

# *Rochester Housing Authority* **times**

## **2020 in Review**



Dear Residents, Participants and Community Partners,

Over the past eight months, our community and nation have been tested in ways that we could never have imagined.

Starting in March, the COVID-19 pandemic has, and continues to, impact daily life in unprecedented ways. Things we take for granted, whether it was going to work or school, spending time with family and friends and undertaking common tasks like going to the grocery store are drastically different than ever before. RHA has worked diligently to help prevent the spread of the virus and ensured that the needs of those we serve are addressed. We closed all communal areas at residential buildings and offices and increased deep cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.

Thank you to our residents and participants who have done exceptionally well in doing their part to keep their neighbors and community safe. We ask that you continue to remain vigilant by following all **CDC and public health agency recommendations**. If you are, or feel, sick please stay home and contact your medical provider for guidance.

Furthermore, this summer and fall has seen progress in the areas of social justice that are changing the face of our nation and providing a voice to those in our community who have been voiceless. We are hopeful that community efforts to make change in Rochester, and across the country, make our society one that is more willing to prioritize equality and opportunity for all, building a community where all are safe and heard.

Now, during these times its important more than ever before for RHA to continue to do what we do best – helping open doors to brighter futures. Through our services, we are working to break the cycle of poverty and provide opportunities to those who otherwise would not have access to safe and affordable housing and educational programming to aid them on the journey to self-sufficiency.

Please take care of yourself, and one another,  
*The Shared Leadership Team: Deputy Executive Director Mr. Shawn Burr and Interim Director of Finance Mr. Sinclair Carrington.*

*Executive Briefings*

**Administration  
Headquarters**  
675 W. Main St.,  
Rochester, NY 14611  
585-697-3600

**Application  
Processing Center**  
270 Lake Ave.,  
Rochester, NY 14608  
585-697-7180

**Resident Services  
Center**  
495 Upper Falls Blvd.,  
Rochester, NY 14605  
585-232-1112



**ROCHESTER  
Housing Authority**

# RHA Re-Opening Update

Your safety, health, and well-being are of the utmost importance to RHA. We understand that there are many concerns around COVID-19 and we want to assure you that over the past eight months, we have, and will continue, to do all that we can to protect our residents and prevent the spread of disease.

While our community is currently seeing an increase in positive cases, our community rooms, buildings and visitation policy will continue to have restrictions in place until further notice. We are concerned about the risk of increased exposure as the number of infections rises each day, which means we need to remain vigilant with health and safety polices in place for the safety of all our residents and associates. It is important that we remain thoughtful of each other, our neighbors and community health. We understand and empathizes with our residents on the impact that COVID-19 continues to have on our lives and routines and thank you for being patient, understanding and doing your part to limit the spread.

Unfortunately, due to the increase in positive cases in our area, we cannot begin the process of safely reopening RHA offices for public access. Once it is safe to do so, RHA will inform the community in various ways. Thank you for being patient and understanding with limited office hours by appointment to-date. We have developed a safety plan and will soon reopen with new protocols in place.

## Compliance Corner

RHA Compliance, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Cynthia Herriott, was recently named as Interim Police Chief for the Rochester Police Department.

During her tenure with us, she has shown exceptional integrity in her work and dedication to the organization, staff, program participants, residents and the community. This is truly a historic moment for our City, not only because Cynthia will be the first woman to hold this position, but it also opens a window for critically necessary and systematic changes to the role of policing and its effects on people of color in our community.

We congratulate Chief Herriott on her appointment and the RHA Board of Commissioners fully supports a temporary, one-year, leave of absence for Cynthia Herriott to take on this interim role.

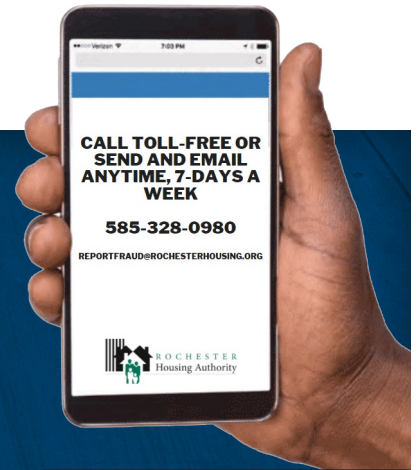
While our Compliance, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer is on a leave of absence, it is important to know that our Compliance Office is still working diligently. We want to remind you that the InTouch Hotline is available for residents, participants,

landlords, employees and community partners. This communication system is designed to make it as convenient as possible to send your concerns, questions confidentially, and comments directly to our senior management.

