

STRATEGIC PLAN

2016-2020



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The West Palm Beach Housing Authority (WPBHA) is pleased to present our five year Strategic Plan to the community we serve. The strategic planning process was initiated in October, 2015 and completed in January 2016. The WPBHA retained CoWorks International, Inc. to guide this process and ensure that an objective, inclusive and ultimately usable document was produced that will aid the WPBHA in implementing its vision for the future.

Critical, candid information was solicited from residents, staff and the WPBHA Board of Commissioners. An analysis of the data collected revealed that, to a remarkable degree, priorities and recommendations were consistent throughout all groups surveyed. The framework that emerged forms the basis of our work going forward.

Special thanks to Linda Odum, Deputy Director, for her leadership in this process and to all who participated in sharing their ideas, ideals and industry towards fulfilling the mission of the West Palm Beach Housing Authority. We look forward to putting this plan into action.



Laurel Robinson
Executive Director

WHO WE ARE

Established by the city of West Palm Beach in 1938, the West Palm Beach Housing Authority (WPBHA) is a major provider of affordable housing in Palm Beach County. The WPBHA owns and manages 223 public housing units, 282 Rental Assistant Demonstration (RAD) units, and administers 3,344 Housing Choice Vouchers which includes 385 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers within Palm Beach County. The WPBHA also owns and manages 125 unassisted affordable housing units, and 128 units of Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) units. Currently under construction are 99 units of project based voucher units for seniors, 120 LIHTC family units and 125 project based voucher units with a preference for senior veterans. The WPBHA is also a HUD Certified Housing Counseling Agency and provides housing counseling to the community at large.

The demand for affordable housing in Palm Beach County is vastly greater than the supply. The WPBHA currently has 5000 low-income households on its Section 8 HCV waiting lists and over 4000 on its public housing Waiting list. Most families will wait three or more years or more for assistance. The WPBHA is actively working to address local housing needs through its housing development initiatives, including the Pine Ridge Holistic Living Center, a designated Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), as well as through ongoing efforts to maximize utilization of existing public housing and rental assistance resources.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Richard Ryles - *Chairman*
Denise Smith Barnes - *Commissioner*
Zenobia Scruggs - *Commissioner*
Larry Brown - *Commissioner*
Ren Nardoni - *Commissioner*
Philip Spinelli - *Commissioner*

BOARD COUNSEL

Elaine Johnson James, *Esquire*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Laurel Robinson

Deputy Director
Linda Odum

Director of Legal Affairs
Charlotte Burnett

Director of Finance
Philip Goombs

Director of HCV Program Admin
Teresa Gonzalez

Director Asset Based Management
Veronica Jenkins

Director of Resident Financial Services
Cristina Regino

Director of Capital Projects
Edward Overstreet

Director Construction Services
Joel Hatcher

Director of Program Compliance
Michael McManaman

Director of Development
Lisa Maxwell

Community Services Manager
Michael Odum

Elder Care & Crisis Manager
Pamela Wiener

Enterprise Regional Manger
Truellaine Alexander

Risk Control Manager
Leon Lipsick



OUR MISSION

To provide safe, decent, and affordable housing to persons and families with limited financial resources and to provide residents with access to programs which will assist them in making the transition to greater financial security

OUR VISION

To be the leading provider of affordable housing in Palm Beach County

OUR VALUES

- Public trust earned through ethical behavior, with all operations focused on integrity and transparency
- Business conducted in a nondiscriminatory and inclusive manner
- Respectful treatment of all clients and employees
- Exceptional service at all times, while meeting realistic demands
- Sound and effective management of our fiscal resources



SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

The WPBHA committed to creating a clear framework to guide its decision making process for the future. We therefore embarked on a Strategic Planning process to solicit feedback on WPBHA operations that identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) in our internal and external environments. This SWOT analysis included the following:

1. **FACILITATED MEETINGS, BOARD AND STAFF WORKSHOPS**

Participants, including all management staff, residents, and the Board of Commissioners, were guided through a series of activities and exercises in a group setting, which supported the data collection process by including an itemization of the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Residents were informed of the procedure during the annual Resident Advisory Board meeting by the Executive Director and Consultant Shirley Arline of CoWorks International Inc.

2. **QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS**

All residents, employees, and members of the Board of Commissioners were asked to complete questionnaires and surveys regarding the agency’s services, and performance, including areas that needed improvement. Respondents were instructed to return the completed documents directly to the outside consultant to ensure confidentiality and encourage open and honest responses.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Through the Strategic Planning Process, the WPBHA identified eight (8) strategic priority areas as follows:

- Elimination of Generational Poverty
- Financial Independence of the Agency
- Rebranding
- Positive Community Relations
- Staff Development
- Enhanced Communications Programs
- Effective Risk Management
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment of Existing Properties

To ensure that the Strategic Plan is more than an outline of what “should be done” destined to sit on a shelf while we continue with “business as usual”, the WPBHA is developing a detailed annual work plan that will be used internally to organize activities and assign accountability. Initiatives and projects are to be accomplished by 2020. Evaluations and reassessments will take place along the way, but the inclusive process used to develop this plan magnifies its chances of success.

