



## **The Housing Authority of the City of Erie**

### **2023 Goals & Objectives**

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#### **Introduction**

The Housing Authority of the City of Erie's (HACE) steady progress in many areas in recent years is attributable in large part to knowing our mission and not deviating from it; keeping our clients' welfare uppermost in our thinking; knowing the major programs to pursue; and providing continuity and consistency upon which residents and staff can count on. The following goals and objectives for the year 2023 identify a process that will advance our mission, vision, and values by providing **six** major organizational goals and a series of measurable objectives against which our performance can be judged at the end of the year. Each of our goals and objectives will further the Housing Authority's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.

In 2022 HACE spent the year navigating out of the COVID-19 crisis. 2022 saw the end of the eviction moratorium and the Erie County Rental Assistance Program, HUD REAC inspections for the first time in three years and a successful commitment to complete the entirety of our annual inspection work. We continue to renovate our housing inventory to modern-day standards, we provide a full range of support services for our residents, and our financial condition is excellent. Since 2017 HACE has had a major turnover of our administrative staff, replacing key leadership positions throughout the organization. These staffing changes have put the Housing Authority in a strong personnel position for years to come. In addition, HACE has made a commitment to provide staff with both on-going and initial training. All new staff are required to complete 12 hours of HUD and HACE related training prior to obtaining permanent employment status.

In 2022 HACE withdrew its application for the HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

HACE has completed its 2<sup>nd</sup> year utilizing Horizon as its software provider in the public housing program. There have been on-going problems with fully utilizing the Horizon software program. HACE staff will meet early in 2023 to determine the best path going forward, including the possibility of seeking out a new software provider.

HACE has continued the process of reviewing and revising its policies and procedures including our intake and recertification process to ensure compliance with HUD requirements. This is being overseen by the Deputy Director and Associate Director of Compliance.

With the end of the eviction moratorium and Rental Assistance Program, HACE has seen its occupancy rate decline in public housing from 97% to 95%. It is expected that the lower occupancy rate will continue in the first quarter of 2023 before again moving upwards to 97% by the end of 2023. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Section 8 Program has seen an increase of 95 families during 2022 and currently has a utilization rate of 95.6% above the HUD goal of 95%. HACE also implemented a new process for approving initial rent requests and addressing rental increase requests that will allow landlords to receive increased rental amounts based on the Fair Market Rent for the area. This will hopefully provide incentives for landlords to remain and enter the HCV program and maintain their properties thus stabilizing City of Erie neighborhoods.

HACE is in a strong financial position. The most recent audit conducted by Clifton Larson had no findings.

HACE received over \$600,000 from HUD as part of the lawsuit returning excess reserve monies taken from the Housing Authority over 10 years ago. The HACE Board approved depositing these funds in the HACE New Development account to be utilized for special projects including renovations at the Better Housing and Erie Heights developments. This will help HACE ensure that low-income individuals and families in need of quality and affordable housing continue to receive assistance.

HACE made a commitment in 2021 and continued in 2022 to improve the materials utilized in turning over vacant units. We have seen an increase in construction material costs followed by a reduction in having to replace flooring, doors, and cabinets every time a unit becomes vacant. It is our hope that we will see a reduction in vacant unit material costs as we see a majority of HACE units impacted by this process.

2022 was the end of the third year of the vehicle leasing program with Enterprise Leasing. In 2023 HACE will be returning the first six vehicles for resale to determine if the equity obtained from the resale is financially better than purchasing two to three vehicles every year. We have already seen an improvement in the average age of HACE vehicles plus decreased maintenance and fuel costs.

HACE continues its work to upgrade and improve the Better Housing Properties. In 2021/2022 new windows and doors were installed at all Better Housing apartments. In 2022 the electrical systems were upgraded and changed from 60 to 100-amp service. In 2023, the goal is to replace furnaces and install central air conditioning. These projects were funded by HACE and through grants from the Pennsylvania Housing and Finance Agency. (PHFA) A new grant proposal for the furnaces and air conditioning was submitted to PHFA in 2022.

