

PROGRESS REPORT: BHA FIVE-YEAR PLAN (FY 2020 – 2024)

The Boston Housing Authority created its Five-Year plan covering the years 2020-2024 as part of the 2020 Annual Plan. Each year with the submission of the annual plan, the BHA will provide an update in the Progress Report. The goals and key initiatives from 2020 are listed below in the left hand column and those will remain the same for the five-year period. The updates and progress made on achieving those goals and key initiatives are described below in the right hand column and will be updated each year.

Background:

Boston Housing Authority owns and manages more than 10,000 units of public housing and administers housing subsidies for an additional 15,500 families in Boston and eastern Massachusetts through its Leased Housing programs. It is BHA's purpose to provide quality homes and strong communities for low-income Bostonians. BHA housing is truly affordable to Boston's most vulnerable families and individuals, and the Authority strives to ensure that its housing resources serve as a platform for opportunity for residents and a resource to the broader community.

BHA is a critical Boston institution that is an integral part of the vast majority of neighborhoods across the city. Employing nearly 800 workers, most of whom live in the city, BHA contributes significantly to the local economy. Each year we invest nearly \$140 million across the neighborhoods of Boston in the operation of our public housing communities, and we also invest \$270 million in private housing throughout the City through our Leased Housing program. We have generated an additional \$1.5 billion of investment in our neighborhoods through public-private partnerships like the redevelopments currently underway at Whittier, Orient Heights, and Charlestown.

One of the priorities laid out in BHA's previous five-year plan, 2015-2019, was to develop a framework to ensure the long-term viability of BHA's public housing communities in the face of persistent federal funding shortfalls. One important strategy has been public-private partnerships between BHA and other providers of affordable housing and supportive services. In November 2014, BHA issued an invitation to the affordable housing community in the form of a Request for Qualifications, asking organizations to propose innovative approaches to preserving BHA's housing for future generations with decreased reliance on federal public housing subsidies. The response was wide-ranging. BHA received ideas focused on over thirty separate public housing communities. In the years since, BHA has been taking up the most promising proposals one at a time, issuing a series of Requests for Proposals that have led to several new public-private partnerships. In the process, BHA has articulated a set of firm principles to guide its partnerships: Engage residents and community members in meaningful participatory planning; ensure tenant protections; fully preserve on a one-for-one basis all deeply subsidized housing units; and focus on sustaining BHA's assets to fulfill its mission to serve future generations.

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An equally critical strategy in addition to public-private partnerships is to provide for those BHA communities that will remain under BHA ownership - which is the majority of BHA's housing (about 7000 units). Amassing the resources to upgrade and maintain BHA's public housing portfolio remains a challenge given the nearly \$1 billion in capital backlog. BHA will continue to invest in the long-term preservation of these communities using a variety of tools, including HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration program, project-based Section 8, comprehensive capital planning, and better use of technology to deliver our housing services. These BHA sites will continue to be a critical part of their surrounding neighborhoods and the community fabric of the City of Boston.

While we endeavor to preserve our public housing assets, BHA's Leased Housing program has steadily grown to cover more than 15,500 homes, providing a critical tool for affordable housing preservation and development throughout Boston. BHA is continually implementing strategies to ensure that the Leased Housing program is effectively serving low-income families and individuals. As part of BHA's commitment to affirmatively further fair housing, in July 2019, BHA implemented Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) as exception payment standards in those zip codes where they are necessary to make communities accessible and affordable for voucher holders. The goal of implementing SAFMR exception payment standards is multifold: expand choice for voucher holders and decrease the concentration of vouchers in high poverty areas; preserve people's ability to remain where they live, preventing displacement and harmful gentrification; and minimize the risk of artificially inflating rents throughout the city.

Over the coming five years, as we continue to invest in public housing preservation and expand the reach of the Leased Housing program, BHA will adjust our business processes and expand our internal capacities. For this 2020-2024 Plan, we identify six broad strategic priorities:

1. Achieve and maintain high performer status for the public and leased housing programs.
2. Strengthen and preserve the BHA portfolio of public housing.
3. Increase housing opportunities through the leased housing program.
4. Support resident capacity-building, self-sufficiency and quality of life initiatives that help residents meet their personal goals for themselves and their families.
5. Identify and plan for future staffing needs at BHA.
6. Continue to improve customer service in all areas so that the BHA is consistently experienced by residents, applicants, landlords and vendors as an efficient, pleasant and responsive organization.

