



The Housing Authority of the City of Erie

2024 Goals & Objectives

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 2024 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.

The HACE Maintenance Department continued our goal of renovating our housing inventory to modern-day standards and improve energy efficiency. This includes replacing entry doors, windows, replacement of flooring, upgrading plumbing, upgrading electrical systems, and installing LED lighting. In 2023 234 units were completely remodeled and leased to individuals and families.

HACE continues to provide a full range of support services for our residents through partnerships with several local social service providers. These programs include community policing, youth recreational programs, domestic violence counseling services, adult education and family support programs, dental and healthcare education services, creative arts programs, and licensed childcare services. Dafmark and the John F. Kennedy Center were awarded 21st Century Grants through the Department of Education to provide educational support services to at-risk youth. HACE expanded the program area available to Dafmark and upgraded computers at MCRC in 2023 and will do the same for the John F. Kennedy Center in 2024.

Dusti Dennis and I have served on a committee set up to address the on-going chronic homeless situation affecting Erie and cities across the country. HACE has also provided financial support to the Eastside Renaissance Program for acquiring and rehabbing properties along the Parade Street corridor. Two of these properties were recently added to the HACE HCV apartment rental list. Community Shelter services were awarded funds to build two tiny homes for chronically homeless families. Most recently the HACE Board approved funding to the Urban Erie Community Development Corporation to purchase the former Burton Elementary School and turn it into a Community Services building that would benefit nearby Harbor Homes residents.

Thanks to several additions and promotions the HACE administrative staff is in a strong position for years to come. All new staff are required to complete 12 hours of HUD and HACE related training prior to obtaining permanent employment status. HACE has made a commitment to providing staff with both on-going and initial training including adding access to on-line health care and mental health services.

HACE has completed its 3rd year utilizing Horizon as its software provider in the public housing program. We have seen an overall improvement in the performance of the software since HACE staff began working with the owner/head programmer for Horizon. 2024 will see a transition into utilizing the new Horizon upgrade and implementing the new HUD HOTMA requirements. HACE HCV staff will continue to utilize Network Technologies as the chief software provider for the HCV/Section 8 program. Network Technologies has made changes to their software system to be in compliance with the HOTMA changes.

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. 2024 will see the development of a new five-year strategic plan.

We continue to have challenges because of the ending of the eviction moratorium and Rental Assistance Programs. In 2023, 234 individuals/families moved into public housing and 234 moved out or were evicted from public housing. Many of the evictions were for non-payment of rent. This will be an on-going problem. We will continue to make-ready units for new residents and work with current residents to pay their rent and maintain their housing. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Section 8 Program has 1070 families/individuals under contract as of December 2023 versus 1069 as of December 2022 and currently has a utilization rate of 87%, below the HUD goal of 95%. The major reason for this is the increase in funding that HUD has provided Housing Authorities. We have increased the amount of voucher utilization funds we are spending each month, but our utilization rate has decreased because of this increase in HUD funding. HACE also implemented a cash incentive program for landlords who add a new unit, recruit a new landlord who adds a unit to the HCV program or signs a contract with a new tenant. HACE is also offering security deposit assistance to new voucher holders who have been unable to obtain assistance from at least two other sources. The 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 has seen an increased use of voucher utilization funds. These program additions 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 made a commitment in 2021 and continued in 2023 to improve the materials utilized in turning over vacant units. Vacant units now receive new long-lasting flooring, replacement of plumbing to PCV piping, tankless water heaters, solid core doors, outside LED lighting and new and more durable kitchen cabinets. 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.

2023 was the end of the fourth year of the vehicle leasing program with Enterprise Leasing. At the end of 2023 HACE is leasing 22 vehicles with an average age of 2021. We also have 4 utility vehicles that are HACE-owned. In 2023 HACE sold six vehicles and received \$95,830, which was used to offset leasing costs. We continue to see reductions in maintenance and fuel costs because of the average age of our vehicles.

HACE continues its work to upgrade and improve the Better Housing Properties. In the past three years we have installed new windows and entry doors, upgraded the electrical delivery systems from 60 to 100-amp service, replaced furnaces and are adding air conditioning and hard-wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. In 2024, the goal is to begin façade work on the outside of the buildings.

Despite problems with supply-side issues causing contractors to struggle meeting completions dates, HACE has completed or is currently working on several Capital Fund construction projects. These included replacing the roofs in the entire Pineview Developments, installing entry doors at Harbor Homes and Harbor Homes Annex, installing windows at Bird Drive, Better Housing and the JEHGA (Franklin Ave) developments, painting the exteriors of Agnes Priscaro and Eastbrook, installing metal roofs on over 30 scattered site units, replacing over 60 entire bathrooms in Harbor Homes, sealing and striping of the majority of HACE parking lots, façade work and balcony replacement at Schmid Towers, door closure replacement at Friendship Apartments, replacement of furnaces and addition of air conditioning at Better Housing, replacement of air conditioning units at Friendship and Curry Schell, replacement of sliding glass balcony doors at Friendship, replacement of emergency generator at Curry Schell Apartments, replacement of ceilings at John E. Horan Garden Apartments, and upgrading electrical delivery system and hardwiring smoke alarms at Better Housing.

In addition, HACE contractors replaced over \$1,200,000 worth of flooring with more durable and longer lasting laminate flooring. HACE contractors continue to install French drains throughout public housing. HACE also has contracts with area painting companies to paint the inside of vacant units. All these projects and HACE maintenance staff's work in vacant units are designed to reduce replacement and maintenance costs.

Lastly, HACE has revamped operations in the Tenant Select, HCV/Section 8 and Management offices through regular training and inspections by our recently initiated compliance office. This has allowed our offices to be current on HUD changes and rules. It also allows our staff to receive up to date training offered through HUD and other partners like NELROD. It is our hope that as HUD

returns to property and management inspections, we will see an improvement in scores. This has already happened at our most recent Better Housing inspection.

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/HUD 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 2023.

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 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 - 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 2 - Collect 99% of annual charges for the year ending December 31, 2024.

- 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* - Design and implement Resident Survey that is conducted every two years.
- 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/HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (SECTION 8) RESIDENTS AND PROMOTE A 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 2nd 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** - Contract with organization to design, administer and evaluate 2024 Resident Survey.
- Objective 11** – Meet with all HACE social service providers 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. Initiate process to rename Better Housing Development.
- 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.