCE

We do it all – from the beautiful paint job to the new appointments before you move into your new apartment. The maintenance staff meets the challenges on every occasion and has done an excellent job.

With the four seasons here in New England, maintenance has to be ready to take it all in stride. They do the spring clean-up and plantings; the summer mowing, watering, weeding and trimming; the fall leaf pick-up; and winter's snow and ice removal. The maintenance staff works tirelessly to keep our developments looking beautiful. In the past, we have been lucky enough to have the assistance of the Work Release Program from the Middlesex Sheriff's Department. They have been exceptional in the work that they have done with our landscaping and painting projects. These programs are cost effective and have become a critical component to maintaining our properties. During the course of this past year, the RHA did not utilize this program due to re-organization efforts within the Sheriff's Department and a limited availability, however, we hope to once again make use of their services in the future. We hope to continue our relationship with the Middlesex Sheriff's Department to afford us the opportunity to enhance the appearance of all of our properties.

The Authority is responsible for 115 individual units located on 10 different sites. It is no easy task to keep each one looking in its top form. The maintenance staff is also responsible for the daily work orders and any emergency work that has to be done. The Authority has an extensive preventative maintenance program for all major components and has a cyclical paint schedule for all units.

2016 FUNDING RECEIVED:

Each year the Authority applies for several grants or capital funding when available to improve our properties and better serve our residents and the community. Included in this year's awards were:

MODERNIZATION OF STATE HOUSING

The Housing Authority has had a very busy year with projects; some of which are ongoing. To date, we have completed approximately \$33,000 in various upgrades throughout our properties; new vinyl fencing around all of our barrel areas throughout our senior development along with the interior painting in our special needs home. In addition, we have plans underway to construct a garage on site at our elderly complex to house work trucks and equipment. Overall, we have state capital funding being awarded in excess of \$116,000 for our fiscal year 2017 through Department of Housing and Community Development to cover most of the costs associated with these projects. All of these improvements will benefit all of our residents that live in our developments.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES GRANT – HUD

No funding available since we no longer administer an FSS program.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES GRANT – STATE

Funding of Resident Service Coordinator to address elderly/non-elderly needs for Frank D. Tanner Drive residents was approved; however, it is now categorized as an administrative expense.

AUDITS:

The Authority has a Single Audit of all programs by an independent auditor each year. Ross and Company of Nashua, NH was engaged to perform the latest review of the Authority's programs for fiscal year end June 2016. At this time, the audit has been completed and final copies of report were submitted in late December 2016 to designated agencies; namely, HUD, DHCD and the Office of State Auditors. The Authority had no findings or additional recommendations as a result of this latest audit. The Authority's financial position is adequate to meet the needs of the operation and development of the programs and we are fortunate to maintain a retained revenue agency status.

A new compliance audit mandated by DHCD for FYE June 2016 has also been completed as of December, 2016. Final reports were received by year end and no findings were noted in that detailed report. A copy of that AUP audit has been submitted to DHCD for their review.

MANAGEMENT REVIEW:

The Authority has had a current Management Review done of all State programs. The Asset Managers from the State's Department of Housing and Community Development reviewed all the operations of the State programs to insure compliance in the daily operation of the Authority's budget, occupancy, administration, maintenance, services and tenant participation. The Authority received an excellent review with minor comments.

In regard to our federal program, the Authority submitted its annual Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) reports for fiscal year end June 2015 to HUD for review and subsequent scoring. The purpose of SEMAP is to measure public housing authority performance in key areas of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program management. It is a tool used by HUD to effectively monitor and assist PHA's. It is our pleasure to report that the Reading Housing Authority received an overall score of 85 percent for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. As a result of this score, HUD designates the Authority as a "standard performer" with credit going to former Section 8 Program Coordinator, Kathy Rolli for her continued efforts in administering an ever-changing federal program. We will not submit additional SEMAP reports until fiscal year June 2017. These assessments are now performed every two years for an agency of our size per latest HUD changes.