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Within this context, the Authority proposes the following initiatives:

Goals	Updates and Progress Made
<p>1. Strategic Focus: Achieve and maintain high performer status as evaluated by HUD in their Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) for the public and leased housing programs:</p>	
<p>Maintain 97% or higher Occupancy Levels:</p>	<p>In the midst of redevelopment of the Charlestown and Mildred C. Hailey developments, current resources are being utilized for the relocation efforts in those projects. Operations continue to work on expediting unit turnover with the expectation that all vacant units be ready for move in 30 days or less, and new applicants housed in under 60 days and to work closely with the Admissions Department to ensure there are sufficient pools of applicants to fill vacancies and improve tracking capabilities of expected future vacancies.</p> <p>At the end of September 2023, the occupancy rate was 96.8% with the goal of reaching 97%. BHA reached 97.8% occupancy in early 2025 and has a goal of reaching 98% while maintaining a minimum of 97% over the next fiscal year.</p> <p>BHA continues to strive to improve occupancy performance on multiple fronts, including increased scrutiny of standards for all turnover units, with inspections prior to showings, maximize marketing and curb appeal to ensure we minimize the rejection rates. BHA is also exploring ways to increase the number of offers to waiting list applicants, and implementing measures to centrally capture and share information on anticipated vacancies, so that the unit turnover and applicant screening processes can begin as quickly as possible. Additionally BHA is identifying ways to collect feedback from waiting list applicants about the wait list experience and site selection process. BHA anticipates using this feedback to inform changes to wait list processes that will improve acceptance rates for housing offers.</p>
<p>Maintain 100% Utilization of Section 8 Resources:</p>	<p>The BHA expended approximately 99% of funding eligibility in 2024 and</p>

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	<p>utilizing 99% of the unit months available under the HUD prescribed voucher baseline. The BHA expects to expend all available funding in 2025 and be leased to just below the HUD baseline for vouchers.</p> <p>2024 update: 16,692 HVC, 468 Emergency Housing Vouchers, 410 Mainstream, 950 State Subsidies, 430 Mod Rehab Vouchers, 400 City Vouchers = 19,350 Total Vouchers; BHA also invests more than \$380 million in private housing throughout our Leased Housing program.</p>
<p>Continually improve toward achievement of high-performer PHAS status.</p>	<p>Continue to focus on all key indicators including rent collection, recertifications, and vacancy reduction along with improved REAC scores. Staff training as well as implementing and setting clear productivity expectations on each indicator.</p> <p>BHA continues to focus on improving/maximizing performance on each of the PHAS components. As has been the case for many large housing authorities, and almost universally in the national rental housing industry, performance in rent collection suffered significantly due to the lingering impact of COVID-19. BHA continued to assist impacted households in submitting applications to the City of Boston through 9/30/23, for federal rental assistance relief funds to pay eligible, COVID-19-related rent balances. BHA continues to work with individual households to stabilize potentially at-risk tenancies by assisting clients with referrals to local non-profit organizations that assist with the payment of rent balances, and management encourages residents in arrears to utilize repayment agreements whenever feasible. The rent collection rate in early 2025 was 95.3% and 23% of rental arrears were under management or court repayment agreements.</p> <p>In FY 2024, BHA completed the first full year of inspections under HUD’s new NSPIRE standard.</p>

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	<p>In preparation for the transition, BHA management and maintenance staff trained extensively on the new criteria. The 2024 inspection cycle concluded in November of 2024, and BHA demonstrated significant improvement, with 29 of the 36 inspected properties receiving improved scores. This group of 36 properties had an average score of 67 on their previous inspections back in 2022, but that average score rose to 84.</p>
<p>2. Strategic Focus: Strengthen and preserve the BHA portfolio of public housing:</p>	
<p>Formalize asset management staffing and systems within BHA’s organizational structure.</p>	<p>BHA senior management convened meetings to advance this goal. Much of the focus has been BHA’s increasing portfolio of Section 8 housing units and other affordable housing outside of the traditional public housing program. For example, staff are devising tools such as budgeting templates that will be flexible enough to accommodate various subsidy platforms, while also delivering robust budget-to-actuals reporting to guide operational decisions.</p> <p>BHA senior management continues to focus on specific pieces of this effort, which has led to the development of better budgeting tools and enhanced financial reporting. This process is also leading to the development of a framework for reviewing the financial resources, needs, and performance of properties in order to best position BHA to make projections and structural decisions about which BHA communities may be most viable for continued operation as traditional public housing, or may be candidates for conversion to Project Based Section 8, or require another method of subsidy to best sustain as many units as possible as long-term affordable housing resources. BHA is also developing overarching goals for asset management and conducting case studies of conversions to better understand needed staffing and management systems.</p>
<p>In all redevelopment transactions, provide for BHA’s financial stability in order to preserve public housing character and associated tenant protections into the</p>	<p>While traditional public housing provides valuable, explicitly articulated protections for public housing tenants, the programs have been underfunded over the years. As BHA implements alternatives to traditional public housing—such as, for example, Project Based Voucher Section 8</p>

