



STRATEGIC PLAN

2016/2017

Board members:

Pat Casey, Chair

Tim Johnson, Vice-Chair

Ed Bolf, Secretary

Barb Sanderson

Jerry Kleven

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Staff:

Diane Larson, Executive Director

Brenda Harthan, Housing Specialist/Administrative Assistant

Amanda MacDonell, Property and Program Development Specialist

Carrie Schmitz, Housing Specialist

Executive Summary:

We live and operate in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. The Board and Staff of the ICHRA have jointly recognized the critical need to update our organization's Strategic Plan.

As the lead partner in the Beacon Hill project, as well as management and administrative oversight on a number of housing projects and programs throughout Itasca County, it is essential that our organization remains focused and prepared for all opportunities and challenges that may present themselves in the next three to five years.

It is in response to this need, that the ICHRA engaged William Lindberg of the Ash Grove Group in Edina, Minnesota, to assist in planning and facilitating a strategic planning event that was held on February 12, 2016. The one day session included context mapping, a brainstorming session where the trends, economic factors, political factors, technology factors, customer needs, and uncertainties potentially facing the ICHRA were gathered. Next, a SWOT Analysis was performed looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the ICHRA. In order to facilitate collaboration and to gain stakeholder perspective, a productive session was held with the Grand Rapids City Administrator and the Itasca County Administrator.

The goals and strategies identified through the planning process have been documented and prioritized by the entire board and staff, and subsequently adopted by board action on 5/24/2016.

Periodically, but at least once every five (5) years, the board will evaluate the need to conduct strategic planning session(s) to revise this plan. In order to ensure that it stays current between full strategic planning events, the Itasca County HRA will review the Plan on an annual basis. It will be reviewed according to the following procedures:

1. During the first quarter of each calendar year, ICHRA board members and staff will review the Strategic Plan.
2. Staff will incorporate changes, draft an update to the plan (if necessary), and make recommendations regarding the updated / revised plan.
3. The HRA Board of Directors will take action regarding approval/disapproval of the plan if revisions are made.

The first annual review will be conducted during the first quarter of 2018.

Clarification of Acronyms Used in the Strategic Plan:

<u>AEOA</u>	Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency
<u>ARDC</u>	Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
<u>DEED</u>	Department of Employment and Economic Development
<u>ED</u>	Executive Director
<u>EDA</u>	Economic Development Authority
<u>DEED</u>	MN Department of Employment and Economic Development
<u>FHLB</u>	Federal Home Loan Bank
<u>GMHF</u>	Greater Minnesota Housing Fund
<u>GRHRA</u>	Grand Rapids Housing & Redevelopment Authority
<u>HAP</u>	Housing Assistance Payment
<u>HCV</u>	Housing Choice Voucher
<u>HHS</u>	Health & Human Services
<u>HIAC</u>	Housing Issues Advisory Committee
<u>HQS</u>	Housing Quality Standards
<u>HRA</u>	Housing and Redevelopment Authority
<u>HTF</u>	Housing Trust Fund
<u>HUD</u>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
<u>ICHRA</u>	Itasca County Housing & Redevelopment Authority
<u>IEDC</u>	Itasca Economic Development Corporation
<u>LIHTC</u>	Low Income Housing Tax Credits
<u>LMI</u>	Low to Moderate Income
<u>MH</u>	Minnesota Housing (aka MN Housing Finance Agency)
<u>MHP</u>	Minnesota Housing Partnership
<u>MN DOC</u>	MN Department of Corrections
<u>NAHRO</u>	National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials
<u>NCC</u>	Northland Counseling Center
<u>Ne CoC</u>	Northeast Continuum of Care
<u>NERDA</u>	Northeast Regional Director's Association
<u>NOFA</u>	Notice of Funding Availability
<u>PITI</u>	Principle, Interest, Taxes, Insurance
<u>PBV</u>	Project Based Voucher
<u>PSH</u>	Permanent Supportive Housing
<u>RAPT</u>	Release Advance Planning Team
<u>RD</u>	Rural Development
<u>RHAG</u>	Regional Housing Advisory Group
<u>SCDP</u>	Small Cities Development Program – DEED
<u>SPC</u>	Shelter Plus Care
<u>SRO</u>	Single Room Occupancy
<u>TIF</u>	Tax Increment Financing
<u>VASH</u>	Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing



MISSION STATEMENT

“Creating Affordable Housing Opportunities”

Through initiating, collaborating, and participating in:

- New development projects
- Affordable rental housing options
- Rehabilitation of existing housing stock
- The use of redevelopment powers

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND MEASURES

CRITERIA - The Itasca County HRA will have a wide variety of opportunities in which to become involved in housing programs or housing development projects. The HRA will use the following *criteria* to evaluate and select the areas of housing programs / housing development projects in which they will become involved.

