

Housing Authority of the City of Erie



ANNUAL REPORT

2020

**Annual Report to the Board of the Authority
On the Goals and Objectives for 2020**

December 31, 2020

The Mission of the Housing Authority of the City of Erie is to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing for lower-income families, elderly, and persons with disabilities; and to foster among the residents we serve, economic self-sufficiency, a sense of community, and pride in the neighborhood where they reside.

To further the Authority's Mission, the Board formally established Goals and Objectives for 2020. The following annual report will give the status as of December 31, 2020 on our progress in carrying out the mandates in your resolution, dated 2/24/2020.

2020 can best be described as understanding our mission and working to accomplish it under the most challenging of conditions. COVID19 forced the Housing Authority and its staff to learn how to do day to day operations under the constantly changing conditions presented by the virus. HACE received assistance for public housing and Section 8 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the form of emergency funding through the CARES program.

The process included developing protocols for staff to have a safe work environment, obtaining safety supplies/equipment including hand sanitizer, masks, installing physical barriers for offices and customer areas and establishing strategies to monitor staff and residents who were exposed to or had confirmed cases of COVID19.

The second part of the COVID19 process was to provide support for residents and do what we could to make their living areas safe. This included providing all residents with a reusable mask, sanitizing common areas in high-rise building, providing free move-in support through B. F. Fields for high-rise residents, installing air exchangers in all elevators, providing meals to senior and disabled residents, working with social service partners to offer free on-site COVID19 testing, working with social service partners to keep their services available to residents, partnering with the Erie School District to provide gift cards to youth participating in virtual learning and working with area businesses and social service partners to deliver turkeys and gifts for children during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Through it all, HACE staff has learned to completely change how we provide service and still service residents in need of safe, quality, and affordable housing.

During the past 12 months, HACE staff have focused on maintaining public housing occupancy at above 97%, turning over vacant units, and keeping the Section 8 voucher utilization rate above 96%.

HACE staff focused on improving the occupancy percentage in public housing, bringing units that had been offline for long periods of time back online and utilizing Section 8 funds that were allocated to HACE by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. (HUD)

HACE staff began the process of researching and submitting preliminary applications for the Rental

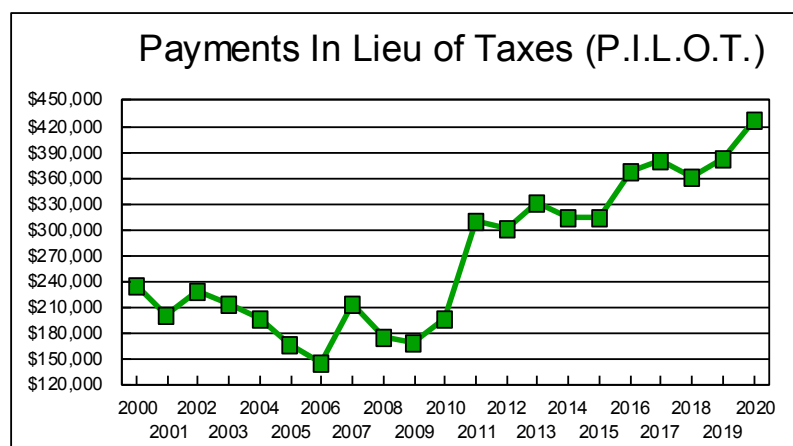
Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD) in consultation with our consultant from Collaborative Housing Solutions. The RAD subcommittee met with Collaborative Housing Solutions on a monthly basis throughout 2020. The firm 2RW was contracted to conduct a physical needs assessment on all HACE properties. The process has started but the real physical needs assessment will be delayed until early 2021. In 2020, HACE submitted RAD applications for phase 1 and phase 2 and has received the Housing Assistance Payment (CHAP) amount from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Preliminary proforma budgets have been completed on all amp groups with final draft budget completed after the physical needs assessment is conducted. Phase 1 will be completed and submitted to the HACE board for review by September 2021.

As of December 31, 2020, the Authority was providing housing assistance to 3,172 families, a decrease of 17 families. A total of 333 (220 public housing and 113 Section 8) new families, elderly, and persons with disabilities received housing assistance in 2020. Our housing inventory is in good condition despite the procedural changes that have occurred because of COVID-19.

2020 was the 2nd year HACE owned the Better Housing properties. In 2020, HACE installed 50 entry doors, contracted for landscaping, contracted for trash pickup, and began the process of making vacant units available at HACE standards. HACE was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, that along with \$250,000 from HACE reserves will be used to replace all the windows in the 52 units along with installing new security screens.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty because of COVID19, we were able to continue to house a near record amount of families with affordable housing, maintain high occupancy, and provide more services to our residents. Credit for these accomplishments must again go to the employees who carried out the day-to-day tasks resulting in the performance figures for 2020.

The Authority is also proud of the fact that, although tax-exempt, we did contribute **\$428,012** to local taxing bodies in lieu of real estate taxes during 2020. This was the largest PILOT payment in the history of the Housing Authority of the City of Erie and an increase of \$45,850 over the amount paid in 2019. In addition to PILOT payments, the Authority continues to pay the City of Erie a portion of the cost for six City of Erie police officers assigned to public housing community policing along with paying a portion of the funding to allow the City to sponsor a full 12 - week summer swim program at the Rodger Young Pool. The Authority also pays Erie County government for a portion of the cost of an adult and juvenile probation officer and a portion of the cost for a library coordinator at our two on-site youth libraries. The total value of these contracts with the City of Erie and Erie County for 2020 was \$699,764.



GOAL 1 - IMPLEMENT ON-GOING HUMAN RESOURCES PROGRAM THAT DEVELOPS PLANS FOR BOARD AND STAFF SUCCESSION.

Objective 1 – Continue training and orientation of new HACE Board members about HACE policies, procedures, and program. (Progressing)

HACE Board members are updated monthly on all changes in policies and procedures. The HACE Board receives an update on all program initiatives monthly including a monthly Executive Directors report. Since April, HACE synopsis and board meetings have been conducted via Zoom conference calls. Two HACE Board members agreed to serve an additional 5-year term and their names were submitted to Mayor Schember for approval.

Objective 2 – Develop a succession plan for upper-level administrative staff (On-going)

In the past 12 months three key mid-level administrative staff members have submitted their intent to retire. (Managers at Lake City and Friendship and the Central Office Administrative Assistant/Executive Secretary) All three positions have been filled with internal candidates. Both new managers participated in training and obtained HUD manager certification the second week of January.

On-going trainings have been conducted with staff to assist them in their current positions and for possible advancement. Twice monthly meetings are conducted with Maintenance supervisors and managers.

An Associate Director of Compliance was hired in November. She has already completed a review of the files of all multi-family properties. She completed and was certified through the public housing managers training program.

Objective 3 – Develop training programs for administrative, clerical and maintenance departments. (Made significant progress)

On-line training was conducted throughout the year for tenant selection, Section 8 and management office staff. On-going on-line training is continuing for all staff involved in the Horizon software conversion.

Objective 4 - Implement HR Department (Completed)

Karen Carneval was appointed to the position in 2018. She oversees the Health Insurance, Retirement, Payroll and Employee incentive programs. 2021 will see a review of the HACE personnel policies.