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<p>future.</p>	<p>subsidies that provide a more robust and reliable financing stream—we must also take care to put in place the same sorts of protections that public housing residents enjoy. In 2021 BHA joined two advocacy agencies, Greater Boston Legal Services and City Life/Vida Urbana to secure a grant through the Innovative Stable Housing Initiative Upstream Fund (the “ISHI Grant”) that supported work among the organizations and in collaboration with public housing local tenants organizations at sites that are going through (or have recently gone through) subsidy conversions and, in some cases, ownership transitions. The goal of the ISHI work was to compile a toolkit of resources to inform such conversions and includes explanatory materials to inform residents and managers about how conversions may affect basic operational processes such as rent calculations. It also includes model documents such as leases and House Rules that ensure continuation of valuable public housing protections even under alternative subsidy platforms. A final version of the Toolkit is available on the BHA website in English, Spanish, and Chinese and was shared at the Resident Empowerment Conference.</p>
<p>Complete a portfolio-wide capital needs assessment for all properties not currently slated for redevelopment. Devise a strategic plan to fund these capital needs over the long term.</p>	<p>Capital Needs Assessments (CNAs) are 100% complete for all of BHA Public Housing properties. These CNAs assist in planning for immediate and future capital projects.</p>
<p>Add new deeply affordable units where possible during redevelopment.</p>	<p>In recent years BHA public housing redevelopment activity has successfully adhered to the principle of one-for-one replacement, meaning that all original public housing units have been replaced (or preserved) with comparable, equally deeply affordable housing units—either RAD or Section 8 Project Based Voucher (PBV) units.</p> <p>At the same time, BHA is also creating net-new deeply affordable housing. “Net-new” means additional new deeply affordable housing units above the number needed to replace (or preserve) the number of original public housing units that previously existed at a given site.</p>

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The net-new deeply affordable housing units underway or completed during the 5-Year Plan are as follows:

- O'Connor Way, a new affordable elderly housing community completed in late 2020 and occupied in 2021 on vacant land at the periphery of BHA's Mary Ellen McCormack, includes 22 new PBV Section 8 units (deeply affordable) plus 25 additional affordable units for a total of 47 net-new affordable units.
- 125 Amory, a BHA elderly/disabled property that completed renovations in early 2021, offers 12 new Section 8 PBV units (in addition to the 199 original public housing units that have converted to Section 8).
- The redevelopment of JJ Carroll completed in the fourth quarter of 2023; it includes 77 net-new PBV Section 8 units (in addition to 64 PBV Section 8 units to replace the original public housing units).
- Old Colony Phase 3, which completed construction in 2022, includes 55 net-new deeply affordable units as Phase 3C.
- The redevelopment of BHA's Clippership Apartments, which was completed in early 2021, resulted in a total of 22 PBV Section 8 units, which is 2 more than the original 20 units that were demolished—in other words, 2 net-new rental units—as well as, 30 net-new homeownership units, 16 of which are affordable.
- Holtzer Park, a new building which completed construction on vacant land at BHA's Amory Street site in 2022, is 100% net-new affordable housing: 62 total net-new units, of which 8 are deeply affordable PBV Section 8 units.
 - The first two new buildings at Mildred C. Hailey (Building 1A and 1B) which is scheduled to complete construction in summer 2025 include 8 net-new Section 8 project-based voucher units (in addition to 91 replacement Section 8 units plus 124 other affordable units—or a total of 223 units).
- The next new building at BHA's former Amory Street site (127 Amory Street which began construction in early 2025 will include 38 net-

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	<p>new Section 8 project-based voucher units (plus 58 additional new affordable units for a total of 96 units).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Colony Phase 6, which began construction in summer 2024, will include 89 net new Section 8 project-based voucher units. • 3368 Washington Street, a brand new building that completed construction in Fall of 2024, is 100% net new supported housing: 156 PBV Section 8 units. • 900 Morrissey Blvd, brand new supported housing that will complete construction July of 2025, will result in 99 PBV Section 8 units.
<p>In furtherance of BHA’s commitment to sustainability, continue to reduce carbon emission toward 38% of 2008 level; and continue to explore climate resiliency, moving from identifying vulnerabilities toward implementing solutions.</p>	<p>BHA has updated energy goals to comply with local and state regulation, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 50% of 2008 levels by 2030 and 0% by 2050. The BHA is introducing non-federal resources to public housing through utility energy efficiency programs and reducing energy costs to support public housing operations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced energy consumption and carbon emissions at numerous developments, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Codman – Heating and Hot Water Boiler Retrofit b. Frederick Douglass – Air Sealing c. Hampton House – Air Sealing d. Washington Manor – Air Sealing e. JJ Malone – High Efficiency Hot Water Distribution Pilot f. Ruth Barkley – Heating and Hot Water Boiler Retrofit g. St. Botolph – Add Insulation in Cavities Wall h. Ashmont – Heating System Retrofit under contract i. Hassan – Add Insulation in Cavities Wall j. Washington Manor – Add Insulation in Wall Cavities Wall 2. Explore Climate Resiliency: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participated in the Urban Land Institute’s charrette “Living with Heat”, and monitoring their comprehensive research project examining the effects and solutions to increased heat on the Greater Boston Area. Partner with Trust for Public Land on Park Equity Accelerator – mapping of

