



Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chelsea Andrews
Executive Director

April 5, 2023

HOC AT-A-GLANCE: March 2023

March's highlights:

- First ever HOC Procurement Fair
- Legislative Updates
- Highlights from our Resident Services Division
- Community Development Block Grant (“CDBG”) Update
- Updates from our Housing Resource Division
- Real Estate Development activities
- Finance Division Update



HOC PROCUREMENT FAIR

- **March 15, 2023:** HOC hosted its first ever Procurement Fair at the Silver Spring Civic Building.
- Event received a 96% success rating based on participant feedback.
- Brought together a diverse group of over 75 professionals interested in doing business with HOC:
 - General Contractors
 - Landscaping
 - Architects
 - Legal
 - Cleaning Services
 - Legislative/communications
 - Construction Management
 - Plumbing
 - Consulting/IT and general
 - Property Management
 - Engineers-Civil, Structural, Ect.
 - Security Firms
 - Inspection services
 - Social Services
 - Janitorial
 - Training



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

- **MC 10-13:** Local bill that would reform HOC's collective bargaining process - passed the House on March 20, with amendments negotiated with Senator Kramer. Amended bill was passed out of the Senate Finance Committee and is awaiting passage by the Senate.
- **SB848:** Bill to establish a statewide voucher program in Maryland - passed the Senate and has is awaiting action by the House Rules Committee. The bill would mandate a \$15 million appropriation beginning in FY 2025.
- **Council Bill 5-23:** Bill passed Council on March 21, 2023. This legislation limits the types of questions that the County can ask prospective employees when conducting pre-employment health screenings.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

- **NAHRO Legislative Conference:** HOC staff and Commissioners attended NAHRO's Legislative Conference in Washington DC and met with staff in the offices of Rep. Raskin, Sen. Van Hollen, and Sen. Cardin to advocate for affordable housing funding in the coming federal budget.

2023 WASHINGTON CONFERENCE NAHRO at 90: *ADVOCATE*



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming

Workshops

- **March 15:** Facilitated the Fundamentals of Housing workshop.
- **March 21:** Facilitated Resource Sharing workshop.

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth:**
 - **After-School Programs:** Street Outreach Network (“SON”) continued to facilitate the Safe Zones program at Cider Mill.
 - **Recreation:** Resident Services staff facilitated a youth movie night at Paddington Square on March 7.



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

Activities for Youth and Families:

- **Financial Literacy:** Staff facilitated a “Reality store” sponsored by PNC Bank and designed to teach participants how to manage a monthly household budget.
- **Recreation:** Staff facilitated Saint Patrick’s Day parties for customers at Spring Garden and Tanglewood on March 17.



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Seniors:**

- **Digital Equity:** Computer courses at Waverly House on March 2; technology training sessions at the Fenton on March 9, 16 and 23; and computer coaching and technology education at Forest Oak Towers on March 21.
- **Arts for the Aging:** Arts programs at Waverly House on March 7 and Arcola Towers on March 2 and 30.
- **Health and Wellness Services:** Wellness services at Residences on the Lane on March 7, 14 and 28 and Arcola Towers on March 6, 13 and 27. Senior fitness exercise program at Forest Oak Towers on March 16.
- **Food and Nutrition:** Senior Brown Bag food distribution at Residences on the Lane on March 16, and informational session at Bauer Park on March 24.
- **Recreation:** Community bingo at Forest Oak Towers on March 9 and a Gardening workshop at Arcola Towers on March 23.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming

Relocation and Re-Certification Assistance

- Assisted customers on an ongoing basis with relocations and other needs related to renovation projects at Shady Grove Apartments, Willow Manor at Farm Hill, Willow Manor at Cloppers Mill, Town Center Olney, Sandy Spring Meadow and Georgian Court.
- Provided continued outreach and assistance to customers who have failed to submit all required documents for re-certification by the stated deadline.