Objective 5 – Develop process for evaluating staff beginning with top level administrative staff, manager and maintenance supervisors. (Made significant progress)

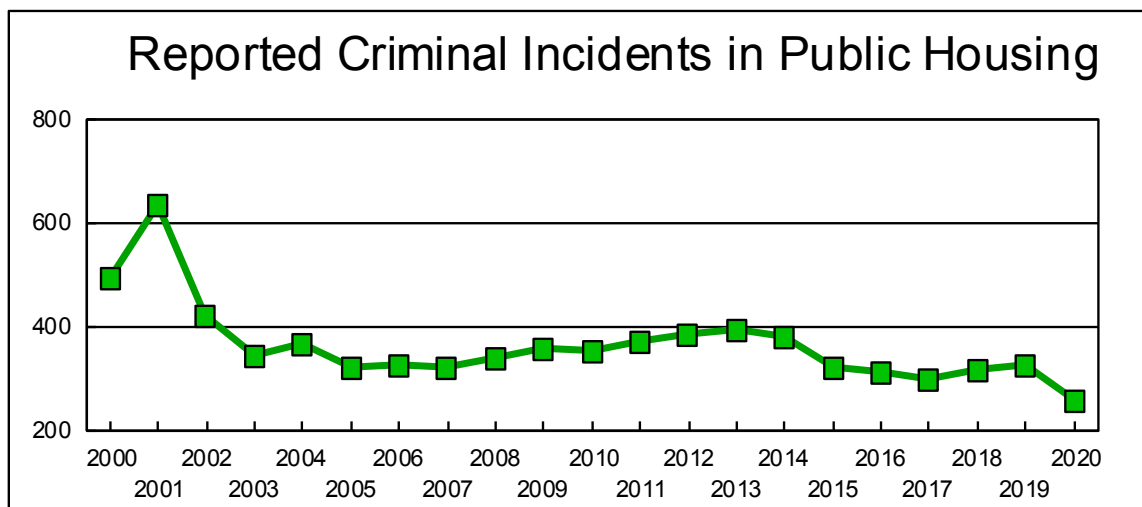
Goals and objectives were provided to all managers and maintenance supervisors on or before 3/31/20.

Evaluations will be completed and reviewed with all administrative staff by 3/31/2021. In 2021, goals and objectives will be established for the Deputy Director, Controller, Resident Initiatives Coordinator, Associate Director of Compliance and HR Coordinator.

GOAL 2 - IMPROVE LIVABILITY OF PUBLIC AND SECTION 8 HOUSING

Objective 1 - Reduce reported crime by 2% from 2019. (Achieved)

In 2020, the Housing Authority recorded data on criminal activity in public housing neighborhoods based on calls for service to the COPPS unit that work in our neighborhoods 16 hours a day, seven days a week; and from the Erie Police Bureau reports on calls for service when the COPPS unit was not on duty. The bulk of all calls for service are responded to by the COPPS officers. In 2020, the number of incidents reported from all sources was 263 down 20.5% from 331 in 2019. There were 24 incidents (down from 48 in 2019) in the four senior buildings, Friendship- 15, Schmid- 8, Ostrow- 1 and Curry/Schell-0. In 2020, there were 45.65 incidents/1,000 residents in public housing, down from 60.47 incidents/1,000 residents in 2019.



In August 2020, the Authority and the City approved its tenth two-year contract to provide six police officers assigned to two shifts between noon and 4:00 a.m. The net cost for the 2-year contract was less than the prior 2-year contract. The current contract expires on August 31, 2022. The officers assigned to the COPPS program have taken a sense of ownership and the results are significantly less crime in public housing neighborhoods.

In 2020, the Authority continued utilization of security cameras in all our developments to monitor incidents of inappropriate and/or criminal behavior. 85 incidents were resolved in 2020 with evidence recorded on the cameras. HACE completed replacement of security lighting with new LED lights in the family developments and inside senior buildings hallways and common areas.

The deployment and utilization of 227 security cameras throughout our family and elderly developments over the last five years has become a major tool for solving/preventing problems. Several cameras were replaced in 2020 to ones that had multiple lenses allowing for a broader camera range.

Due in large part to the presence of these officers in 2020, we continue to see much lower crime rates (76.99% reduction since 1993) in our neighborhoods.

The Housing Authority Resident Initiatives Program in partnership with SafeNet and the Community oriented Police and Probation Program (COPPS) continued its Lethality Assessment Program in public housing for victims of domestic violence. The goal was to provide an assessment tool to the COPPS that will tell them the danger level of the situation and allow for them to connect the victim with a counselor immediately if necessary. Mayor Schember has commented several times that the HACE COPPS program is a model for how community policing should be done throughout the City of Erie.

The Erie Police Department, under the leadership of Chief Dan Spizarny, Deputy Chief Jon Nolan, and Quebec Unit Supervisor Sergeant Tom Covatto, have been extremely responsive to the needs of our residents. In 2020, monthly coordinating meetings were held with the Authority staff and all partners in the C.O.P.P.S. Program. This continues to be very effective in identifying and addressing quality of life issues for our residents.

In 2020, thirteen (13) abandoned/unregistered/unlicensed vehicles were removed from Authority property with the assistance of the C.O.P.P.S. officers. The problem with abandoned vehicles has declined through the years due to more systematic enforcement of parking regulations.

In January 1998, the Authority contracted with Erie County to provide an adult and juvenile probation officer dedicated to public housing sites. The Community-Oriented Probation Services has contributed to the improved conditions in our neighborhoods. The Probation Department's presence has acted as a deterrent against individuals who are on probation from causing problems in HACE neighborhoods. In January 2021, the County signed a one-year extension of the probation services contract through January 31, 2022. HACE continues to work with Erie County, Pennsylvania and Federal Probation and Parole to monitor individuals leaving prison who list a HACE address in their required housing plan. This has virtually eliminated the illegal housing of state and federal probationers in public housing.

The fencing, security cameras and recently installed LED security lighting has helped to deter criminal activity in all HACE neighborhoods and buildings.

The Authority adopted a Trespass and Banning Policy in 1998 in a joint venture with the Erie Police Department and the Erie County District Attorney's office. Individuals with prior criminal records, who were causing problems on Authority property, were identified, warned, arrested, and prosecuted for defiant trespass. This effort was continued in 2020, to exclude six (6) more individuals who had caused problems on HACE property and met the criteria for inclusion on the trespass and banning list. The COPPS officers reviewed the Trespass and Banning List in 2020, making recommendations on individuals that should be removed from the list resulting in forty (40) being purged from the list. **Currently, 130 individuals are on the Banned List.** The Banned List is one of our most effective tools in reducing the presence of convicted criminals in public housing neighborhoods. Residents who allow banned individuals to visit or reside in public housing are subject to eviction. In 2005, the Board adopted an **appeals procedure** for individuals to be removed from the list. In 2020, zero (0) individual inquired about being removed from the banned list.

Objective 2 - Reduce fires and risks of injury and property damage. (Achieved)

In 2020, the Authority had 1 fire in public housing resulting in property damage of \$28,262.89. But more importantly, there were no injuries or deaths in 2020 due to fires.

The Erie Fire Department conducted their annual fire safety talks at our elderly buildings during October, fire prevention month. All public housing and Section 8 units have smoke detectors. All the detectors were tested in 2020. **In 2017, the Housing Authority completed installation of hardwired smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in all family and senior units.**

Objective 3 – Develop Preventative Maintenance Program (Progress)

Due to COVID19 this goal was not finalized in 2020. The Executive Director and Maintenance Superintendent meet with maintenance supervisors twice monthly via ZOOM to discuss items including vacant unit turnover, ideas for improved productivity and extraordinary maintenance. This has resulted in several changes in building materials (changing from legacy to solid core doors) that it is hoped will lower the cost and add to the life of materials installed in vacant units.

Objective 4 - Maintain average response time for tenant-generated work orders to two (2) workdays or less. (Achieved)

In 2020, the Maintenance Department received 8,686 tenant-generated work orders, plus 1,292 emergency work orders. 831 extermination work orders were completed. The average response time for routine tenant-generated work orders was 1.25 days, down slightly from the 1.34-day response time in 2019. COVID19 protocols resulted in only emergency workorders being completed for the majority of 2020.

Objective 5 - Maintain “curb appeal” standards for all public housing communities including development of standards for areas outside living spaces. (Significant Progress)

The Authority strives to create a positive public image of its housing, by keeping them clean, neat, and well maintained; and by promoting neighborhoods that are visually attractive to our residents and the visiting public. This includes grass cutting and edging of all HACE properties by lawn care professionals. To ensure a positive impression, the Authority will continually monitor its developments for achievement of the highest “curb appeal” standards. HACE staff has begun working with MCRC to develop a housekeeping program for residents. In 2020/2021 HACE contracted out its snow removal at the four high-rise buildings.