Despite problems with supply-side issues causing contractors to struggle meeting completions dates, HACE completed or is currently working on several Capital Fund construction projects. These included replacing all the roofs in the Harbor Homes Annex (28 buildings), boiler replacement at Schmid Towers with more energy efficient systems, roof replacement of 17 John E. Horan Garden Apartment (JEHGA) buildings, replacement of 20 plus scattered site roofs with metal roofs, replaced 200 air conditioning units at Friendship apartments, replaced 40 drywall ceilings in JEHGA, replaced sanitary sewer and hot water tank system (tankless) at one LakeCity building, replaced exterior doors/locksets at 68 scattered site units, installed cement board siding in 10 JEHGA buildings, replaced all the doors and hardware in Bird Drive, currently doing complete renovations of 51 Harbor Homes bathrooms (36 completed), upgraded/expanded the laundry room at Friendship Apartments and have substantially completed renovations of the Harbor Homes management office. This is in addition to making over 220 units ready to rent in 2022.

2022 saw the replacement of HACE Board member James Martin with Donald J. Fuhrmann a life-long Erie resident, a graduate of Mercyhurst University where he currently serves as Chief of the Mercyhurst University Police Department. In December a request was made to Mayor Joseph Schember to renew HACE Board members Bishop Dwane Brock, Patricia Mickel and Edward (Ned) Smith for new five-year terms.

The HACE Board approved a new two-year contract effective 8/1/22 with the City of Erie Bureau of Police to continue to provide Authority-wide Community Policing Programs.

Keystone Research completed the 2022 Resident Survey which is conducted every two years. A report will be submitted to the HACE Board and put on the HACE website in February 2023.

### **Mission Statement**

**The Housing Authority of the City of Erie exists 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, and a sense of community and pride in the neighborhoods where they reside.**

### **Vision Statement**

**The Authority envisions public housing communities where all people have safe, affordable housing and opportunities for jobs providing a living wage that will lead to economic self-sufficiency, in diverse, sustainable neighborhoods.**

### **Values Statement**

**We place our residents at the center of all our efforts. Their safety, satisfaction and success are our priorities.**

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

*Objective 1-* Review HACE Personnel Policies.

*Objective 2 -* Continue the training and orientation of HACE Board members and staff about HACE policies, procedures and programs.

*Objective 3 -* Have on-going succession plan for upper-level administrative staff.

*Objective 4 -* Continue to build and support an organization /team of employees that is diverse and reflective of the City of Erie population and the residents of our HACE community.

*Objective 5 -* Continue required training programs for administrative, clerical and maintenance departments.

*Objective 6 -* Develop process for evaluating staff, beginning with top level administrative staff, manager, and maintenance supervisors.

**GOAL #2. IMPROVE LIVABILITY OF PUBLIC HOUSING**

*Objective 1 -* Reduce reported crime by 2% from 2022.

*Objective 2 -* Reduce fires and risks of injury and property damage.

*Objective 3 -* Develop preventative maintenance program. Evaluate materials utilized by maintenance to ensure quality and longevity.

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

*Objective 5 -* Maintain "curb appeal" standards for all public housing communities including development of standards for areas outside living spaces.

*Objective 6 -* Complete annual inspection and requisite follow-up on all public housing and Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8 units to assure all units are decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.

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

*Objective 8 -* Maintain current high level of resident satisfaction with living conditions in public housing.

*Objective 9 –* Recommend capital expenditures from HACE reserve budget for Board approval.