1. The opportunity must meet the mission of the Itasca County HRA.
2. The opportunity must have support and buy-in of the Community demonstrated through its organizations, agencies or the general public.
3. The opportunity must serve an unmet housing need for households of low and moderate income.
4. The opportunity must have the potential to be sustainable over time.
5. The opportunity must be within the financial resources, and/or contribute to the financial resources, of ICHRA.

MEASURES - Many presented opportunities will meet the above criteria. Any opportunity that meets the above criteria will be further evaluated by HRA staff using the following *measures*:

1. Is the opportunity consistent with the goals and strategies outlined within the HRA's Strategic Plan?
2. What are the barriers associated with the proposed activity, and what is the likelihood of overcoming these barriers?
3. What *staff* resources will be required to undertake the proposed opportunity, and does the HRA have these resources?
4. What *financial* resources will be needed to undertake the proposed opportunity? (Are adequate funding sources available to support costs incurred and associated with the program or project?)
5. Does the proposed activity provide revenue to the HRA to sustain programs and staff?
6. What is the probability of being successful in accessing project funding (Local, State, Federal, Philanthropic)?
7. Is the Itasca County HRA the most appropriate agency to undertake the program or project?

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Five goal areas have been established.

- GOAL 1 EVALUATE EXISTING PROGRAMS TO ASSURE SUSTAINABILITY AND RELEVANCE**

- GOAL 2 SEEK NEW HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**

- GOAL 3 INCREASE THE HRA'S ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

- GOAL 4 BUILD SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION FOR THE MISSION OF THE ITASCA COUNTY HRA**

- GOAL 5 MONITOR AND MAINTAIN THE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION**

GOAL 1 EVALUATE EXISTING PROGRAMS TO ASSURE SUSTAINABILITY AND RELEVANCE

Strategy A: Continue to administer and implement the following rental assistance programs

- *248 Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers*
- *Project Based Vouchers, as contracted*
- *MH Bridges Program*
- *“Bridges Plus” Program (local funding through Itasca County Health & Human Services)*

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
Housing Specialists ED oversight	01/01/16	ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Achieve 98 – 100% lease-up in the HCV program for each calendar year (lease up is defined as units leased or budget authority utilized).
- Monitor annual HCV appropriations and make adjustments to both leasing and administrative expenses, as warranted
- Apply annually for set-aside funding, as available
- Explore technology options for HQS inspections
- Promote the retention of participating landlords and seek additional new landlords (could include: Landlord Appreciation Day, Marketing materials, assistance from intern)

Strategy B: Continue to own, manage, and maintain the HRA’s 40 Public Housing Units

- *20 Units in Calumet (16 – 1 BR, 3 – 2 BR, 1 – 3 BR)*
- *20 Units in Taconite (same distribution)*

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
Property/Program Specialist ED oversight	1/01/16	ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Achieve 98% occupancy in calendar year
- Monitor reserve levels

- Apply for bonding funding from the State of MN for rehabilitation if available in 2016
- Timely obligate and expend Capital Fund Grant awards
- Maintain and update Physical Needs Assessment report

Strategy C: Evaluate and present plan to Board of Directors for continued use of Transitional Housing Facilities as loans with MH mature on properties

- *3-Unit Structure at 1804 Mary Ann Drive, Laprairie – presently leased to Advocates for Family Peace*
- *Duplex adjacent to above property – presently leased to Kootasca*

Specific Goals within this Strategy include:

- Determine loan close out process with MH
- Upon loan close out, meet with lessee agencies and the county to determine best ongoing use of properties and best ownership structure
- Complete annual review required by Minnesota Housing until loan close out
- Inspect all units and document, as required

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	1/01/16	12/31/16

Strategy D: Administer the SRO Moderate Rehabilitation Program and the PSH Rental Assistance funding targeted towards homeless persons

- *Midway Villa 14- unit single room occupancy facility (SRO)*
- *9 - 18+ vouchers for use in PSH Rental Assistance*

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
Housing Specialists ED oversight	1/01/16	ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Prepare and successfully complete an Annual Progress Report for each program. Present results to Continuum of Care Committee.
- Work cooperatively with NCC to transfer PSH funding to Beacon Hill at construction end.
- Submit annual renewal application to HUD in response to NOFA for the PSH Rental Assistance Program with goal of maintaining or increasing existing funding.
- Participate on the Governance Board for the NE MN CoC and other committees as relevant.