Objective 6 - Complete annual inspections and requisite follow-up on all public housing and Section 8-assisted units to assure all units are decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair. (Achieved)

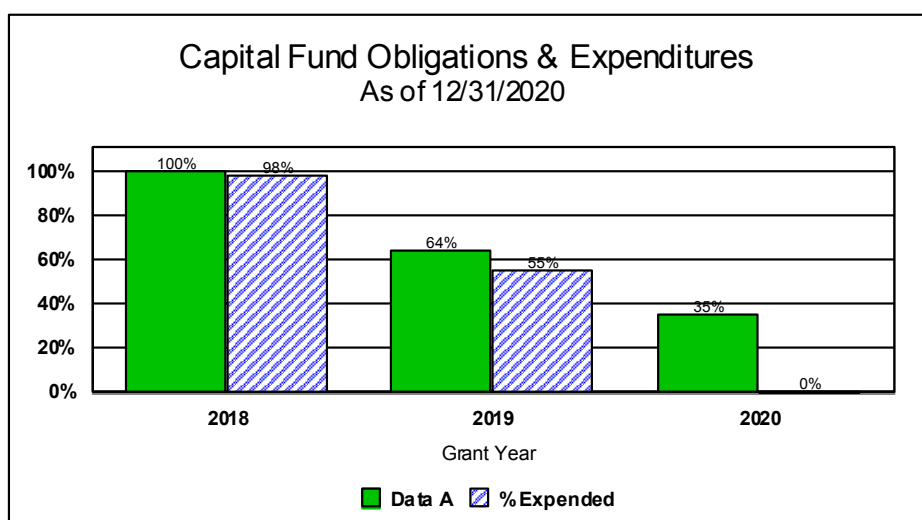
2,049 residential units owned and managed by the Housing Authority were inspected in 2020. One hundred and fifty-three residents refused inspections because of COVID19. These units will be inspected in early 2020. To obtain inspections that conform to the HUD protocol, the Authority contracted with *The U.S. Inspection Group* to perform all our annual public housing inspections. Better Housing properties

were added to the units to be inspected.

All privately owned units in the Section 8 voucher program were inspected at least once during 2020 to assure compliance with HUD’s Housing Quality Standards. Many of these units were inspected virtually utilizing HUD approved virtual inspections. A total of 1,758 initial, annual, final and complaint-inspections were conducted on Section 8 units. Many of these units were inspected virtually utilizing HUD approved virtual inspection protocols. In 2020, the HACE Board of Commissioners approved biennial inspection, which will reduce the number of units required to be inspected yearly.

Objective 7 - Develop annual update to Agency Plan; and maintain Capital Fund obligation rate. (Achieved)

Contracts totaling \$5,938,551 for capital improvements were awarded in 2020. On 7/30/20 HUD approved our 2020 Capital Grant in the amount of **\$4,941,696**. The Authority continues to exceed the required Capital Grant obligation rates for all open phases of Capital funding. The Authority is given two years to obligate and four years to expend each year’s funding. In 2020, the Authority contracted and began work on approximately \$2 million in capital improvements (Projects L & M), including installation of windows and security screens, electrical upgrades, chimney repair, roof installation, metal roof installation at 16 scattered sites, stoop/handrail replacement, Friendship Apartments balcony repairs, emergency generators, replacement of parking lots at Pineview and boiler replacements at Curry/Schell. Projects remaining to be completed are installation of interior flooring at Friendship Apartments, cement board siding and ceiling installation at the John E. Horan Garden Apartments, and installation of new playgrounds at Eastbrook and Bird Drive. Lead-based paint abatement has been postponed until March 2021 because of COVID19.



The 2021 update to the Agency Plan was completed and approved by the HACE Board on 1/6/21. It was submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development on January 11, 2021.

**Objective 8 – Maintain current level of resident satisfaction with living conditions in public housing.
 (Achieved)**

In 2020, Keystone Research Corporation (KSRC) who has conducted the resident survey for the past several years was approved by the HACE Board to conduct the 2020 Resident Survey. On a recommendation from KSRC the resident survey is currently done every two years. HACE Board members and staff have been provided with the results of the 2020 resident survey which will be reviewed at meeting in March.