**GOAL #3. PROVIDE HOUSING ASSISTANCE TO MORE FAMILIES / INDIVIDUALS**

- Objective 1* - Achieve 97% occupancy in our public housing inventory.
- Objective 2* - Begin process of developing HACE 5-year strategic plan for the period of 2024 – 2028 by advertising RFQ for selecting consultant and submitting choice to Board for final approval.
- Objective 3* - Maintain Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8 program at 1100 units and above 95% utilization rate.
- Objective 4* - Decrease vacancy turnover rate. Continue deferred unit program.
- Objective 5* - Develop 10-year Capital Needs Plan for Erie Heights
- Objective 6* - Provide supportive services to non-profits with special needs populations.
- Objective 7* - Continue to update and improve Housing Authority Web Site interactivity.
- Objective 8* - Maintain Veteran’s Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program utilization at 98%.
- Objective 9* - Improve utilization of Foster Youth to Independence Program.

**GOAL #4. OPERATE ALL PROGRAMS EFFICIENTLY WITHIN BUDGETARY LIMITS; AND IMPROVE STAFF PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFECTIVENESS**

- Objective 1* - Collect 99% of annual charges for the year ending December 31, 2023.
- Objective 2* - Reduce utility consumption and expense.
- Objective 3* - Continue energy conservation improvements throughout public housing.
- Objective 4* - Limit operating expenses to rental income collected and HUD subsidies.
- Objective 5* - Maintain fiscal and management operations so there are no audit findings.
- Objective 6* - Reduce employee absenteeism.
- Objective 7* - Achieve high performance status on Section 8 Housing Assessment System (SEMAP).
- Objective 8* - Achieve high performance status on Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS).
- Objective 9* - Continue quality control for all HUD programs; improve staff proficiency in use of verification tools; and continue Tenant Fraud Detection Policy in all programs.

**Objective 10** – Continue implementation of HACE Strategic Plan for 2020-2024.

**Objective 11** - Utilize Associate Director of Compliance to review operations in management offices to ensure compliance with HUD requirements and HACE policies.

**Objective 12** - Continue to revise and update HACE procedures and policies to comply with HUD requirements.

**Objective 13**- Review and revise HACE health insurance and retirement programs.

**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 a source of income.

**Objective 3** - Maintain HomePLUS Program at Schmid Towers and Friendship Apartments.

**Objective 4** - Continue Community Policing focus of C.O.P.P.S Program under 1<sup>st</sup> year of 2 year contract with the City of Erie.

**Objective 5** - Work with residents to improve the image of public housing.

**Objective 6** - Maintain maximum participation in the Section 8 Self-Sufficiency and Public Housing Family Self-sufficiency Programs.

**Objective 7** - Encourage homeownership for Section 8 and Public Housing residents.

**Objective 8** - Continue flat rents that reflect market value of units based on size, condition, and location.

**Objective 9** - Continue conversion of two learning centers to self-sufficiency training centers for public housing residents.

**Objective 10** - Review results of 2022 Resident Survey and develops goals and objectives based on survey results.

**Objective 11** – Complete evaluation process of all HACE social service program to determine if they are meeting programmatic requirements and if the services, they provide are still necessary to meet the goals of assisting residents in moving towards self-

sufficiency.

**GOAL #6 IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOODS SURROUNDING PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITIES**

- Objective 1*** - Establish development account to be utilized as investment capital to expand and improve low-income residents access to quality and affordable housing.
- Objective 2*** - Identify public and private partners to participate in neighborhood community development initiatives.
- Objective 3*** - Continue acquisition of properties near public housing that are available and/or in distress.
- Objective 4*** - Develop strategy for the utilization of vacant land at Erie Heights and adjacent to Harbor Homes that would generate non-federal funds for other HACE initiatives.
- Objective 5*** - Develop relationships with community leaders and businesses in neighborhoods surrounding public housing that could provide employment opportunities for public housing residents.
- Objective 6*** - Continue renovations of Better Housing Development to bring the properties up to the modern-day standards expected of HACE properties.
- Objective 7*** - Research and apply for funding sources to assist HACE in pursuing development projects and renovating current properties such as Better Housing and Erie Heights.

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