We have signed a contract with a third-party organization to ensure complete anonymity of messages received, unless there is a physical or verbal threat, illegal activity, or you chose to identify yourself. This arrangement ensures that anything you say can be completely confidential, so you can share your concerns with us openly.

Call toll-free or send an email 24-7, 7-days a week.  
585-328-0980

[reportfraud@rochesterhousing.org](mailto:reportfraud@rochesterhousing.org)



## COVID Testing and Community Health Resources

This summer, RHA and Trillium Health partnered to provide public housing residents access to COVID-19 testing. At RHA's public housing sites, over 250 residents to date have participated in testing on Trillium Health's Mobile Access Clinic. Based on the success of the program, RHA and Trillium Health recently extended their partnership to provide important health services along with ongoing COVID testing.



Using the Mobile Access Clinic, Trillium Health will be on location at Public Housing locations every month, following a set schedule, to offer residents access to critically important health services like flu shots and other vaccinations, treatment for illnesses and injuries, health screenings, advice on nutrition and weight loss, and the management of chronic, long-term illnesses. Trillium Health serves everyone regardless of their ability to pay. Insurance navigation and financial counselors are available to help enroll residents in health insurance programs by phone.

### Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Goes Virtual!

Despite COVID-19 putting restrictions on in-person programs, RHA's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program is continuing to offer its services with 245 residents and participants taking advantage virtually so far this year. As part of the FSS Program, participants have been able to participate online in classes that have assisted in obtaining education or training, referrals to case management and support services, and helped graduates of the program with receiving an escrow check upon successful completion! To learn more, visit <https://www.rochesterhousing.org/what-is-fss>.

### HCV Participant Spotlight – Ashley Sims



Congratulations to Ashley Sims, who recently purchased her first home following the completion of the FSS program! Ms. Sims entered the program with the goal of furthering her education, restoring her credit, and owning a home.

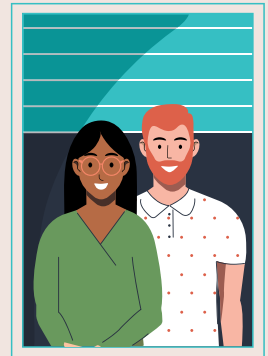
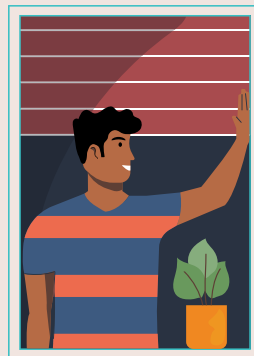
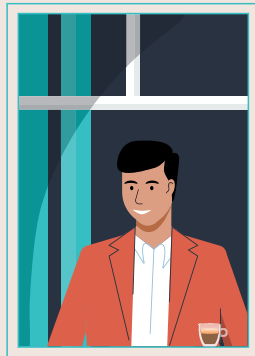
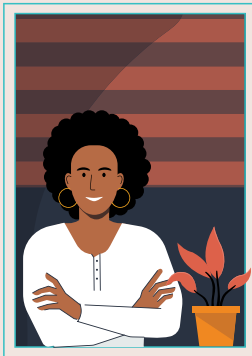
“I am very appreciative of everything the RHA has done for me over the years. At times where I wanted to give up, they would not let me give up,” said Ashley. “They were like - listen — stick to it, you will get there. They were very inspiring. They kept me motivated.”

With the help of the program's supportive services, she improved her credit score by over 120 points, increased her earnings through employment, began attending courses at Genesee Community College, and was able to accrue escrow savings, which enabled her to purchase her home.

Start your journey to self-sufficiency and home ownership today by visiting <https://www.rochesterhousing.org/homeownership>.

## Rent Relief

Has your income has been affected by COVID-19? RHA residents and participants may apply to have their rent payments temporarily reduced by up to 100%. Those currently enrolled in public housing or rental assistance programs through RHA can visit [www.rochesterhousing.org/rha-participant-renewal-process](http://www.rochesterhousing.org/rha-participant-renewal-process) to learn more about submitting a change of income request or contact your housing specialist for more details.



CREATIVE GRAPHICS

## Landlord Incentive Program

Earlier this summer, RHA introduced a Landlord Incentive Program designed to encourage increased landlord participation in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. The incentives in the program are available until July 31, 2021. By reducing some financial and process barriers for area property owners, RHA is hoping to encourage greater participation in the Housing Choice Voucher program, increasing options for program participants to find quality, safe and affordable units across Rochester.

