

THE HRHA NEWSLETTER

News, announcements, and more from the
Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority



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Interested in subscribing? Questions?
Contact Victoria Hill
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The Housing Need in Our Community

Harrisonburg is the Friendly City for all who live here. No matter our background, we want the best for our families - including stable and safe homes for our children and elders. Currently, our City is facing a shortage of more than 1,256 units of housing, creating a worsening community challenge that affects us all. Additionally, we need 84 to 94 supportive housing units for the elderly and 445 to 509 for non-elderly individuals.

**The time to act is now - we need to house
Harrisonburg now, and support housing
for all.**

**Attention online readers!
Click the link below to gain
access to**

- Bluestone Town Center Petition
- Bluestone Town Center Emailing List
- Petition Facebook Post

<https://linktr.ee/bluestonetowncenter>

Grant Announcement

The Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA) is happy to announce that we have been awarded \$23,174 in funding from Sentara Healthcare for our Skilled Career and Job Training initiative. These funds will benefit our Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) participants in their efforts to make progress in several aspects of their lives, including financial wellness, higher educational achievements, higher incomes, and more job opportunities. It is no secret that higher education can come at a high financial cost. This grant will cover tuition and provide laptops for FSS participants to use for their studies.

"The recent Sentara Healthcare grant award is another excellent example of a shared vision with a critical community agency on assisting and supporting families in bridging gaps and providing opportunities for success. Special thanks to all the past and current staff, community partners, and FSS participants for the program improvements."

- Executive Director Michael Wong

About Sentara

Sentara Healthcare celebrates more than 130 years in pursuit of its mission – "we improve health every day." Sentara is an integrated, not-for-profit health care delivery system with approximately 30,000 employees (including 1,375 physicians and advanced practice providers), 12 hospitals in Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina and the Sentara Health Plans division which serves over 950,000 members. Sentara is recognized nationally for clinical quality and safety, and is strategically focused on innovation and creating an extraordinary health care experience for our patients and members. Sentara was named to IBM Watson Health's "Top 15 Health Systems" in 2021 and 2018, and was recognized by Forbes as a "Best Employer for New Grads" and "Best Employer for Veterans" in 2022, "Best Employer for Women" in 2020, and one of "America's Best Employers" in 2018.



Harrisonburg Redevelopment &
Housing Authority



SENTARA®

The Community Give Back Event

Making its debut in December 2022, HRHA hosted its first Community Give Back event for Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program participants. The event name was chosen because local public organizations, private companies, and community members donated resources to be distributed to the families we serve. For those who may not be familiar, individuals and families receiving a housing choice voucher from HRHA are eligible to join our FSS program, which focuses on core elements such as career advancement, money management skills, higher education and job training, and more to propel individuals toward self-sufficiency.

At this event, items such as hats, gloves, books, toys, and more were given out to our program participants. HRHA would like to recognize United Way for donating numerous items to the event; Target's corporate giving program, which enabled HRHA to purchase toys; and a member of the community who donated hats that have helped keep over 50 kids warm and toasty during the chilly holiday season! HRHA looks forward to creating more events in 2023 that help to serve the needs of our local community!

Executive Director's Corner



To be part of the solution in addressing the housing crisis, HRHA is focusing on expanding housing opportunities and increasing housing resources. This priority is evident in the Authority's annual and five-year plan, which outlines goals and objectives for 2023. These goals include developing Bluestone Town Center, preserving Lineweaver Annex, developing additional supportive housing, and implementing Moving to Work initiatives. MTW will provide additional flexibilities to assist residents in improving their self-sufficiency, increase the availability of landlord incentives to expand housing access, and allow HRHA to use resources such as project basing vouchers to address local needs. These goals will only be achievable with the work of the HRHA team; resident participation and involvement in the processes; community supports; and partnerships at the national, state, and local level. We look forward to working with all to address the housing needs within our community.

-Michael Wong

Staff Highlight: Kaitlin Heatwole

HRHA manages a variety of programs, grants, and initiatives. We serve hundreds of families through housing vouchers, programs like Family Self-Sufficiency, and city-wide campaigns. Through 2023, we plan to highlight members of the HRHA team who make this work possible.



1. What is your role in HRHA?

HRHA is the lead agency for the Western Virginia Continuum of Care (CoC), and through that I'm a data specialist for the CoC's homeless management information system (HMIS).

2. What is one of your favorite aspects of working with HRHA?

I love that I get to do different tasks over the course of a year, but one of my favorites so far has been taking numbers that usually just sit in a report or a spreadsheet and turning them into more interesting and accessible forms of information: I made a data dashboard showing the demographics of people experiencing homelessness in our area, and also made a series of infographics to share on Facebook and other social media.

3. Do you have any goals or aspirations in your position?

An important part of my job with HMIS is making sure that we are meeting HUD reporting requirements, but I want to go beyond that. I want to help HRHA and other agencies in the CoC get and use information in ways that are easy to do and helpful for our work, our clients, and our relationship with the broader community.

4. What is one unique fun fact others may not know about you?

I enjoy making and fixing things around the house – from basic electrical and carpentry to quilting, canning, and gardening, although I spend most of my time repairing the broken toys that my kids bring to me to fix!

5. What is the best career lesson you've learned so far?

Don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask for help (after you've tried to find the answer yourself, of course)

Welcome Michelle and Jessica!

HRHA is pleased to welcome Jessica Meza-Yanez and Michelle Walker to our team!

Jessica Meza-Yanez– Administrative Assistant



Michelle Walker– Lineweaver Property Manager





Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

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Harrisonburg VA, 22801

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+ *HRHA Commerce Village*

Waiting List & Applications

Fax: (540)-615-5558

+ *HRHA Lineweaver & Annex*



To reach all HRHA offices, call: (540) 434-7386

Website



www.harrisonburgrha.com

Facebook



@harrisonburgrha

HRHA Board of Commissioners

HRHA is governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Harrisonburg City Council. The Board establishes the Authority's policies and procedures and appoints the Executive Director.

Board of Commissioner meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00PM.

Meeting location/access will be posted prior to meetings and in line with local health guidelines.

+ Christine Fasching Maphis - Vice Chair

Term Expires: November 29, 2022

+ Kevin Coffman - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2023

+ Luciano Benjamin - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2024

+ Gil Colman - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2025

+ Shonda Green - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2025

+ Michael Wong, (Not a commissioner)

Executive Director/Secretary-Treasurer

Looking Back at 2022 and Looking Forward to 2023



In 2022, HRHA was proud to have hosted many successful events, such as the Kelley Street Garden Dinner, a credit repair workshop, our annual Back to School Bash, the Community Give Back event, and many more! At our FSS program, our top priority is to serve our residents and provide the resources that help them become self-sufficient through these events. We also gain better relationships with our residents as well as with fellow local organizations through working together to support our residents. For 2023, we are keen to hear back from our FSS program members from a recent survey to create even more events and opportunities for them to reach their goals and become self-sufficient.