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open space access.

b. Partnered with City of Boston’s Climate Ready team on strategies contained in the framework of the Heat Resilience Study. Distributed air conditioners to elderly sites and added One Call Now communication system. Heat pump projects will add cooling at various sites. c. Working with City of Boston’s Green Infrastructure team on assessments of priority sites at particular risk for extreme heat and flooding. Installed new rain garden at Franklin Field. Identified other stormwater and resiliency projects.

3. Added Sustainability Planning and Reduction of Use of Fossil Fuels in Housing per Mayor Wu’s State of the City Address January 2023. Energy conservation projects in design at Franklin Field, Pond Street, Hassan, Bellflower, Peabody to save on utility bills.

a. BHA completed a consultant review on energy efficiency and electrification in its portfolio.

b. BHA received in-kind services to identify Solar Energy Systems/Photovoltaic installations at BHA Sites and estimated energy savings from these projects.

c. Launched pilot Networked Geothermal project at Franklin Field, currently in design.

d. Constructed first electric vehicle charging stations and secured consultant to deliver recommendations on local fleet transition.

3. Strategic Focus Area: Increase Housing Opportunities through the Leased Housing program:

<p>Apply for additional vouchers as opportunities arise.</p>	<p>In 2021, BHA applied for and received an additional award of 100 Mainstream Housing Vouchers, vouchers allocated for families with disabled non-elderly adult household members bringing the total to 410. These vouchers supplement the 500 vouchers BHA maintains for Non-Elderly Disabled (NED) households, bringing the total number of vouchers for non-elderly disabled families to 910, notwithstanding the units designated for non-elderly disabled families in the project based voucher</p>
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	<p>portfolio. The BHA has utilized approximately 200 Mainstream vouchers, with a majority of the remaining 210 being committed to permanent supportive housing project based voucher developments.</p> <p>In 2022, BHA applied for Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) and received an allocation of 480 that are currently being issued in cooperation with the Continuum of Care (CoC). As of the writing of this plan, 420 of 480 EHVs have been issued and more than 410 families have been housed.</p> <p>The BHA also received additional funding for 15 additional VASH vouchers in September of 2024, bringing the BHA's total VASH allocation to 758.</p> <p>The BHA was able to increase utilization for the Family Unification Program (FUP) to near 100% increasing the chances of eligibility for any additional funding opportunities.</p> <p>BHA has also applied for and received 50 Foster Youth to Independence vouchers in 2024, resulting in a grand total of 94, 47 of which have been housed, supplementing the work BHA does with the MA Department of Children and Families.</p> <p>Effective 10/1/2022, BHA received an additional allocation of 55 Housing Choice Vouchers.</p> <p>Effective 10/1/23 BHA received 47 stability vouchers, to utilize in partnership with the CoC.</p> <p>The BHA will continue to apply for additional voucher opportunities as they arise.</p>
<p>Maintain high occupancy rates in the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) portfolio while decreasing turnover</p>	<p>The BHA closely monitors vacancy rates in the project based voucher program to maximize housing opportunities for Boston families. In order to</p>