Strategy E: Monitor Occupancy and Financial Performance of WilderNest

- 12 townhome units in Bigfork, MN

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
Property/Program Specialist	1/01/16	ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Successfully administer the PBV program and its requirements.
- Report financial results to Board quarterly and annual audit.
- Submit Annual Budget to Board for Approval.

Strategy F: Administer the HTF Pilot Program, monitor expansion and/or other funding sources to serve those exiting jails/prisons

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Expend current grant by June 30, 2017
- Continue partnership with NCC and DOC to determine if other sources of funding could continue this resource

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
Housing Specialists ED oversight	1/01/16	6/30/2017

Strategy G: Administer the SCDP Grant

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Work cooperatively with the City of Grand Rapids to meet all goals of the grant
- Complete all target rehabilitation numbers by December 31, 2016
- Expend all grant funding by December 31, 2016

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
Property/Program Specialist ED oversight	1/01/16	12/31/16

Strategy H: Continue to evaluate and undertake local programs as appropriate

- *HRA Tax Levy Authority*
- *TIF District Formation*
- *Issuance of Bonds*

Staff Lead(s):

ED

Start Date:

1/01/16

Time Frame:

ongoing

GOAL 2 SEEK NEW HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Strategy A: Expand *existing* programs as funds and opportunities become available, specifically the rental assistance programs (HCV and Bridges)

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	1/01/2016	ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Apply for incremental Housing Choice Vouchers, if HUD makes available. Monitor potential for special allocation vouchers i.e. VASH.
- Monitor the opportunity to increase the both the Bridges and Bridges Plus funding.
- Monitor the opportunity to apply for any voucher funding that becomes available because another HRA is unable or unwilling to administer.

Strategy B: Complete Beacon Hill 48 unit supportive housing project

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED Property/Program Specialist	1/01/2016	9/01/16

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Attend construction meetings
- Monitor and evaluate all change orders and construction contingency
- Formulate a plan for the conversion of 12 HCV to PBV
- Plan and coordinate an open house event
- Work with the management team to ensure a successful lease up
- Work cooperatively with NCC to complete the supportive service staffing
- Work cooperatively with NCC to establish kitchen and meal service

Strategy C: Monitor Status of the availability of resources to develop housing specifically for seniors

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	6/01/2016	ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Monitor housing infrastructure bonds with senior housing as an eligible use
- If appropriate, determine local partners to develop plan for senior housing option
- Determine if ICHRA should develop a senior housing project or facilitate the development and report to board on findings

Strategy D: Investigate the Opportunity to Apply for Additional Rehabilitation Grant Funds

Staff Lead(s):

Property/Program Specialist
ED oversight

Start Date:

5/01/2016

Time Frame:

ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Meet with representatives from the City of Grand Rapids to determine feasibility of another rehabilitation project
- Be a resource to other Itasca County communities, if needed
- If applicable, apply for SCDP through DEED in the fall, 2016
- Form a potential partnership with Habitat For Humanity

GOAL 3 INCREASE THE HRA'S ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Strategy A: Formulate a succession plan for the agency

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	01/01/2017	12/31/2017

Strategy B: Evaluate Staffing Needs of ICHRA

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	06/01/2016	ongoing

Specific Goals within this Strategy Include:

- Draft plan to address staffing needs
- Draft plan to stabilize the maintenance position

Strategy C: Encourage training and educational opportunities for staff

Institute employee and organizational development to insure the mission and vision of the HRA is consistently provided.

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	01/01/16	ongoing

Provide necessary staff development and resources to keep staff members abreast of position-related matters, technology and technological advances.

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	01/01/16	ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Investigate training to equip staff with the necessary skills to work with residents and participants with mental health issues
 - Attend, as appropriate, MN NAHRO conferences
 - Work with each staff member to create a "training" goal.
 - Explore possibility of "staff sharing/learning day" at a neighboring HRA

Conduct a Performance Evaluation on each employee and follow-up with an individual staff development plan, detailing needed areas of training and resources, as appropriate.