Rental Assistance

- Provided face-to-face and electronic outreach and assistance to customers with applications for the CDBG and other rental assistance programs.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming

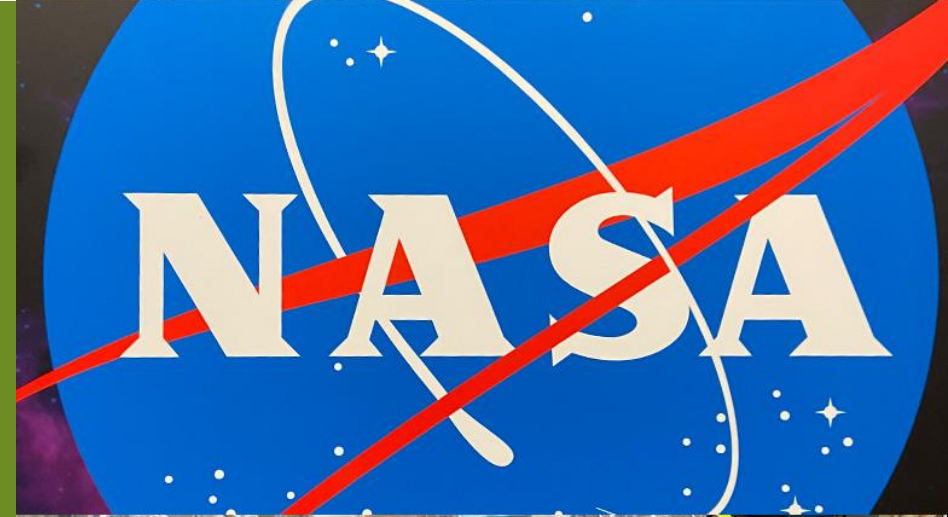
- Provided food and other resource support to 400 HOC customers through partnerships with: Manna Food Center, Emmanuel Brinklow Seventh Day Adventist Church, Montgomery County Senior Nutrition Lunch Program, Capital Area Food Bank's Senior Brown Bag, and My Groceries To Go Programs.
- Continued to facilitate the Senior Nutrition Program, which provides meals and opportunities for seniors to socialize.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

HOC Academy

Youth Education/Enrichment:

- **March 31:** In partnership with IEI, and in honor of Women’s History Month, facilitated a field trip to NASA Goddard Visitor Center for “Girls Got IT!” Program.
- Participants in the First Generation College Bound Program continued to work with their coach and prepare for college.
- HOC Academy staff planned for upcoming activities in April including a family STEM fair, and additional STEM field trips.



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming

Adult Education and Workforce Development:

- **March 21:** Workforce development event at Paddington Square.
- Current Small Business Strategy Course 2023 (Cohort #1) completed three weeks of the 10-week course in March.
- **March 22:** In partnership with We Achieve, staff facilitated an information and recruitment session for customers who learned about available positions for immediate hire.
- **March 29:** HOC Academy staff facilitated a webinar on ‘How to Create a Video Blog’ for customers.
- Continued to provide tuition assistance to customers to assist them in achieving their educational goals.



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Financial Literacy

Financial Literacy Coach continued to work with HOC's customers and individuals on the Housing Path waitlist:

- Provided one-on-one financial literacy coaching to 13 HOC customers and four (4) individuals from the Housing Path waitlist.
- Facilitated financial literacy workshops: seven (7) HOC customers and four (4) individuals from the waitlist attended the workshops.