As of September, 2015, the Reading Housing Authority entered into an inter-agency agreement with Chelsea Housing Authority to administer our Section 8 housing program. That agreement was extended for our FY2017. This cost effective measure has enabled the RHA to maintain the federal housing program with the assistance of personnel from another agency. The Reading Housing Authority continues to oversee the program and remains responsible for all reporting requirements to HUD.

STATE PROGRAMS:

The Authority currently manages the three programs under the State's Department of Housing and Community Development: 667 Housing (elderly/handicapped housing); 705 Housing (Family housing); 689 Housing (Special Needs Housing).

All of our wait lists are open at the present time; however, estimated wait times can be long. All information regarding our agency and the programs we administer can be found on our website at www.readinghousing.org. We encourage applicants to apply for our elderly/handicapped (667) housing by contacting the Housing Authority at (781) 944-6755 or by accessing the application on our website.

HOUSING FOR ELDERLY/HANDICAPPED PERSONS (667) effective 11/07/16

80 units	Frank D. Tanner Drive Complex
Eligibility :	60 years of age or disabled
Income:	1 person - \$51,150
	2 persons - \$58,450

HOUSING FOR FAMILIES (705) effective 11/07/16

6 units	Waverly and Oakland Road (six 3BR units)
4 units	Pleasant and Parker Street (two 2BR units; two 3BR unit)
Eligibility:	Family of 2 or more depending on Bedroom size
Income:	2 persons - \$58,450 3 persons - \$65,750 4 persons - \$73,050 5 persons - \$78,900 6 persons - \$84,750 7 persons - \$90,600 8 persons - \$96,450

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

The Authority manages 125 subsidies for persons of very low income under the Federal Section 8 program. However, the Chelsea Housing Authority is currently managing this program for the RHA through an inter-agency agreement. Currently, the RHA participates in a centralized waiting list administered by the MASSNAHRO organization. Applications for this wait list are available at the administration office building at 22 Frank D. Tanner Drive, Reading or online @ www.readinghousing.org. The income limits are:

SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Income limits:	1 person – \$34,350	2 persons - \$39,250
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3 persons - \$44,150	4 persons - \$49,050
5 persons - \$53,000	6 persons - \$56,900
7 persons - \$60,850	8 persons - \$64,750

RHA-OWNED PROPERTIES

The Authority presently owns and manages seventeen family units located in various locations throughout the Town of Reading. RHA had the opportunity to add an additional two bedroom unit to our inventory in 2015. We continue to pursue opportunities to expand low income housing units within the Town whenever possible.

APPLICATIONS:

ELDERLY/HANDICAPPED HOUSING (667)

The Authority manages 80 one-bedroom units of housing for elderly/handicapped persons at our Frank D. Tanner Drive complex in Reading. To qualify for this housing, a single person or couple must meet the eligibility guidelines and be **60 years of age or older or handicapped**. The Authority sets aside 13.5% of these units for non-elderly handicapped persons.

The wait list is currently open for all seniors' 60 years of age and older. We encourage Reading residents to apply and are making special outreach efforts to elderly of minority representation. The 13.5% non-elderly handicapped requirement has been fulfilled but applications are still being accepted for our wait list. Non-elderly applicants will be served after the Authority has placed all qualified applicants if the 13.5% requirement has been met. **You may obtain an application at the office of the Authority, 22 Frank D. Tanner Drive, Reading, MA 01867 or by accessing one online at www.readinghousing.org.**

FAMILY HOUSING – STATE (705)

The Authority operates the State's Family Housing Program with 2 different developments. The first family housing development that was built by the Authority is located at Oakland and Waverly Roads and is called *Waverly Oaks*. There are six 3-bedroom units. Our second state family development is near the center of Town and is referred to as our *Pleasant/Parker* location. There are only four units available at this site. Our wait list is open. Approximate wait times for those presently on the list remains in excess of ten years.

SECTION 8 FEDERAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Currently the wait list for our Section 8 Program is open. We now participate in the centralized wait list program initiated in December 2002 and administered by Mass NAHRO. Applications are available at our administrative office or online at www.mnahro.org. An application can be downloaded from that site and submitted to *any* agency participating in the centralized wait list program. There are currently over 125 member agencies taking part in that joint process. At present there are almost 200,000 families on this waitlist with waiting times for assistance quite long.

