

2018 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 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. 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, Julie Johnston 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.

Our community is very fortunate to have such caring and dedicated public safety personnel. The men and women of the Reading Police Department and Fire Department have our gratitude and appreciation for the many times they have responded to emergency situations for residents of the Reading Housing Authority.

We look forward to working with them and the Reading community as we meet the new challenges that lie ahead.

Respectfully,

Richard Robbins, 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 2018, the Board Members and their term of office are as follows:

Richard Robbins
42 Dudley Street

Chair
Term expires 6/30/2020

Timothy J. Kelley
84 Woburn Street

Vice-Chair
Term expires 6/30/2019

Diane L. Cohen
73 Hillcrest Avenue

State Appointee
Term expires 5/03/2021

Charles L. Adams
13 Riverside Drive

Assistant Treasurer
Term expires: 6/30/2022

Vacant Seat

State Tenant Representative

Julie M. Johnston
22 Frank Tanner Drive

Secretary and Executive Director

ADMINISTRATIVE and MAINTENANCE 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.

Administration:

Julie M. Johnston	Secretary and Executive Director
Susan McLaughlin	State Housing Manager
Catherine Sutherland	Office Manager
Iris Perez-Feliciano	CHA Federal Program Coordinator for RHA

Maintenance:

Joseph Costello	Maintenance Staff
Edward Bennett	Maintenance Staff

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AFFILIATIONS:

Home Care:

Jane Burns	Town of Reading, Elder & Human Services Administrator
Kerry Valle	Town of Reading, Case Manager
Alyse Warren	Town of Reading, Nurse Advocate
Daniel J. O'Leary	Director, Mystic Valley Elder Services

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, Esq.

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 we experience here in New England, maintenance must 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 raking; and winter's snow and ice removal. The maintenance staff works tirelessly to keep our developments looking beautiful.

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 needs to be done.

2018 FUNDING RECEIVED:

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

MODERNIZATION OF STATE HOUSING FUNDS

In March 2018 the Reading Housing Authority was notified that the agency would be receiving \$69,882 in Formula Funding Grants for Capital Improvement Projects for fiscal year 2021. The Authority began working on an exterior door replacement and balcony repair project in 2018 at Frank D. Tanner, Drive with anticipated completion by the end of June 2019.

AUDITS:

The Authority has a Single Audit of all programs by an independent auditor each year. Guyder/Hurley of Braintree, MA was engaged to perform the latest review of the Authority's programs for fiscal year end June 2018. At this time, the audit has been completed and final copies of report were submitted in late December 2018 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 2017 has also been completed as of December 2018. Final reports were received by year end and no findings were noted in that detailed report. A copy of that Agreed Upon Procedures (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.

As of September 2015, the Reading Housing Authority entered into an inter-agency agreement with Chelsea Housing Authority to administer its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. That agreement was extended for our FY2018. 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 three (3) 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 our wait lists are open now; 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 April 1, 2018

80, one-bedroom units located at Frank D. Tanner Drive Housing Complex

Eligibility: 60 years of age or disabled

Income: 1 person - \$54,750
2 persons - \$58,450

HOUSING FOR FAMILIES (705) effective April 1, 2018

6 units Waverly and Oakland Road (6, three-bedroom units)

4 units Pleasant and Parker Street (2, two-bedroom units; 2, three-bedroom units)

Eligibility: Family of 2 or more depending on Bedroom Size

Income:	2 persons - \$58,450	6 persons - \$84,450
	3 persons - \$63,750	7 persons - \$90,600
	4 persons - \$73,050	8 persons - \$96,450
	5 persons - \$78,900	

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 for 2018 are:

SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Income limits:	1 person – \$37,750	2 persons - \$43,150
	3 persons - \$48,550	4 persons - \$53,900
	5 persons - \$58,250	6 persons - \$62,550
	7 persons - \$66,850	8 persons - \$71,150

RHA-OWNED PROPERTIES

The Authority presently owns and manages seventeen family units located in various locations throughout the Town of Reading. Four of the seventeen units were located at the condominiums of the Old Reading Schoolhouse. However, in June 2017 the RHA lost these four units due to fire. Thankfully, no one was hurt as a result of the fire but all forty (40) units were determined to be uninhabitable. Efforts are underway to rebuild and restore the units to their original condition as soon as possible. The RHA is hopeful that it will be able to retain the affordability component to all 4 units once construction is complete.

APPLICATIONS:

*****NEW APPLICATION PROCEDURES COMING*****

CHAMP – COMMON HOUSING APPLICATION FOR MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC-HOUSING

In August 2014, legislation as part of Chapter 235, an Act Relative to Local Housing Authorities, was passed to establish a centralized on-line wait list system for persons seeking state-aided public housing assistance. CHAMP will enable Local Housing Authorities and the Department of Community Development to manage state-aided housing applications for all situations – emergency, standard and transfer. CHAMP is scheduled to go on-line to the public access sometime in 2019. Once on-line, applicants will be able to submit and self-manage their applications through the on-line portal from a computer, smart phone, or tablet.

You may obtain an application at the office of the Authority, 22 Frank D. Tanner Drive, Reading, MA 01867 or by accessing it online at www.readinghousing.org.

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.

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 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 <http://www.section8listmass.org/>. An application can be downloaded from that site and submitted to **any** agency participating in the centralized wait list program. At present there are over 200,000 families on this waitlist with waiting times for assistance being quite long.

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. Interested applicants are encouraged to contact the Authority.

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.