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

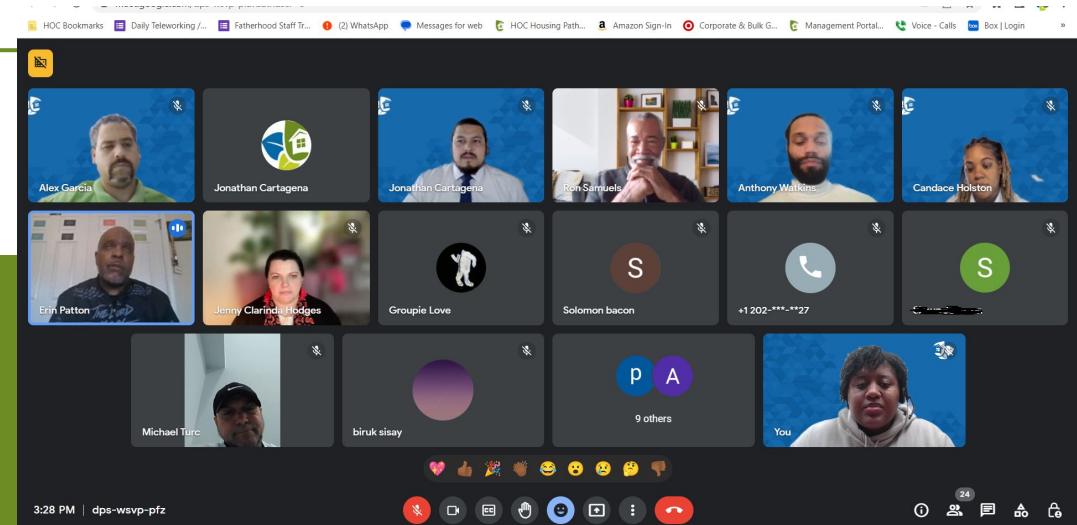
Supportive Housing

- Program **served 228 participants** by conducting home visits with program participants, providing case management services, and paying rent and utilities.
- Continued to help Emergency Voucher recipients secure housing by providing housing location services, as well as financial assistance for application fees, security deposits, moving expenses and household items.
- Program staff continued to implement the Rent Supplement Program, which provides a shallow rental subsidy (up to \$600 monthly) to county residents, including a large number of seniors on fixed incomes. In March, the program served 276 participants.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

