



Fort Collins Housing Authority

Building Foundations for Families since 1971

Five-year Strategic Plan 2007-2012

“Decent, affordable and accessible housing fosters self sufficiency, brings stability to families and new vitality to distressed communities, and supports overall economic growth...It improves life outcomes for children. In the process, it reduces a host of costly social and economic problems that place enormous strain on the nation’s education, health, social service, law enforcement, criminal justice, and welfare systems.”

*The Millennial Housing Commission
June 2002*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1971, the Fort Collins Housing Authority was created to build, own and manage affordable, subsidized housing for low and moderate-income Fort Collins residents. Today, FCHA currently assists approximately 1,500 families (3,500 individuals) throughout Larimer County through various programs. These programs include federally subsidized Low Income Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8 Rental Assistance), management of the Wellington Housing Authority, management of The Villages non-subsidized affordable housing properties owned by the Fort Collins Housing Corporation, development and management of the low income housing tax credit development the Village on Elizabeth LLLP, and management of the historic Northern Hotel low income housing tax credit development

Our Mission:

Just as a house is built upon a solid foundation, the Fort Collins Housing Authority is built upon its mission: To promote adequate and affordable housing, economic opportunity and a safe living environment free from discrimination.

Our Business Objective:

To achieve this mission all FCHA functions will be operated with attention paid to a triple bottom line:

- Maintaining the fiscal viability of the organization
- Achieving a social goal through the provision of affordable housing and supportive services
- Achieving environmental sustainability

Our Core Values:

Through our day to day operations as well as when striving to attain our long-term goals, FCHA staff's Core Values are prevalent in our work in the manner in which we serve our community.

Teamwork
Fun
Compassion
Honesty
Accountability

Situational Summary:

Based upon 2005 U.S. Census estimates, the City of Fort Collins has a population of 125,461. The city witnessed strong population growth throughout the 1990s. However, in early 2000 to present, Fort Collins has registered a significant slowdown in population growth. Although the population is expected to continue to grow during this decade it is expected to be at a slower rate than in previous years.

The rental market continues to be competitive with rent specials continuing to be prevalent. The market is beginning to show moderate decreases in vacancy and is projected to continue to improve over the next year.

Wait lists for federally subsidized programs are very long. The public housing wait list averages six months to one year for most bedroom sizes, two years or more for one-bedroom units. The Housing Choice Voucher program waiting list currently has 116 families who can anticipate a three-year or more wait. This list has been closed since 2004.

Cuts in funding for federal programs have been consistently happening over the past several years. As of June 2007, FCHA staff did not know what the Housing Choice Voucher funding amount would be for fiscal year 2007 and did not know if it could continue to serve all of the families served on that date. The instability of funding continually presents challenges for staff managing these budgets. Increasing sources of revenue other than those dependent upon congressional appropriations will be crucial to the sustainability of our current programs and future growth.

Goals

Goal I: Maintain and preserve existing affordable housing for our community's lowest income families

Actions:

1. Maintain satisfactory occupancy and turn-over rates in order to ensure adequate cash-flow and thus financial viability of the existing portfolio
 - Outreach and marketing through a formal budget supported Outreach Plan, including maintaining website
 - Maintain an average vacancy of 3% or less and an average turn-around time of 20 days or less which meets HUD's High Performer status
 - Vacant unit turn-around of 7 days
 - Preventative maintenance schedule
 - Annual and special as needed inspections
 - Routine maintenance schedule
 - Resident on-demand service of 14 days
 - Weekly vacancy meetings for good communication
 - Outsource maintenance functions when affective
 - Periodically review waitlist process for public housing requiring a full application for the list and purge periodically

2. Capital needs assessments, improvements, and maintain reasonable reserves in order to maintain the physical integrity of the properties
 - Complete public housing capital needs assessment in 2007 which may require purchase of adequate software or outsource
 - Annual budgets must include adequate reserve for replacement contribution for Fort Collins Housing Corporation properties and Village on Elizabeth
 - Update amenities for marketability when possible and appropriate after a market/cost analysis
 - Identify properties in need of major capital improvements and plan accordingly through grant applications, refinance, or disposition if other options are not fiscally sound
 - Continue to refine project-based accounting and accrual of reserves by project and need

3. Fully utilize all tenant-based rental assistance
 - Apply for any and all additional voucher subsidy from HUD, and advocate to Congress about the need for additional funding for this program
 - Maximize number of vouchers issued, leased and outstanding.

- Review leasing and budget statistics at weekly Housing Programs meetings and regularly reconcile budget numbers with finance staff
- Purge waiting list on a regular basis. Public housing quarterly, voucher program annually.
- Operate with excellence utilizing SEMAP indicators as benchmarks.
- Continue to administer HOME program Tenant-Based Rental Assistance from the City and State HOME programs, and expand if possible.