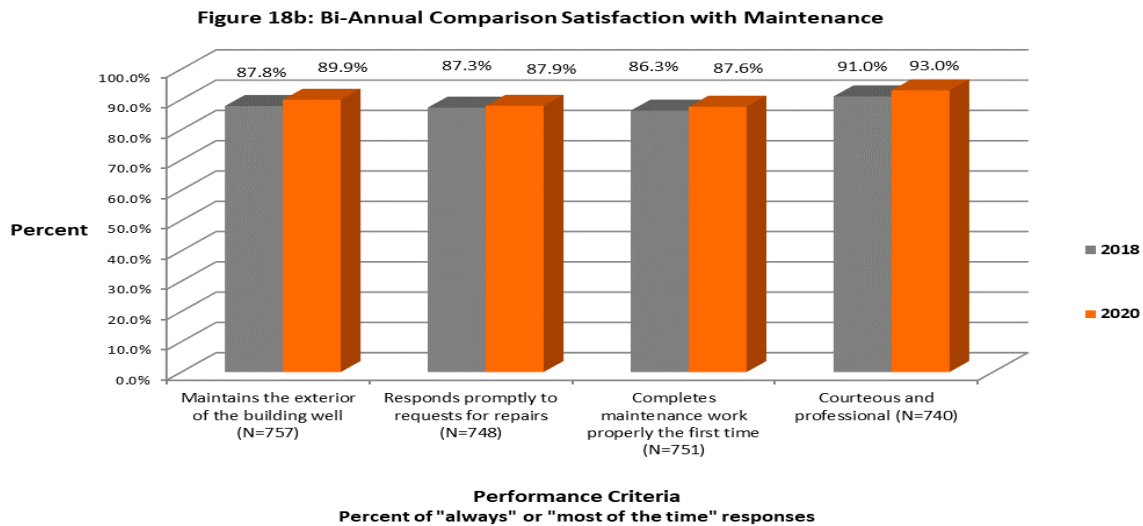


Figure 17b: Bi-Annual Comparison Satisfaction with Manager's Office

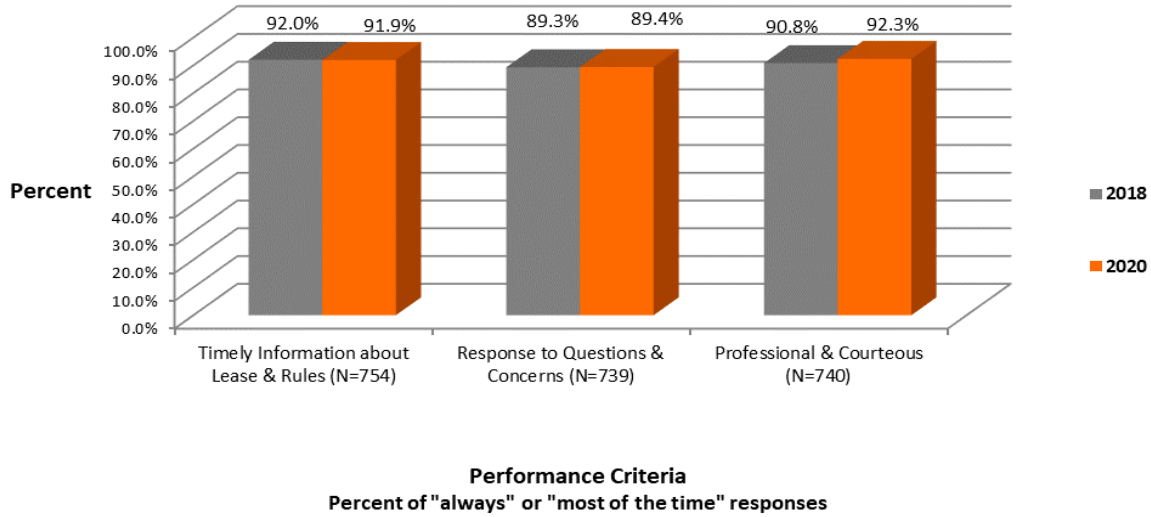
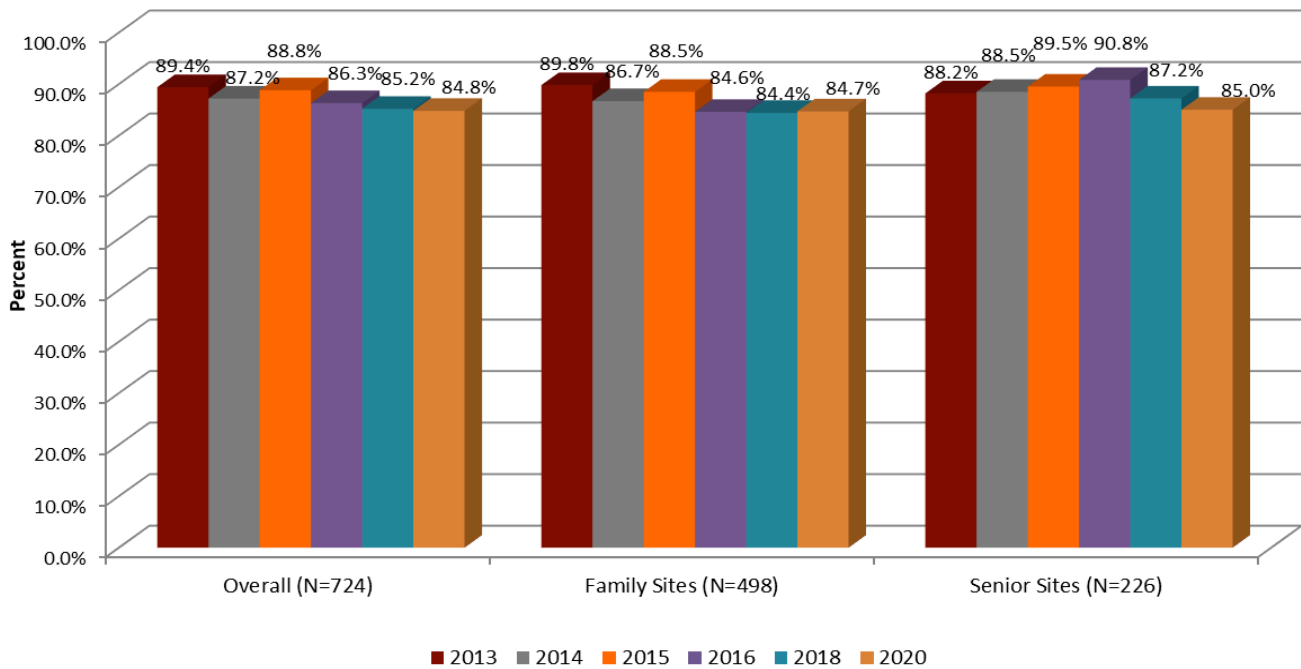


Figure 21: Residents' Recommendation to Friends & Family



Objective 9 – Develop Emergency Operation Plan for smaller family sites and revise EOPs for

larger family developments. (Achieved)

In 2019, HACE contracted with Infinity Resources staff person Joseph Weindorf to review and update the HACE Emergency Management Plans for all HACE properties. Part of that process included meetings with HACE staff and key program partners. The plan included the development of an easy to read/implement plan for key HACE staff and on-going yearly trainings. A training session was conducted with HACE administrative and management staff to review the plans along with possible scenarios.

Objective 10 – Recommend capital expenditures from reserve budget for Board approval. (Made significant progress)

Several capital projects have been approved for expenditures from Capital Fund and Reserves. With the increase in the capital fund allocations funding of these projects will come from current capital funds.

In 2020, a Capital Needs Assessment and Environmental review will be conducted as part of the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program. 2RW was contracted to conduct the physical need assessment. They have started the assessment, but the work will be completed in early 2021 due to COVID19.

GOAL 3 - PROVIDE HOUSING ASSISTANCE TO MORE FAMILIES/INDIVIDUALS

Objective 1 - Achieve 98% occupancy in our public housing inventory. (Made Significant Progress)

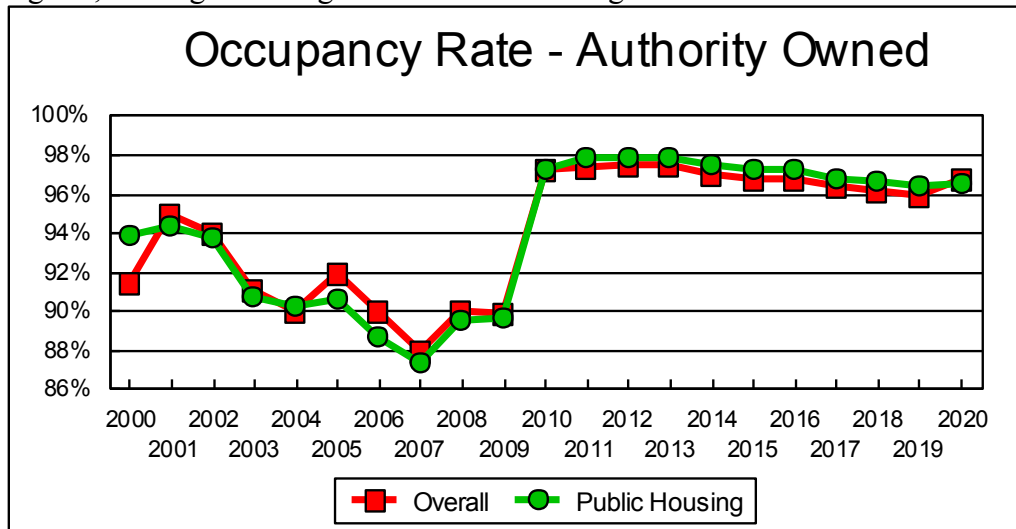
The Authority **averaged 97.40% occupancy (public housing) in each month during 2020**, up from 96.64% in 2019. On December 31, 2020 the public housing occupancy rate stood at 97.22%. In 2020, the Tenant Selection Office processed 551 applications and **housed 220 new tenants down from 254 in 2019**. In addition, 50 families up from 30 in 2019 were transferred in 2020, 49 to units that better met their family size and 1 due to house fires. **At December 31, 2020, the overall occupancy rate was 96.84% up from 95.96% in 2019**. On December 31, 2020 the overall occupancy was 96.53%. **A total of 2,114 were in occupancy at year-end, up by 7 families at the same time in 2019**. The continued high occupancy was attributable to the hard work of the managers, tenant selection and maintenance staffs. Communication between the managers and tenant selection was improved to reduce time between when a unit was available and when it was leased out. Five of seven AMP groups were at or above the 97% goal for 2020. On December 31, 2020 five of the seven AMP groups were at or above 97%. Three of the seven AMP groups are currently above their year-end average as of December 31, 2020.

Rent-up time (the time between a unit being ready and actually rented) in 2020 was 11.95 down from the 5-year average of 12.17. Procedures for improving the rent-up time are continually discussed between tenant selection and the managers at managers meeting. Average move-out to ready was 104.33 days in 2020 down from 110.49 in 2019. **In total, our unit turnover time was 116.28 days, a decrease from 120.59 days in 2019 and above the five-year average of 110.99 days**. In 2020, 219 units were turned over for rent, and 25 units deferred for modernization, down from 266 units in 2019. In 2020, HACE set a goal to reduce unit turn around to 90 days and ensure that no unit is vacant for longer than 180 days.