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<p>times.</p>	<p>further increase occupancy rates and a focus on reducing unit turnover, BHA is implementing an online Owner Portal that will enable the tracking of eligible applicant referrals from the BHA waiting lists to the respective owner for suitability screening. In addition to technology implementation, the BHA is seeking other ways to optimize and streamline the screening process.</p>
<p>Optimize the use of PBVs to preserve and create affordable housing in Boston.</p>	<p>The BHA has awarded project-based vouchers to preserve tenancies at three expiring use developments that were previously subsidized by the state 13a mortgage program. The expiring use project at Mercantile Wharf is now under a long-term PBV contract, stabilizing eligible low-income families at the property for years to come.</p> <p>Additionally, the BHA awarded 156 vouchers to a project in Jamaica Plan that include a mix of Project Based Vouchers and Mainstream Vouchers and another 15 vouchers a project at Quint Ave that provides support to individuals in recovery. In 2021, the BHA awarded 210 Project Based Vouchers (a combination of Mainstream and traditional vouchers) to Beacon Development to preserve and create affordable housing at 140 Clarendon Street. The BHA will continue to solicit Project Based Vouchers, specifically soliciting opportunities to project base Mainstream vouchers.</p> <p>BHA is actively exploring how to use its “Faircloth” capacity—the number of public housing units that BHA is entitled to create—in combination with a mechanism articulated by HUD (in 2023) to create new project-based voucher units through HUD’s RAD program. BHA’s aims to use this new “Faircloth-to-RAD” path to create new PBV units with its approximately 2900-unit Faircloth capacity over the coming years. In 2024, the BHA submitted requests for Notice of Anticipated RAD Rents (NARRs) as the first stage of leveraging HUD's Restore Rebuild program (formerly Faircloth to RAD). BHA's request reflected updated HUD guidance enabling non-MTW agencies to pursue rent augmentation for Restore Rebuild units. BHA successfully submitted NARRs for all of the agency's</p>

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<p>Implement ECHO—Expanding Choice in Housing Opportunities pilot program—and Small Area Fair Market Rents to promote access for voucher holders to a wider array of neighborhoods.</p>	<p>current Faircloth capacity.</p> <p>The BHA launched Expanding Choice in Housing Opportunities (ECHO) pilot program. ECHO is a voluntary program aimed at affirmatively furthering fair housing by providing technical assistance and information to BHA voucher-holders. Under the Fair Housing Act, our voucher-holders should be able to live in any part of Massachusetts they choose and the mission of the ECHO program is to provide them with all the information and technical assistance they need to make their own decisions. Through ECHO, BHA has taken steps insure that our voucher-holders receive Fair Housing training, so they know their rights and protections under the Fair Housing Act, and what steps to take if they encounter any discriminatory behavior.</p> <p>The BHA also developed a software tool that assists families with identifying neighborhoods that might meet their family needs, providing information on neighborhood qualities including schools, transportation, and public safety and linking them to units that can be afforded under BHA’s payment standard structure.</p> <p>The BHA has also implemented Small Area Fair Market Rents as exception payment standards in many of the zip codes that fall within its administrative area, to increase options for voucher holders to find apartments in a wider variety of apartments.</p> <p>The BHA hired a Director of Housing Search and Landlord Recruitment with the goal of continuing to expand on housing choices for voucher families by recruiting new landlords to the program, improving on existing program marketing materials, streamlining administrative barriers, and proving resources for housing search through internal tools and access to external partnerships.</p> <p>The ECHO team continues to expand its housing search services to BHA</p>
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families that are facing displacement due to failed inspections and a landlords failure to make repairs and victims of Domestic Violence that have been issued vouchers in order to permit relocation from public housing.

4. Strategic Focus: Strengthen resident capacity-building and quality of life initiatives that help residents meet their own personal goals and that help support vibrant communities:

Rebuild resident capacity program to support resident empowerment and leadership; improve the efficacy and efficiency of Local Tenant Organizations (LTOs), Resident Empowerment Coalition (REC), and Section 8 Tenants Incorporated (S8TI).

- o Develop metrics to track levels of resident organization and engagement.
- o Revise LTO policy, election procedures, and by-laws; pursue strategies to maximize diversity of participants and their level of participation in LTOs.

The Resident Capacity Program provides regular board compliance and Tenant Participation Fund training to new and existing Family & Elderly/Disabled Board members in collaboration with Mel King Institute and Boston Resident Training Institute.

Current metrics track LTO Compliance; TPF spending; participation in REC Meetings; LTO meetings and activities. Several Local Tenant Organization elections were completed in 2023 and 2024 and election activities are under way at Charlestown, Mildred Hailey Apartments, MLK, Codman, along with other sites. Election activities also includes outreach to sites without boards to gauge interest and working to fill vacancies as they arise. Resident Advisory Board elections were also completed in summer 2024 for the first time since 2016 with more than 40 residents elected across family, elderly disabled, and leased housing programs.

The Tenant Participation Policy has been updated and renamed as the Resident Participation Policy after significant public and resident review. The document was streamlined and reorganized for clarity and includes clarification that the policy applied to mixed-finance sites, and provides guidance for use of resident stipends, among other changes.

Holding Resident Empowerment Coalition meetings, now on a virtual basis. Registration for meetings captures first time participants. Meetings are held every other month. BHA staff will continue to host virtual and in-person events, meetings, and activities and promote LTO events.