4. Focus on customer service

- Operate with integrity and with the principles expressed in the Core Values
- Customer driven service utilizing the concepts expressed in the Bridges Out of Poverty in order to understand our unique customer

Goal II: Increase permanently affordable rental housing portfolio through acquisition/rehab, development, and sound partnerships

Actions:

1. Acquire and renovate 40 existing units per year

- Closely monitor trends in the local market for both rental and homeownership needs and opportunities
- Continue to develop relationship with local real estate community, development community, and property owners who might be in a position to benefit from a sale of property
- Identify potential acquisitions each year and conduct feasibility analysis
- Acquisition/rehab utilizing the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, supplementing gaps with City of Fort Collins HOME/CDBG, Colorado Division of Housing HOME, and Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program funds.
- Supplement with local gap funding sources such as CARHOF when possible
- Hire additional Accountant to fill gap in finance department in order to comply with added requirements and grow the agency in this respect

2. Leverage private or other public funds to create additional affordable housing and preserve existing affordable housing

- City CDBG and HOME applications due in February and August
- Federal Home Loan Bank Applications due in March and July
- Division of Housing applications accepted monthly
- Colorado Housing and Finance Authority three funding rounds per year
- Educate and encourage local property owners to take advantage of the possible tax benefits of selling to FCHA

- Utilize FCHA’s ability to issue bonds
3. Encourage partnerships with local for-profit and non-profit developers in order to serve our community’s lowest income families
 - Educate potential partners of the benefits of FCHA participation in affordable housing development
 - Utilize development partnership criteria and Board adopted project analysis application
 4. Build internal capacity for development projects.
 - Apply for CHDO capacity building funds through the City of Fort Collins

Goal III: Increase assisted housing choices for our community’s lowest income families

Actions:

1. Conduct outreach efforts to potential voucher landlords and retain current landlord participation
 - Immediate meeting with walk-in landlords with any available Voucher staff person or Program Manager, or schedule an appointment for orientation.
 - Transfer phone calls from landlords to available “person in the know”.
 - Continue representation and develop presentation for the local Apartment Owners Association monthly meetings. Provide booth at annual trade-shows and other events
 - Develop plan for annual landlord appreciation/program update event.
2. Continue voucher homeownership program
 - Maintain current information on resources, including down payment and closing cost assistance, relationships with participating lenders, etc.
 - Continue to refine processes and update waiting list and selection criteria
 - Assess feasibility of continuing current pace of closings/utilization
 - Research additional program funding options
3. Implement additional homeownership opportunities
 - Continue to assess viability of other homeownership program options
 - Work with the City of Fort Collins to redeem and resell foreclosures which have received subsidy.
 - Assess market conditions for homeownership production program.
 - Work with public housing FSS families on homeownership opportunities

4. Continue to build and update a comprehensive referral system for people seeking housing and supportive services.
 - Continue development of FCHA web site to include resources
 - Maintain web site on a monthly basis.
 - Develop a one-page housing referral sheet with local options
 - Continue to provide updated FirstCall referral sheets for people seeking supportive services and publicize the 211 information number

Goal IV: Provide resident services and promote development of family self-sufficiency skills

1. Maintain current funding/level of staffing for public housing and Housing Choice Voucher self sufficiency programs.
 - Annual HUD funding applications
 - Regular HUD reporting
 - Development of Logic Model and success/outcomes tracking methods
2. Pursue continued funding for First Step transitional program with intensive case management.
 - Apply for continuation funding from the City and State in the fall of 2007.
 - Apply for additional funding from the City of Fort Collins to supplement the SRO efforts as well as the goals of the Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership.
3. Provide SRO Case-management
 - Continue partnership with Larimer Center for Mental Health, possibly expanding with development of Integrated Dual Disorders Treatment
 - Continued involvement with Interagency Group and the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership
 - Search for additional sources for case management to replace HHS staff person
4. Provide successful Self Sufficiency Case Management Services
 - Case Management – Continue to use consistent:
 - a. Assessment tools
 - i. Use the Matrix consistently to help goal setting
 - b. Use a goal sheet or “to do” list for each family
 - c. Use the Matrix to help determine average contact frequency by program
 - d. Test project – Bridges Out of Poverty Workbook
 - Outcomes and Measures

- a. Review and update logic model
- b. Get database running!

- Client Assistance - \$5,000 goal with Resident Services Committee
 - a. Holiday Program
 - b. DVD outreach video (Start with PowerPoint Presentation ASAP.)
 - c. ChildSpree
 - d. Journey Home Fundraiser
 - e. Realtors' Sponsorship

- Advocacy
 - a. Weekly check on any current legislative or advocacy items

- Formalize Intern Program
 - a. Orientation/Exit
 - b. How to sustain
 - c. Responsibilities
 - d. Supervision
 - e. Outcomes/Expectations

Goal V: Ensure equal opportunity and affirmatively further fair housing

Actions:

1. Affirmative measures to ensure access to assisted housing regardless of race, color, religion national origin, sex, familial status, and disability:
 - Fair Housing brochure and presentation at all briefings, lease-ups, tenant packets, and upon request.
 - Publicizing HUD's Fair Housing Hotline.
2. Affirmative measures to provide a suitable living environment for families living in assisted housing, regardless of race, color, religion national origin, sex, familial status, and disability.
 - Annual training for reception staff on resources available within the community.
3. Affirmative measures to ensure accessible housing to persons with all varieties of disabilities regardless of unit size required.
 - Continue staff training for consistent awareness and processing of requests for reasonable accommodation. Inform Board of Commissioners of any potential denial of request.