The following pages detail each Strategic Priority and the specific Strategic Initiatives that the WPBHA will undertake to accomplish its purpose.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ELIMINATION OF GENERATIONAL POVERTY

Elimination of Generational Poverty is an enormous challenge. The Residents, Board of Commissioners and Staff have agreed that the focus should be on the youth that live in assisted housing, providing them with financial literacy and supporting their academic achievement. The WPBHA will enhance these efforts by fostering partnerships with institutions such as the Palm Beach County School District, City of West Palm Beach, and other civic groups that have resources and expertise to reach the families we serve.

Strategic Initiatives

- ➔ Provide financial literacy programs to residents, including youth
- ➔ Partner with the Palm Beach County School District to develop programs to support academic achievement. Specifically, the WPBHA will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to combat truancy
- ➔ Utilize athletic coaches, mentoring organizations and programs to highlight the importance of education and academic success
- ➔ Enhance the ability of every child residing in an assisted unit to read at the required level by third grade



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

One of the WPBHA's goals is to ensure the long term financial viability of the agency. Over the last fourteen years the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has consistently reduced Operating and Capital Fund allocations to Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). Funding has become less and less predictable, and this situation is unlikely to change given current federal budget priorities.

Strategic Initiatives

- ➔ Strive for less reliance on government funding in all areas of operations
- ➔ Identify other business opportunities consistent with the mission of the WPBHA
- ➔ Effectively manage current assets and resources.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: REBRANDING

The WPBHA has grown significantly over the years. The agency has embarked on various housing development activities, acquired affordable housing units not funded by HUD, increased its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher allocation, implemented new programs for residents, became a HUD Certified Housing Counseling Agency, and is a Licensed General Contractor in the State of Florida. The old image of the agency is no longer relevant. Therefore, the WPBHA must rebrand itself to reflect its current position. If successful, the WPBHA will develop a differentiated identity in the minds of its clients, stakeholders, and the public.

Strategic Initiatives

- ➔ Create an “umbrella” designation to reflect the Mission and Vision of the WPBHA
- ➔ Utilize a new “brand” to improve the image and reputation of the agency
- ➔ Launch the Housing Center of the Palm Beaches



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Board of Commissioners and Staff acknowledged that effective community relations have a direct impact on the health of the agency and its future success. It was therefore imperative that the agency work on strengthening its current relationships, and forge new and sustainable ties with the neighborhoods and the City of West Palm Beach at large.

Strategic Initiatives

- ➔ Build an improved relationship with City Hall
- ➔ Create a “Hall of Fame” of current and former residents to promote a positive image in the media, at sponsored events and on our website
- ➔ Expand outreach efforts to include more community organizations in WPBHA activities
- ➔ Partner with community organizations to facilitate economic development
- ➔ Expand product offerings to meet community needs
- ➔ Partner with neighborhood leaders and community organizations to facilitate a stronger, safer West Palm Beach



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Employees are an important business asset. A more highly-skilled workforce can accomplish more and make positive contributions to organizational performance. This strategic priority reflects the WPBHA's commitment to maintaining qualified individuals who are highly engaged and dedicated to the mission of the agency.

Strategic Initiatives

- ➔ Thorough evaluation of skills and competencies of individual staff members to meet current and future organizational needs
 - Complete assessment of employees skills and credentials
 - Review job descriptions
 - Create staff development plans to ensure that employees continue to develop the skills necessary to fulfill the mission of the WPBHA
 - Provide employees with career paths and ladders

- ➔ Review compensation and benefit programs

- ➔ Develop effective staff recognition programs

- ➔ Review allocation of staff resources



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS

It is essential that the WPBHA open the lines of communication with the general public, its clientele and stakeholders. It is important that the activities and accomplishments of the agency be communicated to our external environment on an ongoing basis. It is also important to create an avenue for the WPBHA to monitor public opinion on a real-time basis and fix problems quickly if necessary.

Strategic Initiatives

- ➔ Identify and build effective methods of communication with residents
- ➔ Design and implement a sustainable public relations program
- ➔ Implement a vibrant social media program
- ➔ Utilize existing media platforms to expand communications

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: EFFECTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT

Residents, clients and employees must feel safe in our communities and on our properties. The WPBHA will continue to develop a culture of risk awareness and put systems in place that will reduce our exposure to liability and dangerous situations. All who participated expressed a strong desire for a consistent presence of security personnel to deter threats to personal safety.

Strategic Initiatives

- ➔ Continuously evaluate community safety and security protocols and adjust as necessary.
- ➔ Develop and maintain systems and programs to create a safe work place
- ➔ Establish and coordinate neighborhood organizations that focus on safety and risk control.
- ➔ Increase security staffing and ensure a well-trained, well-equipped workforce



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: COMPREHENSIVE PHYSICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING PROPERTIES

While it is important that we increase the supply of affordable housing in Palm Beach County, it also important to preserve our current housing inventory. Our assisted-rental communities have buildings that are relatively well-maintained, some are aging and in need of renovation. To keep our properties at their best, frequent physical needs assessments of our properties must be an ongoing process.

Strategic Initiatives

- ➔ Identify and plan for the replacement or rehabilitation of properties that have significant capital needs
- ➔ Create a sustainable plan to address the near-term capital needs of WPBHA buildings.
- ➔ Budget and allocate financial resources to meet identified needs
- ➔ Implement a Preventive Maintenance program that eliminates deferred maintenance expense