HACE, under the Deputy Director, is continuing a process with the HUD Pittsburgh Field office to remove units with extensive damage from the rent-ready list helping to reduce the unit turnover time. The

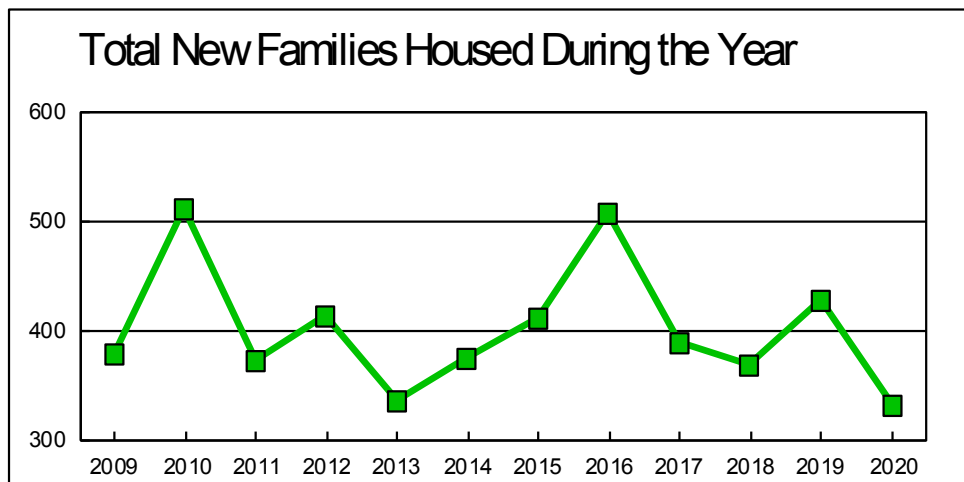
majority of these units require scheduled contract work or extermination. As of 1/28/21, seven (7) units are currently approved by HUD for removal. These units are to be repaired in 90 days or reported to the Executive Director with a completion date. This process has greatly reduced the amount of time that any unit is off-line.

In 2020, 10 applicants were made eligible for housing assistance after completion of the Credit/Budget Counseling Program. Since its inception in 2001, 718 applicants have completed the counseling program, making them eligible to receive housing assistance.



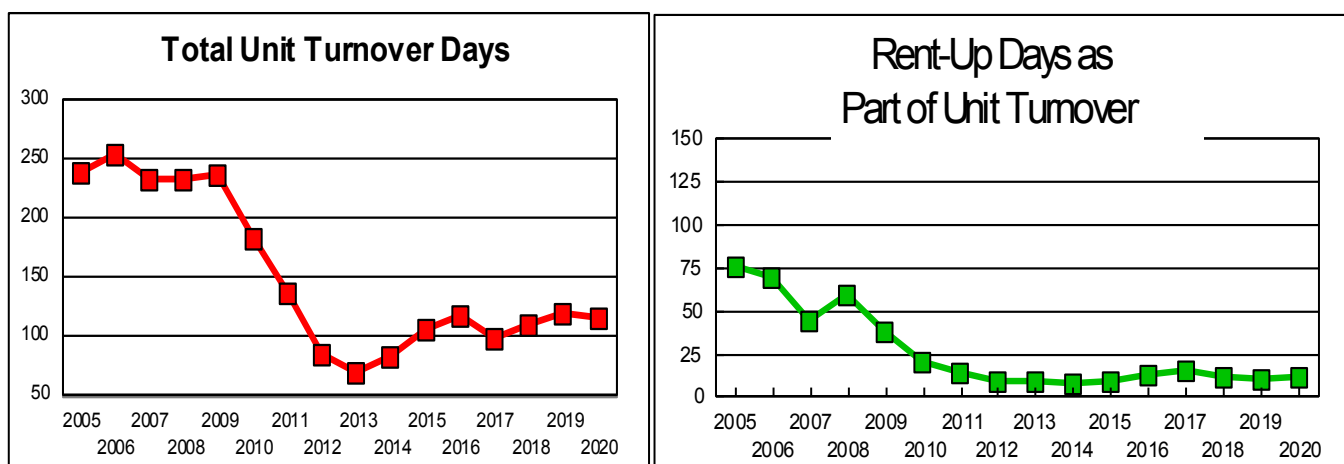
Objective 2 – Maintain Section 8 utilization rate at 1,000 units. (Significant Progress)

In 2020, the Housing Authority utilized 96.00% of funding available to us for the Section 8 Voucher Program. The number of families receiving assistance at December 31, 2020 was 1,067 down by 18 (1.2%) from December 31, 2019. **We were able to help 113 new families/individuals in 2020 down from 175 in 2019.** The Section 8 application waiting list was reopened in June of 2018. The Authority received 1,408 applications.



**Objective 3 - Decrease vacancy turnover rate.
(Progress made but improvement needed going forward)**

In 2020, the Maintenance staff of the seven asset management groups made a total of 244 units ready for occupancy down from 266 in 2019. **Turnover time—the number of days from the move-out of one tenant to the move-in of another averaged 104.33 calendar days, down from 110.49 days in 2019.** In 2020, the period from a make-ready to apartment rental increased to 11.95 days up from 10.10 days in 2019.



Objective 4 - Provide supportive services to non-profits with special needs populations. (Achieved)

In 2020, the Authority continued to provide funding for two Section 8 project-based developments that serve special needs populations. *Columbus Square Apartments* and the *Lodge on Sass* received funding for two caseworkers to assist the residents of those facilities. These caseworkers are helping to stabilize the residents of those buildings.

Objective 5 – Improve Housing Authority Web Site Interactivity. (Made significant Progress)

In 2003, the Authority launched its web site (www.hace.org). The site includes information about the Authority, our housing, personnel, services, and news. The site was completely redesigned in 2020. Engel and O’Neil changed the format allowing HACE staff to update it on a regular basis and for it to become user friendly and more interactive for residents. Section 8 owners can now access their accounts, and families can now apply for public housing on-line. **During 2020, there were 36,275 visits to the website, compared to 31,641 visits in 2019. There were 21,335 unique users in 2020 compared to 18,342 unique users in 2019.**

In 2018, HACE launched a Facebook page to better provide residents with up to date information concerning HACE activities, programs and procedures.

In August 2020, HACE renewed a 2-year contract with Engel/O’Neil to provide public relation services for HACE. Engel and O’Neil changed the website, completed three newsletters, completed a 2021

Calendar and the History of Public Housing document.

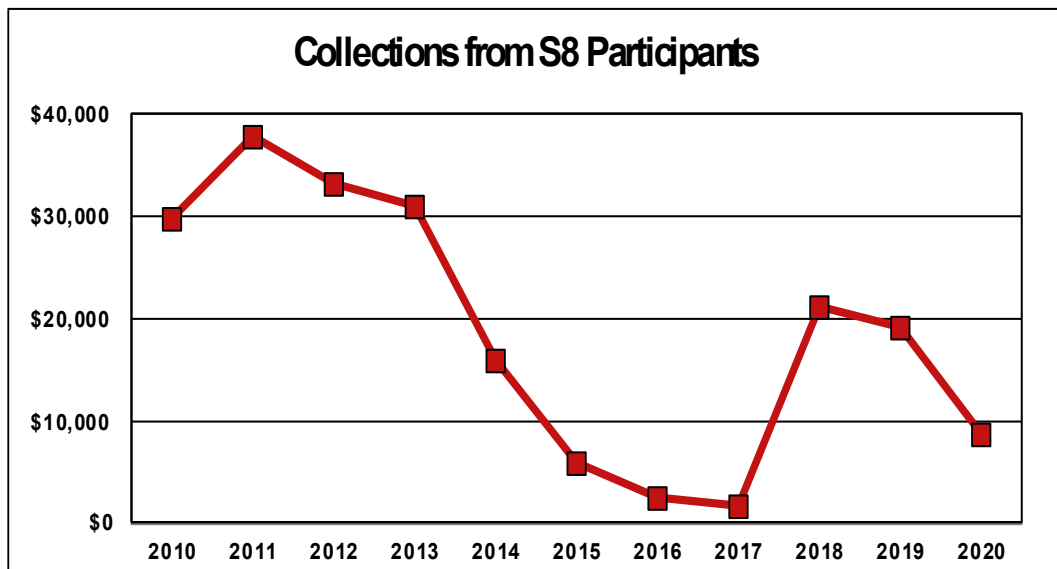
Objective 6 – Maintain Veteran’s Affairs Supportive (VASH) program utilization at 98%. (Not Achieved)

At December 31, 2020, the VASH program utilization was 92.22% up from 85.0% at December 31, 2019. The VASH program was able to provide housing for 16 new veterans in 2020.