Goal VI: Work as a partner and resource with other community groups to develop and meet common goals

Actions:

1. Building Networks with other civic agencies:
 - Workenders – Property maintenance
 - Apartment Owners Association membership and participation
 - Neighborhood Task Force, which includes law enforcement, City Attorney, City code enforcement, Streets Dept, Zoning, Parks, County Animal Control – Membership and participation Larimer County
 - Affordable Housing Coalition – Membership, participation and leadership role
 - Crossroads Safehouse – Providing Transitional Housing Partnership
 - Larimer County Workforce - Workforce Investment Board Executive Committee and Youth Council leadership role
 - Project Self Sufficiency – Financial support
 - Social Services Family Response Team
 - Experience Works – Employ and train interns as needed.
 - Larimer County Workforce – Employ and train interns as needed.
 - Poudre School District – (ask barb for the name)
 - Northern Front Range Continuum of Care – Leadership
 - Interfaith Council – Membership and leadership role
 - Eastgate Homeowners Association – Membership
 - Stanford Homeowners association – Membership
 - Thunderbird East Neighborhood Association – Support and assistance
 - Fort Collins Board of Realtors – Membership and leadership in annual Sensible Housing Summits and other projects
 - FirstCall Servicenet.
 - Colorado Legal Aid
 - Disabled Resource Services
 - Larimer County Health and Human Services

2. Taking a leadership role in coordination efforts:
 - City Manager’s Strategic Issues Team – E.D. Member
 - National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Local, Regional, National and International leadership role
 - Larimer County Affordable Housing Coalition – leadership role
 - Housing Services Day Center – Board of Directors and building committee
 - Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership - Leadership
 - FCHA Board of Commissioners input to Council regarding affordable housing issues on an as-needed basis

3. Identifying voids in the availability of facilities or programs in our community:
 - Coordinate with City and state consolidated plan, demographic surveys, etc.
4. Providing resources to the community regarding housing issues:
 - Offer meeting space and additional support as available to neighborhood groups as appropriate.
 - Maintain area agency pamphlets and resource lists in waiting area, reception desk, through Housing Coordinators. Review and revise annually.
 - FCHA information listed in First Call Servicenet
 - Financial advising and financial resource for other agencies, at the Board's discretion.
5. Linking residents to public and private resources.
 - FSS Referrals/enrollment on a regular basis.
 - Housing Coordinators Referrals
 - Continue donating two office spaces and resources to Project Self Sufficiency and one office space to Crossroads Safehouse at the Village on Plum
 - Pamphlets and resource lists included with monthly newsletter, one highlighted each month.
6. Active involvement and understanding of local and national housing issues and trends:
 - All staff attends at least one training per year.
 - Housing NOW Annual Conference
 - Colorado NAHRO Annual Conference
 - Mountain Plains Regional NAHRO Annual Conference
 - CoNAHRO Maintenance Conference
 - Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Conference
 - Professional memberships in NAHRO
 - Continue professional periodicals and list-serves for all
7. Development of relationship between the City of Fort Collins and other governmental entities.
 - City Strategic Issues Team
 - City Department managers interaction
 - Neighborhood Task Force
 - City Utilities interaction – Tenant Accounting Clerk ongoing.

- County Sheriff’s Department – Ongoing
- Police Services – regular interaction and cooperation.
- City of Loveland Housing Authority LaHIP program advisory board
- Larimer County Homeownership Program LaHOP

Goal VII: Hire and retain knowledgeable, skilled staff

Actions:

1. Providing competitive wages.
 - Annual wage survey update.
 - Budget preparation and prioritization by the Board annually.
 - Job Description updates periodically.
 - Benefits coordination with the City of Fort Collins when beneficial over privately brokered benefits
 - Periodic review of benefits
2. Key new positions for future “next level” FCHA grow include Accountant, Villages Resident Services Case-worker and succession planning for the construction management and facilities management operations.
3. Conducting training and development activities which reflect the Mission for staff and the Board of Commissioners.
4. Attending local, State, and national meetings and training programs
5. Encouraging active staff participation in policy development.
6. Utilizing staff skills to the maximum capacity
7. Providing cross-training opportunities

Goal VIII: Develop a positive public image and promote community awareness of Housing Authority Programs by:

1. Educating the public about mission and services
 - Regular press releases regarding family successes, community needs, funding awards, awards of recognition, special achievements, etc.
2. Presentations to the public regarding goals attained, impact of services provided, and demonstration of accountability of public funds.
3. Active involvement of the Board of Commissioners in public relations.