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED Property/Program Specialist	01/01/2016	annually

Strategy D: Enhance the Board’s Ability to be Effective

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
Board Chair ED	1/01/2016	ongoing

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Invite people to meetings to educate members about potential partners and housing issues
- Conduct a Board Self Evaluation at least every other year
- Conduct a regular monthly board meeting once each year at various ICHRA owned projects so residents have an opportunity to attend ICHRA Board meetings
- Encourage Board member attendance at conference or training opportunities.
- Tour Housing Property(ies) under administration of ICHRA
- Establish a recruitment committee, as needed, to recruit new board members who represent geographically different areas of Itasca County

Strategy E: Continue to Monitor Office Space for functionality, privacy requirements, and security needs

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	1/01/2016	ongoing

GOAL 4 BUILD SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION IN THE MISSION OF THE ITASCA COUNTY HRA

Strategy A: Educate Community /Local Leaders about housing issues and participate in local/regional/state housing collaborations

Continue to educate and promote the need for decent safe affordable housing throughout the region.

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED Property/Program Specialist	01/01/16	ongoing

Continue to participate in area, regional, and state meetings.

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED, with assigned staff, as appropriate	01/01/16	ongoing

ICHRA staff should be involved in area and regional meetings, as appropriate. Duplication of staff attendance is avoided where practicable.

- Housing Issues Advisory Committee (HIAC)
- Northeastern MN Executive Director's Association (NERDA)
- Individual County/City/EDA meetings when housing/planning is an area of focus.
- NE Continuum of Care (CoC)
- MN NAHRO Executive Committee and other Committee work
- MN NAHRO Board of Directors
- Release Advance Planning Team (RAPT)
- Housing Institute Team
- Regional HCV Roundtable Group

Strategy B: Continue to develop relationships with key stakeholders

Partner with a broad range of external entities, including private, nonprofit, philanthropic, and other governments to leverage HRA resources.

Staff Lead(s): Start Date: Time Frame:
ED 01/01/16 ongoing

Strategy C: Explore new partnerships and deepen existing collaborations with other entities

Staff Lead(s): Start Date: Time Frame:
ED 01/01/16 ongoing

Continue to cultivate existing partnerships and collaborations. Explore new partnerships with the *expressed intention* of deepening and expanding partnerships where they do not currently exist. The express intent of these collaborations is to achieve synergies and should result in progress toward accomplishing our mission.

Existing and Potential Expansion Partnerships:

**Those marked with an asterisk are those partnerships where we will intentionally attempt to enhance the collaboration.*

- Northland Counseling Center
- Kootasca Community Action
- MN Dept. of Corrections
- Itasca County Probation
- D.W. Jones Management
- D.W. Jones Development, Inc.
- Grace House
- Itasca County Health & Human Services
- NE Continuum of Care
- Northeast Regional Director's Association
- DEED
- MHFA
- GMHF
- Minnesota NAHRO
- *Cities of Grand Rapids, Bigfork, Calumet, Taconite
- *Grand Rapids HRA (**)
- Blandin Foundation
- Itasca Community College (MnSCU)
- And other potential entities that share our mission.

**When appropriate, consult with state level technical assistance services available for collaborative efforts between HRAs/PHAs.

GOAL 5 MONITOR AND MAINTAIN THE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION

Strategy A: Monitor changes to the financial environment under which existing programs are funded

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Maintain reserve levels of \$80,000 - \$100,000 in the Public Housing program
- Monitor legislative action on the federal level to ascertain HUD's fiscal environment
- Monitor leasing in the HCV program to maximize use of budget authority

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	01/01/16	ongoing

Strategy B: Monitor the HRA Levy Request

ICHRA needs to be positioned and ready to consider levy changes to respond to housing needs and projects.

<u>Staff Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
ED	1/01/16	by 9/1 of each year

Strategy C: Ensure Fiduciary Duties are Performed

Specific goals within this strategy include:

- Annual full audit with presentation to the board
- Monthly board review of combining financial reports
- Monthly review and approval of all expenditures by the board
- Review specific projects detailed financial reports as needed

<u>Lead(s):</u>	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Time Frame:</u>
Board Members ED	1/01/2016	ongoing