GOAL 4- OPERATE ALL PROGRAMS EFFICIENTLY WITHIN BUDGETARY LIMITS; AND IMPROVE STAFF PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Objective 1 - Collect 99% of annual charges by December 31, 2020. (Significant Progress)

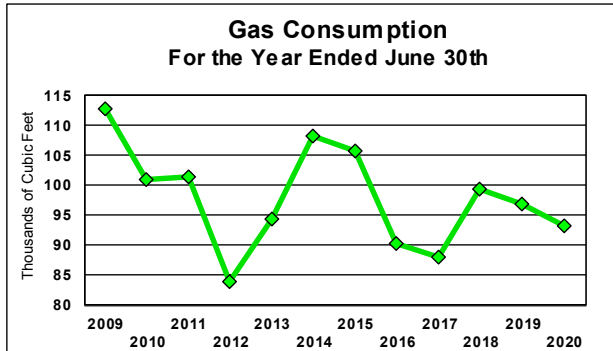
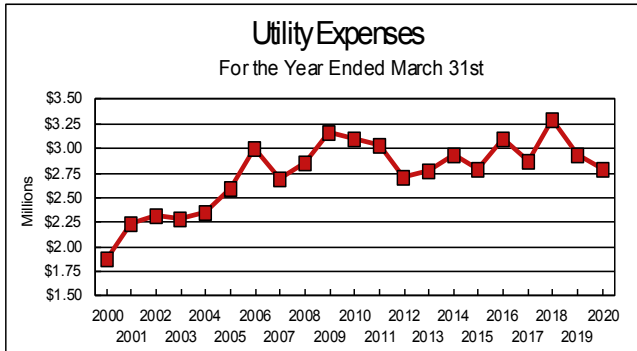
The Authority collected \$8,307,158 or 101.7% against a rent-roll for all units of \$8,168,207 in 2020. Total cash receipts were up \$55,304 over 2019. The Authority collected 98.00% of all charges in 2020. This collection record was accomplished by a variety of strategies; primarily, maintaining high occupancy in all programs and HACE staff working with tenants who fall behind in rent. Also, the Authority collected \$47,603 from ex-tenants who left owing money. Under the Authority’s policy, no one who owes money from a prior tenancy can be on the Authority’s active waiting lists. Section 8 staff also identified 8 Section 8 participants who had not reported all of their family income. Agreements were signed with these participants resulting in repayments totaling \$8,683. The Authority continued, for the 32nd year, its positive-incentive *Early Bird* program, where tenants who pay by the 5th of the month get a chance at a Gift Certificate each quarter during the year. In 2020, the payments by the 5th of the month were 74% over the base year, 1989. Part of this is attributable to increasing the late payment fee in 2014.



The Authority continues to encourage residents to pay rent through automatic debit of their checking account. In 2020, 497 residents selected this rent-paying option, a decrease of 3 in 2020. In 2020, 61% of our residents paid their rent before the 5th of the month. This is up from 57% in 2019.

Objective 2 - Reduce utility consumption and expense. (Achieved)

For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, the expenditures for utilities was down \$157,269 from the same period in 2019. Natural gas rates decreased with the warmer winter and rate decrease on the supply-side. Electric rates decreased due to a rate decrease on the supply-side. Water and sewer expenses slightly increased due to rate increases and the timing of quarterly invoices.



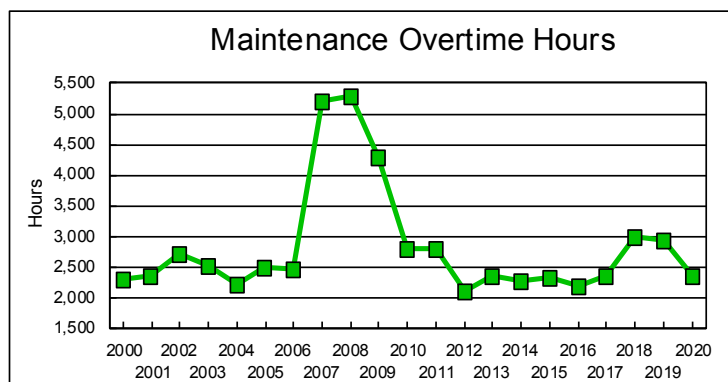
Objective 3 – Continue energy conservation improvements throughout public housing. (Achieved)

LED lighting installation was completed in all senior buildings in 2017. LED Security lighting was replaced in all HACE developments by the beginning of 2018.

Objective 4 – Limit operating expenses to rental income collected and projected HUD subsidies. (Achieved)

The operating expenses for the federally assisted public housing program totaled \$13,950,244 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020. Operating income was \$16,014,492 or \$2,064,248 more than the expenses.

For the 12-month period ending December 31, 2020, maintenance overtime decreased from 2,954.75 hours to 2,356.75 hours (-20.2%) from 2019 level. The overtime hours were below the eleven-year baseline (1996-2006) average of approximately 2,800 hours.

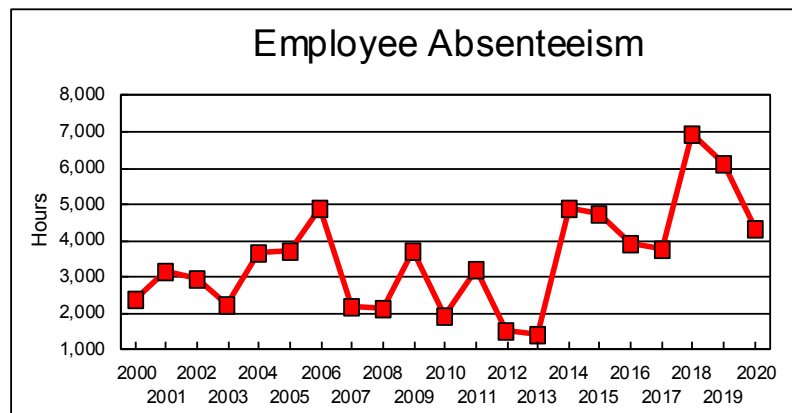


**Objective 5 - Maintain fiscal operations and management operations so there are no audit findings.
(Achieved)**

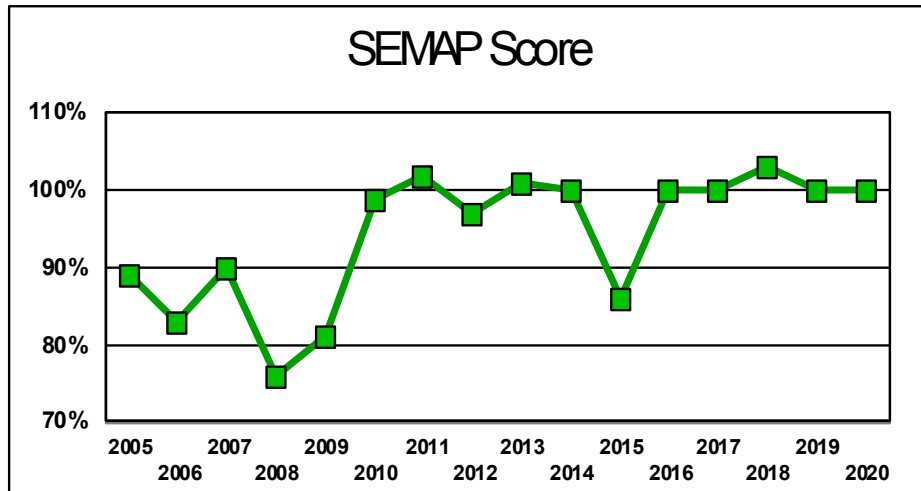
The independent audit for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020 contained no financial findings.

Objective 6 - Reduce employee absenteeism. (Achieved)

Paid time due to sickness, disability, and workers compensation leave decreased from 6,141 hours in 2019 to 4,360 hours in 2020. Forty-three (43) of sixty-seven (67) employees went through the entire year without missing one hour of work due to illness, disability, or off the job injury. This represents 64% of the Authority's full-time workforce. The employees had an overall attendance rate of 97% in 2020, missing an average of nine (9) days due to sickness, disability, or work-related injuries. The Authority continues its employee incentives for not using sick leave; employee training and education; implementation of a work safety program; referring all workers compensation injuries to the St. Vincent Occupational Health Center; and, a light-duty program for injured employees. There were four (4) Worker's Compensation claims in 2020 totaling 15 hours. Two filed workmen's compensation claims (both have been denied to this point, one is still being investigated and two had major surgery. 1,703 of the hours were unpaid.