The State maintains a wait list for its programs through the Metropolitan Boston Housing Program (MBHP). Anyone seeking an emergency application should contact MBHP at (800) 272-0990 to obtain an application. The local area service agency for emergency applicants is Community Service Network. You may contact them at (781) 438-1977.

SUMMIT VILLAGE FIRST TIME HOMEBUYERS PROGRAM:

The Authority continues to oversee the maintenance of the wait list for qualified and eligible applicants for the affordable units at Summit Village through the First Time Homebuyers Program. We presently have no potential buyers on our waitlist. During the past year, one 2-BR affordable unit was made available and was purchased by the RHA at an affordable price and will become part of the overall affordable inventory held by the Housing Authority. The "affordable" owners must have a fair market appraisal done; the Authority reviews the appraisal and if accepted, provides the owner with the maximum resale price for the affordable unit. If the owner has a friend who would be eligible and income-qualified, then the Authority reviews their qualifications and provides them with an "Eligible Purchaser Certificate". If the owner wishes to select an applicant from the wait list, the Authority would send the next available and eligible buyer's name to the owner to negotiate the sale. If no one is available or eligible to purchase an affordable unit at this location, the RHA has the "right of first refusal" and can opt to purchase.

Interested applicants may pick up applications packets at the Town Clerk's office in Town Hall; at the Reference Desk at the Reading Public Library; or at the office of the Reading Housing Authority, 22 Frank D. Tanner Drive. When making an application, a \$10 fee made payable to the "Reading Housing Authority" must be included along with all pertinent documentation. If the family applying for the affordable unit is headed by 2-persons, both parties must execute the application as applicant and co-applicant. Income from all family members age 18+ is included in family income for eligibility. However, if the income of one of these persons is from a dependent (not spouse) who is a full-time student, then a deduction for out of pocket expenses for books, tuition, fees and/or travel is allowed. Documentation from the school must be provided and verification for employment and expenses must be provided with the application. All persons must sign a "Release of Information" to have their documentation verified by the Authority. Highlights of the program are:

First Time Homebuyer	Cannot have owned a home within the last 3 years; divorced persons cannot currently own home but 3 year restriction is excused.
Maximum Family Income	Currently, the maximum family income cannot exceed 80% of FY 2016 Medium Family Income presently set at \$98,100 (effective 03/28/16) for all persons in the family from all sources (wages, interest, dividends, etc.)
Family Housing	The 2 bedroom units must have a minimum family size of 2 persons. The maximum number of persons that can qualify for a 2-bedroom unit would be 4 persons.

The 3 bedroom units must have a minimum of 3 persons with 2 being minor children living in the household. The maximum

number of persons that would qualify for a 3-bedroom unit would be 6 persons.

Affordable Price

The affordable price is based on a 20% discount from the current fair market appraisal of the unit, which must be verified by the Authority.

Deed Restriction

Anyone wishing to purchase an “affordable” unit should be aware that a permanent deed restriction would be recorded with their deed. This restriction states that the unit must be sold to a qualified and eligible purchaser at a 20% discount from the fair market value as approved by the Reading Housing Authority.

Single Persons

Applications are accepted from single family households but persons on the single person wait list will be chosen only after all the eligible family applicants have been served.

Local Preference

Applicants from the Town of Reading are given preference over other applicants if their application is made on the same day. This local preference is given if a person is employed in the Town of Reading; has a business or enterprise in Reading which has been established for one or more years; if they are parents of a school child in Reading; persons who were residents of Reading for 5 or more years.

CONCLUSION:

The Reading Housing Authority is proud to provide this information to you. Anyone interested in obtaining an application for any of our housing programs: elderly/handicapped housing, state family or the Federal Section 8 Rental Assistance Program, should contact the authority at 22 Frank D. Tanner Drive or by calling the office at (781) 944-6755.