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From the REC Meetings, we have developed a Peer Learning Committee and Election Support Committee. The topics for both committees are developed with resident input and resident leaders co-host with RCP staff.

Tenant Participation Fund reports and Laundry fund reports are tracked quarterly, with regular follow-ups and technical assistance provided to LTOs.

Youth Council continues in partnership with SPOKE Art, Inc. The youth leaders connect with other BHA youth and provide feedback to the BHA related to items of importance to youth and young adults. The Youth Council also plans to meet with the Mayor's Youth Council and both groups will present to each other and discuss possible areas of collaboration.

BHA is also hiring two staff to assist with Resident Leadership and Engagement.

The CCECR section of the BHA website features an LTO Resource Page - for LTO members and general residents. The information includes links to templates needed for their TPF reporting. LTO Members and general residents can also find links to LTO bylaws and Board contact information.

Digital Equity: Senior Advisor for Digital Equity is overseeing efforts; Hired 2 full-time Digital Equity Coordinators;

- Received additional funding from City of Boston, Mass Broadband & FCC to support digital equity classes, outreach, and assessment of wiring in public housing
- Wired 17 developments for BoNet
- New partnership with MAPC to promote wireless internet access in unit at several developments
- Updated ISP agreements to enhance speed and competition

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	<p>Previously the team provided laptops and tablets to tenant leaders during the pandemic and in a partnership with the Boston Public Library and City of Boston distributed free Wi-Fi routers that will be connected through 2023 and free Chromebooks. All residents were provided the opportunity to request these devices and to date BHA has provided residents with more than 3000 devices BHA has also provided on site digital equity classes and drop-in hours directly through staff and through partnerships with various service providers.</p> <p>In 2024, Digital Equity staff reactivated two computer labs, providing 10 computers in each lab and also started regular programming to provide various digital literacy related workshops; held 41 digital literacy programs, including computer classes focused on basic computer and internet skills; tech drop ins providing one-on-one basic technology and resource support; and virtual workshops focused on cybersecurity/online safety and using social media, serving more than 100 residents; and distributed over 100 laptops to residents, primarily to computer class graduates and residents who've expressed a need for a device.</p> <p>Multiple boards have received training from Mel King Institute as part of their public housing leadership training including Mildred Hailey, Commonwealth, and Charlestown. Launched 'Powered by the REC' on October 1st: an initiative to increase resident engagement with their LTOs.</p>
<p>Institutionalize resident protections and participation in all redevelopment projects; advance internal BHA systems to ensure long-term compliance by new owners.</p>	<p>BHA collaborated with Greater Boston Legal Services and City Life/Vida Urbana on a grant offered by three hospitals known as Innovative Stable Housing Initiative that was successful. The partners called it the Resident Empowerment Project (REP) and its focus was to develop tools and trainings and empower residents as they go through redevelopment. The initial grant work wrapped up in summer 2021, and the grant partners created a "Toolkit" for resident empowerment shortly thereafter. The</p>

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	<p>Toolkit is finalized and available in multiple languages. Materials are hosted on the BHA website. In addition, a Resident Empowerment conference was held on October 15, 2022.</p>
<p>Explore voter registration at re-certification.</p>	<p>No update for 2024. Staff will move forward with planning around this goal in 2025.</p>
<p>Increase Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Participation from 200 to 800 households.</p>	<p>BHA has increased FSS Participation to approximately 1600 and continues to enroll families. We expect to enroll 1,700 enrolled by the end of 2025. We also expect to graduate approximately 150 families by end of 2024 and 200 families by the end of 2025.</p>
<p>5. Strategic Focus: Identify and plan for future staffing needs and to support BHA staff:</p>	
<p>Proactively plan for future staffing in light of property repositioning and pending retirements; identify areas where BHA needs to hire for new capacities and functions.</p>	<p>Human Resources and Finance identify retirees and devise replacement needs agency wide. Identify career development opportunities for staff that could be promoted into new classifications for advancement. BHA continues to reach out to local colleges and universities and has partnered with Bunker Hill Community College and Roxbury Community College to hire a series of interns who have an interest in pursuing careers in the field of affordable housing. Additionally BHA developed partnerships with training and career development organizations (such as the YMCA Training Inc.) to create opportunities for BHA residents.</p> <p>BHA’s Operations Division has partnered with Building Pathways training program and have recruited 2 graduates to enter the work force as Janitor Groundskeepers. Both continue to be active members of the BHA community. We anticipate this relationship will continue, and allow both BHA and City residents the opportunity for employment at the BHA.</p> <p>A new Onboarding initiative launched in Fall 2022, which includes a broad overview of the BHA’s and Operations Division goals, as well as training sessions to assist with the employee’s entry into new positions. Operations has established two training tracks, one follows the necessary training for management staff, and the second training track focuses on</p>