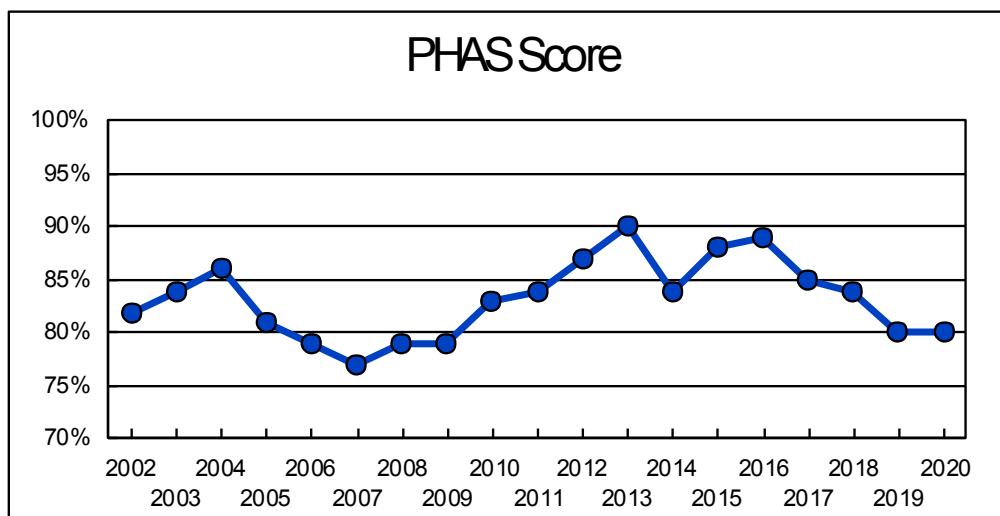
**Objective 7 – Achieve HUD's high performance on Section 8 Housing Assessment System.
(Achieved)**



In 2020, due to COVID19 the Authority was not given a SEMAP score. HACE retained the score it received in 2019 which was a **100% rating** in HUD’s Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP). The Authority achieved the HUD **high performance** designation.

**Objective 8 – Achieve high performance status on Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS)
(Not Achieved)**

In 2020, HUD did not assess housing authorities or provide a PHAS score. The Authority retained a standard performance rating of 80% in HUD’s Public Housing Assessment System.



Objective 9 – Continue quality control for all HUD programs; and improve staff proficiency in use of verification tools; and continue tenant fraud detection in all programs.

(Significant Progress)

Section 8 and public housing quality review and assurance for 2020 were conducted by the Deputy Director, Tenant Selection Coordinator, the Maintenance Superintendent and the Maintenance Supervisors. All clerical and management staff have been certified to perform HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) background checks. Going forward the Associate Director of Compliance will oversee Section 8 and public housing quality file reviews and perform oversight of the EIV system.

In 2020, the Authority identified 24 new cases of probable tenant fraud in the public housing program that resulted in repayment agreements totaling \$22,740.23. Also, 8 new cases of probable participant fraud in the Section 8 program resulted in repayment agreements totaling \$13,523.00.

Objective 10 – Continue Implementation of Strategic Plan for 2020-2024 (Progress)

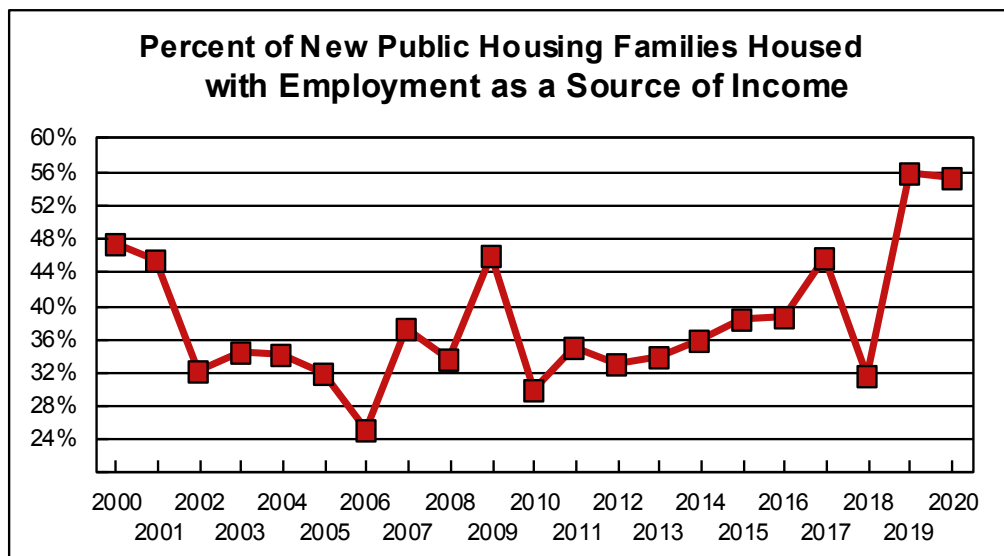
In 2014, the Housing Authority retained a consultant to assist us in the preparation of a five-year strategic plan. The plan was approved by the Board in March 2015. A review of the progress of the plan will be discussed with the HACE Board and Senior staff.

GOAL 5 - ENHANCE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC HOUSING / SECTION 8 TENANTS AND PROMOTE GREATER SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND PRIDE AMONG RESIDENTS

Objective 1 – Provide housing to a cross section of the low-income population in order to obtain a broad range of incomes in housing and promote economic diversity resulting from employment.

Objective 2 - Maintain the ratio of public housing/Section 8 tenants who have employment as source of income. (Not achieved)

In 2020, 943 families had employment as a source of income. This was down from 1,126 families in 2019. There were 667 (-91) public housing households and 276 (-92) Section 8 households employed at December 31, 2020. This is a total net decrease of 183 from 2019. Of the families newly housed in public housing in 2020, 122 (55%) of 220 families had employment as a source of income. In 2020, 245 working families enjoyed the benefits of the Authority's flat rent or ceiling rent, which caps the household rent, regardless of income. These data reflect an overall improvement in the Erie economy.



Objective 3 - Maintain HomePLUS Program at Schmid Towers and Friendship Apartments. (Achieved)

In 1997, the Authority contracted with the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC), to implement the HomePLUS Program at Friendship Apartments and Schmid Towers. The program provides case management and supportive services to many residents of both buildings. From January 1, to December 31, 2020, 20 initial assessments were completed. Of the residents identified with service needs, 103 have accepted services. Annual reassessments were performed on 405 residents of the two buildings (some residents are assessed twice yearly). Direct services (e.g. home support, personal care, and chore services) have been provided since August 1, 1998 and, at present 63 residents are receiving direct services. GECAC estimates that **271 residents have been maintained in their homes because services are adequately meeting their needs**. Additionally, 45 residents (16 Schmid and 29 at Friendship) are nursing home eligible and have been given a waiver from the Commonwealth to receive nursing home services in their public housing apartments. **GECAC estimates that 87 residents would be immediately at risk of losing their independence without HomePLUS services.**

Objective 4 – Continue Community Policing focus of C.O.P.P.S. Program

Objective 5 – Work with residents to improve the image of public housing. (Achieved)

The Authority encourages beautification efforts by residents who reside in our family communities. The annual Garden Contest continues to attract many participants.

In August 2020, HACE signed a two-year contract with Engel/O’Neil to continue to provide public relation services. They completed a redesign of the HACE webpage, finished the History of Public Housing brochure, three newsletters and the 2021 Housing Authority Calendar. They were instrumental in

increased coverage of HACE activities both in print and on television. A new HACE website was launched on January 29th, 2021.

Objective 6 - Maintain maximum participation in the Section 8 and Public Housing Family Self-sufficiency programs. (Achieved)

All current providers of social services for our residents are required to have a comprehensive self-sufficiency goal for participants and to coordinate activities with inter-agency team members. Quarterly meetings with the Quality of Life Learning Center (QLLC) and the Multi-Cultural Resource Center (MCRC) together with monthly reports result in the monitoring of their progress in assisting residents on their journey toward self-sufficiency. **In 2020, 24 residents obtained employment through the two learning centers. This was down from 49 in 2019.** In October 2019, HACE was awarded a second three-year HUD ROSS grant to provide two Case Managers to implement a Public Housing Family Self-Sufficiency Program. The case managers, assigned to QLLC and MCRC, respectively, were on the job through all of 2020, and have enrolled a total of 148 families into the self-sufficiency program. 80 families have current escrow accounts, totaling \$354,945. In 2020, thirty-eight (38) families graduated from the program and with eight (8) purchasing a house.