Available incentives for landlords include:

- **Security Deposit Initiative:** Rochester Housing Authority will pay the security deposit for HCV participants impacted by COVID-19, to the landlord, for up to the cost of one full month of rent.
- **Leasing Up Bonus:** New landlords can receive a \$1,000 bonus payment per unit and existing landlords can receive a \$500 bonus payment per new unit leased.
- **Rehabilitation Cost Recovery Plan:** Landlords can get up to \$1,000 to make repairs or improvements to a Section 8 housing unit.
- **Lead Clearance or Testing Costs:** Landlords can receive up to \$500 to ensure their unit is lead free.
- **Repayment Plan Bonus:** RHA will pay a bonus to the landlord when they set up a repayment plan to assist HCV participants who are behind on their rent.
- **Damage Payment Reimbursement:** Landlords can receive a one-time payment to make repairs to damages beyond normal wear and tear to continue the housing assistance payment.

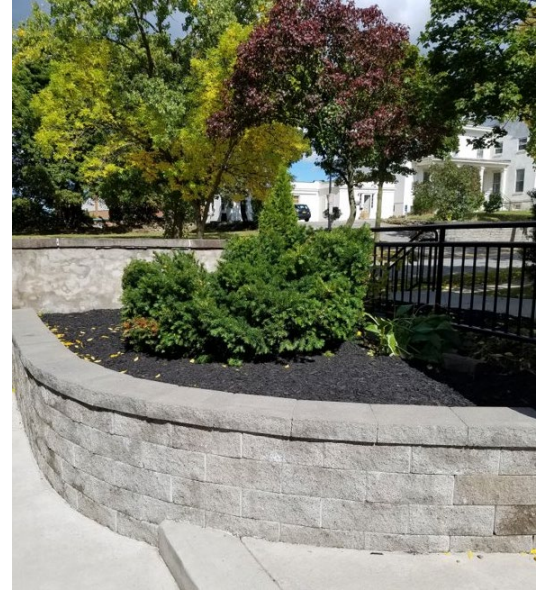
Do you know someone who is interested in becoming an RHA landlord? Tell them to visit [www.rochesterhousing.org/landlords](http://www.rochesterhousing.org/landlords) for more information on the Landlord Incentive Program.

## ***Capital Projects: Recently Completed & Works-in-Progress***

At RHA, our team is constantly working to improve the quality of life for all our residents. While COVID-19 affected the timeline of some of these projects, we are excited to provide updates on the progress being made. Below are some of the projects our teams have been working on:



**Corridor Abatement and Residents' Units Upgrades at Kennedy Tower**



**Landscaping improvements at Lexington Court**



**Site improvements at Lena Gantt Estates**



**Roof replacements at scattered sites**



**New sidewalk and gazebo at Hudson Ridge Tower**

## JOB OPENINGS

Are you interested in being a part of the RHA team? Visit our **Career Center** to look for current job openings. Candidates must meet the minimum qualifications for the job classification to be considered for all positions.

### Positions Now Available Include:

<i>Director of Operations</i>	<i>Building Maintenance Supervisor</i>
<i>Director of Public Housing</i>	<i>Clerk II/Bilingual</i>
<i>Housing Specialist</i>	<i>HVAC Mechanic</i>
<i>Senior Maintenance Mechanic - Electrician</i>	<i>Maintenance Mechanic</i>

## UPDATE ON RESIDENT COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS

The Resident Commissioner Election, which is required to take place every two years, was previously scheduled for this past September. As part of the electoral process, eligible residents seeking this office are required to collect signatures from 50 fellow residents, often going door-to-door to do so. Due to the risks associated with the petition gathering process, the decision was made to postpone the Resident Commissioner elections by one year. RHA will update residents on when the elections are rescheduled and until then Florine Cummings and Hershel Patterson will remain in the positions as Resident Commissioners.

## MILK VOUCHERS

Rochester Housing Authority recently received milk vouchers from Foodlink that can be exchanged at area stores for a free gallon of milk. The vouchers have been distributed to Public Housing residents and must be redeemed by December 20. If you, or someone you know is currently struggling with access to food, please contact our Resident Services office at (585) 232-1112.

## *Preparing your Home for Winter!*

As the weather becomes colder, residents and homeowners are looking to stay warm! Here are some tips for preparing yourself and your home for the cold weather:



- If your windows have curtains, drapes, shades, or blinds, use them to keep your heat from escaping through the windows!
- Save on heating costs by setting your thermostat to one temperature during the day and another during the night.
- Do you feel a draft from room to room or even outside when doors are closed? Add a door sweep to stop drafts from coming underneath your doors and keep the warm air in and the cold air out!
- If your home has a fan, reverse the spin clockwise to push the warm air that has risen to the ceiling back to where you're actually doing your living.
- With grass, trees and gardens covered in snow and the sun setting earlier, this is a great time to start a winter vegetable garden. Visit [www.modernfarmer.com](http://www.modernfarmer.com) to learn which crops grow best indoors.