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	<p>those who have joined our maintenance operations. Training facilitators for both tracks are current Operations staff that have expertise with the subject matter. BHA continues to enhance the onboarding experience with a goal to encourage those who participate to view the BHA as career path for future staff development options.</p>
<p>Institute additional mentoring and training for the current and the next generation of BHA staff.</p>	<p>Created and implemented intensive 3-month manager training program called Management at its Best since 2020. BHA is also offering a variety of skill building workshops, such as monthly Microsoft Office trainings in Excel, Word, Outlook, etc. and Civility in the Workplace.. In FY2024, Operations rolled out a six-month Manager III training program, providing a career path for Management Aides.</p>
<p>Continue to promote diverse hiring and employment opportunities for BHA residents.</p>	<p>BHA has been able to provide additional stipends for residents interested in capacity building and engagement work (i.e.; Census, digital equity). Hired BHA resident as Resident Capacity Program (RCP) Assistant.</p> <p>BHA continues to make efforts to recruit, hire, and promote public housing residents and voucher holders and is proactively seeking more creative, non-traditional means of candidate recruitment to reach a broader audience of potential applicants. BHA is looking to expand on the Internship Program, offering paid internships throughout the year. Additionally BHA developed partnerships with training and career development organizations (such as the YMCA Training Inc.) to create opportunities for BHA residents. We hope to launch a resident apprenticeship program for residents interested in Property Management careers.</p>
<p>Continue to develop information systems, communications tools, and interactive forums to enhance collaboration, efficiency and productivity across departments.</p>	<p>BHA implemented ‘One Call Now’ software to provide automated texting, robocalling and emailing capabilities for more timely and efficient communication with residents. BHA is using this software at all public housing sites in multiple languages and has trained Operations and other staff in its use. Messaging around urgent utility outages (ie; no water, electricity, heat, elevator) are being sent regularly to residents through the BHA’s ERS team and messaging related to non-urgent or recurring</p>

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activities, such as Unity Days, food deliveries, resident meetings, are being sent through the BHA’s communications team. Additional messages are continually being developed and will expand into a variety of other messaging such as Living Unit Inspection, work order, rent due messages over time. The tool can also be utilized for messaging to staff and leased housing participants and landlords as appropriate going forward.

6. Strategic Focus: Continue to improve customer service in all areas so that the BHA is consistently experienced by residents, applicants, landlords and vendors as an efficient, pleasant and responsive organization:

Develop a Customer Service Policy to promote client-focused and consistent service delivery.

A Customer Service Representative position was created within Admissions and Leased Housing. An Operations Customer Service and Programs Compliance Manager position is working on developing and implementing business process changes designed to improve the accessibility and clarity of information provided to individuals and families as they use the programs and services offered by BHA and ensuring the BHA Reasonable Accommodation policy is adhered to and tracked consistently.

Customer Service staff have conducted many training sessions for the client facing ERS team to improve their understanding of operations and how they affect business and refine their current customer service skills. The Customer Service Director has also created a comprehensive service training program for his team with the goal of rolling out the same training agency wide over the next year or two; and has also created phone/email etiquette/protocol for all BHA employees.

The Operations Division works closely with the Director of Human Resources identifying staff’s skill development needs, as well as building the needed current and future staff capacity. Actively engaging with the YMCA and colleges providing internship opportunities in an effort to build needed temporary and potential future staff capacity ensuring improved,