Objective 7 - Encourage Homeownership for Section 8 and public housing residents. (Achieved)

Thirty-eight (38) families graduated from the Section 8/Public Housing FSS program in 2020 with eight (8) purchasing their first home. The eight (8) families were able to access their FSS Escrow accounts for down payment and closing costs (see objective 7). Since the inception of the Section 8/Public Housing FSS Program there have been one hundred and six (106) graduates with forty-nine purchasing their own home. **Also, according to exit surveys of tenants who moved from public housing in 2020, a total of forty-seven (47) families purchased a house.**

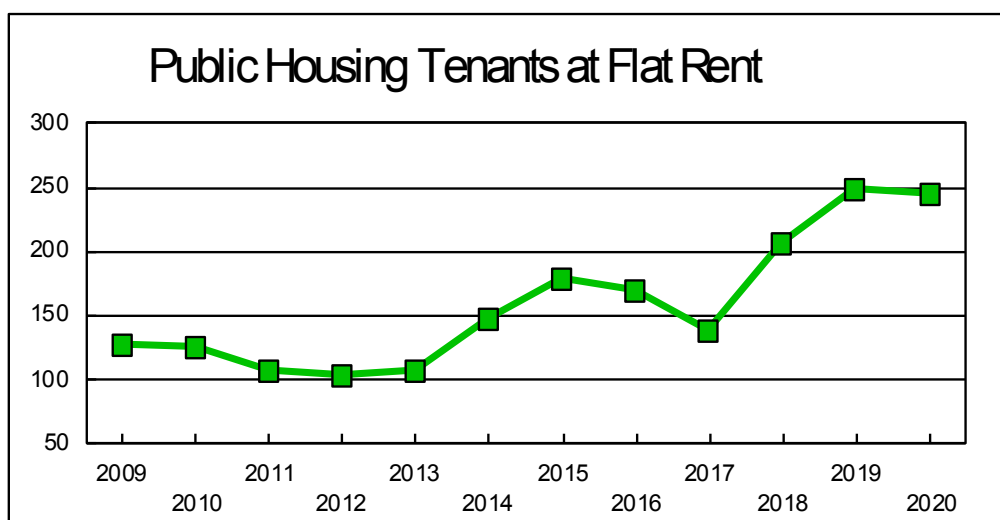
As of December 31, 2020, there were thirty-nine (39) families enrolled in the Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Of those thirty-nine (39) participants, twenty-one (21) have a cash escrow account. The total number of Section 8 FSS graduates in 2020 were ten (10). The total cash escrow paid out to graduates as of December 31, 2020, is \$461,448.19. The total escrow cash assets, including current participants, interim withdraws, and graduates equals \$680,593.

As of December 31, 2020, there were 69 families enrolled in the Public Housing Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Of those 69 participants, 59 have a cash escrow account. The total number of Public Housing FSS graduates in 2020 were twenty-eight (28). The total cash escrow paid out to graduates as of December 31, 2020, is \$357,912. The total escrow cash assets, including current participants, interim withdraws, and graduates equals \$659,139.

Objective 8 - Continue flat rents that reflect market based on size, condition, and location. (Achieved)

The Authority believes that the use of flat rents provides stability for our communities by giving working families an incentive to remain in public housing while they are getting on their feet economically. In

2020, the number of families who opted for the flat rent was 245 down from 250 in 2019. The Authority first adopted a flat rent schedule in 2004, based on market data. In 2014, Congress required HUD to change the way Flat Rents are calculated and revise them on a yearly basis. Under RAD the option for flat rents would be eliminated.



Objective 9 – Continue conversion of two Learning Centers to job centers for public housing residents. (Progress)

COVID19 had a major impact on the provision of on-site services at both MCRC and the Quality of Life Learning Center. The Authority had quarterly meetings with the two learning center operators to monitor their monthly progress on training and employment for public housing residents. HACE moved the offices of the 2 Family Self-sufficiency caseworkers to the John E. Horan Garden Apartments to provide for better coordination of services with the two job programs. Secondly, HACE completed a complete renovation of the Quality of Life Learning Center to provide a better more accessible environment for participants. **The two learning centers placed 24 residents in jobs in 2020. This was down from 49 in 2019.**

HACE completely renovated the Quality of Life Learning Center in 2020 to update its facilities and make them fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

Objective 10 – Revise resident survey tool to assess resident needs. (Achieved)

HACE staff met with and completed a revision of the 2020 Resident Survey. The survey was administered, and results are being prepared for review by the HACE Board in January. Keystone Research will make a presentation to the HACE Board at the February Board meeting.

GOAL 6 - IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOODS SURROUNDING PUBLIC HOUSING

COMMUNITIES

Objective 1 – Continue to identify public and private partners to participate in neighborhood community development initiative. (Significant Progress)

In 2020, the Authority maintained relationships with multiple organization to continue building support for our neighborhood renewal initiative. These included: The City of Erie, County of Erie, E.F. Smith Quality of Life Learning Center, the John F. Kennedy Center, Community Health Net, Community Shelter Services, SafeNet, the Multicultural Community Resource Center, Early Connections, the Erie County Library, Gannon University, LECOM, the YMCA of Greater Erie and GECAC.

Objective 2 – Continue strategic acquisition plan for sites that are available and/or in distress. (Progress)

The Housing Authority purchased Better Housing properties (52 units) on January 10, 2019. This provides stability in an area where the Housing Authority has significant investment. HACE was awarded a PHFA PHARE Grant in 2020, allowing us to move forward in completing much needed upgrades to the properties including in this case replacement of all windows and security screens.

Objective 3 – Develop strategy for the utilization of vacant land at Erie Heights and property adjacent to Harbor Homes that would generate non-federal funds for other HACE initiatives. (Progress)

Some progress was made in this area by removing the fencing in front of Erie Heights to improve the overall look of the property. Our current focus is on improving the Better Housing properties and completing the RAD application process and decide on if converting to RAD is in the best interest of HACE.

Objective 4 – Develop relationships with community leaders and businesses in neighborhoods surrounding public housing that could provide employment opportunities for public housing residents. (Progress)

HACE has a strong relationship with community leaders in the areas surrounding HACE properties. The E.F. Smith Quality of Life Learning Center purchased the Joyce Savocchio Industrial Park in late 2018. HACE staff will work with QLLC to ensure that HACE residents benefit from any projects undertaken at the Industrial Park.

2020 Rental Demonstration Program (RAD) Update

- **Contracted 2RW Firm to complete Due Diligence Studies and Capital/Physical Needs Assessment.**
- **Began process of submitting RAD application in two phases.**
- **Continuing to work with Collaborative Housing Solutions to select RAD Rents, develop proforma budgets and submit phase 1 and 2 applications.**
- **HACE staff began meetings with HUD transactional analyst to develop application for RAD.**

- **Knox Law Firm completed review of Declarations of trust, HACE property deeds and acreage of all HACE properties.**

HACE received a \$1,000,000 Lead-based Paint Grant in 2019 for the removal of lead-based paint in up to 67 units in Harbor Homes.

- **Contracts were awarded to complete lead abatement on 12 properties.**

Better Housing Renovations

- **HACE was awarded \$250,000 from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. This along with \$250,000 approved by the HACE boards will be used to replace all the windows and security screens in Better Housing.**
- **HACE submitted an application to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency PHARE Grant Program to upgrade the electrical system, replace furnaces and add central air conditioning.**
- **HACE replace 50 entry doors. The remaining doors will be replaced in 2021.**

Personnel Changes

- **The position of Associate Director of Compliance was created and filled in 2020.**
- **Two long-time managers retired and were replaced internally in 2020.**
- **Vince Palermo, the long-time HACE Maintenance Superintendent, will retire in June 2021.**