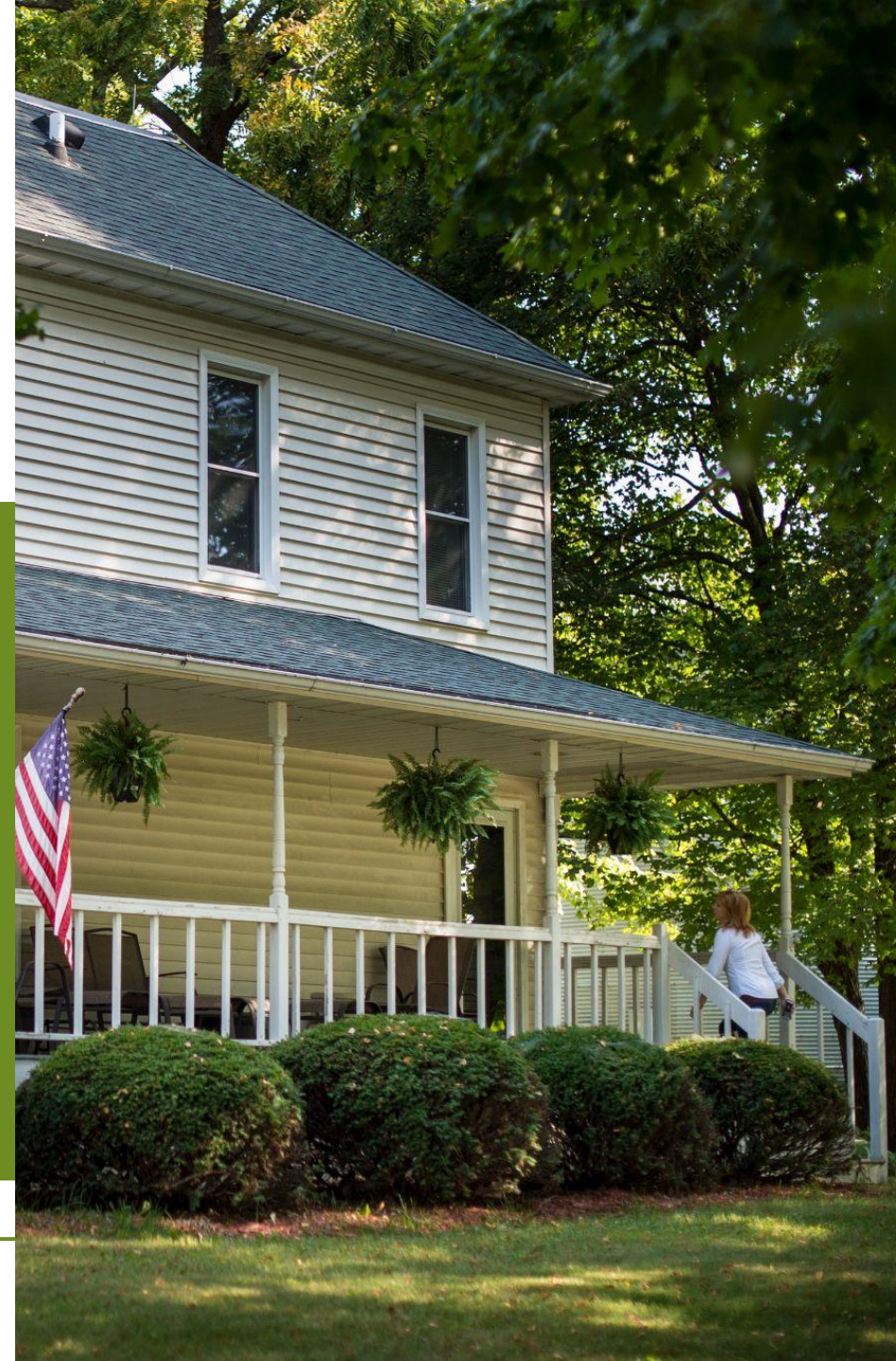
Fatherhood Initiative

- **March 24:** Program graduated 28 fathers from the March cohort.
- For the month of February, 25 fathers were enrolled for the cohort that will begin in April 2023.



PROPERTY MANAGEMENT / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (“CDBG”) UPDATE

- HOC staff have continued to support residents via one-on-one application assistance for the Community Development Block Grant Rent Relief (“CDBG”) program.
- Efforts to date have resulted in more than **\$1.4 million** in rent relief for our customers.
- Due to the success of our outreach efforts, the State has extended the deadline for HOC to provide assistance to residents through June 30, 2023.



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Housing Choice Voucher (“HCV”) Program

- Currently, 177 families with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent; and 163 contracts are pending execution. Two Hundred (200) families were selected from the HCV waitlist last month.
- During November, the Division received nine (9) request for a voucher extension beyond the initial 90-day period.
- Two (2) of the nine (9) extension requests warranted a referral to the Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Civil Rights for possible discrimination.



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

RENTCafé Used to Support Online Annual Recertifications

- HOC introduced use of RENTCafé to assist with annual recertifications.
- Customers with recertifications effective March 2023, required to submit electronic annual recertifications.
- Overall, 374 out of 612 customers submitted their paperwork electronically.
- Forty-six (46) customers were recommended for program termination effective March 1, 2023. The Resident Services Division worked in collaboration with the Housing Resources Division to assess client needs and to determine why recertifications were not being completed.

HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

RENTCafé Used to Support Online Annual Recertifications (cont.)

Resident Services Counselors assisted twenty-eight (28) families with the recertification requirement and overturned the termination. Termination proceedings will continue for eighteen (18) families for the following reasons:

- 15 – Failed to respond to counselor outreach
- 1 – Deceased
- 2 – Vacated/Skipped

Housing Resources Division will continue to work collaboratively with Resident Services to assist customers facing termination.

HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Emergency Housing Vouchers (“EHVs”)

HOC has an allocation of 118 Emergency Housing Vouchers.

- Ninety six (96) families have successfully leased units.
- Ten (10) families with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent.
- Staff are reviewing two (2) certification packets to determine program eligibility.
- HOC requested ten (10) additional referrals from HHS for the EHV Program.



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Family Self Sufficiency (“FSS”)

- This month FSS staff continued their recruitment efforts, with current enrollment consisting of 372 families. Six (6) new families enrolled into the FSS program this month, with no graduations occurring in March.
- HOC staff met with members of the Program Coordinating Committee (“PCC”) on March 22, 2023. The PCC is a group of service providers and other key partners organized for the purpose of coordinating services and programs in the community for the FSS participants.



REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:

Renovations at Georgian Court and Shady Grove Apartments Nearly Complete

- Renovations for both projects have exceeded 50% completion.
- Work on the community room spaces in both buildings has been completed, allowing additional space for year-round activities.
- Exterior enhancements made to Georgian Court Apartments significantly improved the community's visual appeal.



FINANCE DIVISION UPDATE

County Executive Elrich Presents the County's Recommended Budget

- On March 15, 2023, County Executive Marc Elrich presented his FY 2024 Recommended Budget, which included an appropriation in the Non-Departmental Account for services to be provided by HOC in the amount of \$7,972,501.
- County funds are allocated in HOC's Non-Departmental Account to support resident services, rental license fees, customer service centers, homeowner association fees, and utilities in deeply subsidized buildings.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

THE END