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<p>Optimize technology to transform interaction with the agency—e.g., landlord and tenant portals, vendor tools, on-line rental payment and direct deposit.</p>	<p>efficient, and consistent service delivery throughout the Agency.</p> <p>BHA implemented on-line rental payment and automated demand debit rental payments for residents who opt in. BHA implemented Virtual appointments with clients in order to expedite processing, recertifications, rent changes and other business that was strictly handled in person previously.</p> <p>In 2023 and 2024, staff training on handheld tablets with introduction of a mobile work order platform (Elite) to improve the efficiency of the work order system. In 2024, BHA customer service staff sourced, hired and trained a new answering service to back up ERS/Work Order associates when they are on the phone, out sick, etc. We redefined the process for the new answering service and the results have been excellent. We have cut our response time in half for these calls and continue to improve service and response time.</p> <p>Public Housing files have largely been digitally transferred. All resident records stored digitally allows greater capacity to serve our residents both in person and virtually.</p> <p>The planning of resident portals continues, with a goal of providing an interactive online avenue to conduct many frequent customer service transactions with BHA, including the annual certification process and requesting maintenance service.</p> <p>BHA Operations implemented a new work order system in 2021, and continues to work on maximizing the system’s functionality and continues staff training on all aspects of the system. Customer Service staff, in partnership with Operations staff, have implemented new technology to enable our teams to communicate work order emergencies in a more timely, organized fashion. Essentially, this entire process has enabled us to go “paperless” and has eliminated a great deal of oversight and lost paper work orders. This initiative involved the purchasing of new technology for many of our tradesmen and a great deal of training and</p>
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	<p>practice on the operations and service side. As a result, the entire work order process, including assigning emergencies, is easier, more accurate, more timely and also much better at archiving work order info.</p> <p>In September of 2023, BHA implemented a new component of the Emphasys software, which features a dashboard capable of providing real time information on work orders, vacancies, and other performance metrics. BHA is continuing to work toward improving the efficiency of maintenance delivery and performance, while working with our software vendor to continue enhancing capability to monitor progress city-wide, as well as at the portfolio and property level. Reducing the backlog of work orders will allow site maintenance supervisors to focus more on maintenance delivery and less on reconciliation of outstanding, and often duplicative, work orders.</p>
<p>Streamline and simplify the housing application process to maximize transparency for applicants and focus staff efforts on working with applicants who are most likely to be housed in the near future.</p>	<p>BHA worked on policy revisions that align the application and verification policies across federally assisted programs, to simplify requirements for any applicant that applies to multiple BHA programs. The policy revisions also reduce the verification requirements for applicants as related to housing history, which can often be extremely difficult to piece together for homeless or otherwise unstably housed applicants and of little value for determining eligibility and suitability.</p> <p>In late 2021/early 2022, BHA launched a web-based online application system that dramatically simplifies the application process. All applications are now completed online, with exceptions for applicants that require additional assistance. The technology continues to be refined to streamline the application process and reduce administrative burden for the Authority.</p> <p>The information on the website regarding BHA housing programs continues to be added to and improved for readability so that applicants</p>

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<p>Simplify applicant and resident forms; improve program marketing materials and briefings.</p>	<p>may make informed choices.</p> <p>The BHA revised the Admissions and Continued Occupancy policy aimed at transparency. The BHA will continue working on policy documents in the coming years to be as succinct and precise as possible.</p> <p>The BHA created an online briefing session and worked to simplify many of the forms associated with voucher issuance, including the RFTA and the BHA Leasing Guidebook.</p> <p>The BHA continues to simplify its online application process and improve the quality of the information on the website.</p> <p>BHA updated and converted several frequently used applicant and resident forms, including the transfer application, the request forms to add household members, and the request form for approval of residual tenancy, to a fillable pdf format and online forms with the resident/applicant information pre-filled to increase efficiency and convenience for staff and clients.</p>
<p>Improve landlord recruitment and retention strategies.</p>	<p>The BHA hired a Director of Housing Search and Landlord Recruitment to focus on this issue. The Director focuses on marketing to existing and new landlords, including designing informational sessions for interested landlords. BHA has developed and conducts landlord outreach and holds briefing sessions on a monthly basis to recruit new landlords and educate existing.</p> <p>The BHA implemented an online owner portal that allows BHA owners access to financial information, inspection results and scheduling information, and the ability to follow move ins and rent increases through statuses as they move from submission to completion.</p> <p>The BHA continues to streamline paperwork and enrollment processes so that the barrier to become a landlord is minimal. The request for tenancy</p>

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	<p>approval process is primarily managed entirely online, however we also offer a paper option for those who prefer it.</p>
<p>Provide additional opportunities for customer feedback.</p>	<p>The BHA implemented a texting survey for voucher holders which has provided significant feedback regarding the housing search and move process. The BHA will develop other surveys for owners, applicants, and tenants, to drive procedural changes and improve customer service. New platforms will be created where clients can receive surveys in all media form, TEXT, EMAIL, PHONE, and reply confidentially.</p> <p>Customer Service staff have created magnets with QR codes, signs and swag that we handed out at our (very successful), fall 2024 resident event, the Future of Public Housing, to spread the word about our efforts to modernize the way we operate in an effort to improve efficiency and the resident experience.</p> <p>In early 2022, the BHA implemented a customer service tracking system, Zendesk, that allows BHA to report and track customer service issues as they are resolved while monitoring responsiveness and consistency. The system allows BHA clients to report issues by web, email, and phone and receive an issue number that will allow them to follow up on the inquiry no matter who they reach at the BHA. Most customer service issues have been resolved on time since the program launched, and BHA hopes to continue to improve. A recent week of service requests across Admissions, Communications, Customer Service, Inspections, Leased Housing and Public Housing departments logged 601 requests with 594 or a 99% achievement rate.</p>