

Five-Year and Annual Agency Plan Hearing on April 8

The GRHC will hold a public hearing to get input regarding our Five-Year Plan for 2025-2030 and 2025 Annual Agency Plan on Tuesday, April 8, at the Bobbie Butler Community Center. Details on page 2!

“Thanks for Giving” Luncheon Honors Community Partners

In mid-November GRHC Resident Services hosted our 12th annual luncheon celebrating our amazing community partners. This year’s event was at the Gerald R. Ford Job Corps Center. Details on pages 4-5!

Partners Brighten Holidays for GRHC Residents

Community partners worked with GRHC staff to bring residents of our agency-owned developments a wide variety of fun celebrations during the fall and winter holiday seasons. Details on page 7!



GRAND RAPIDS
HOUSING COMMISSION

NEWS

Winter 2025



Trainer Morgan Petragallo (standing) explains HUD NSPIRE rules to a packed conference room at GRPS University

GRHC Hosts Landlord Training on New HUD NSPIRE Inspection Standards

To help our landlord partners become familiar with the new HUD National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE), during mid-January the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) hosted an NSPIRE training designed specifically for rental property owners and managers who participate in federal housing voucher programs. Held at GRPS University, the training was conducted by Housing Choice Voucher inspections expert Morgan Petragallo, a trainer with well-known housing industry consulting group Nan McKay and Associates.

Eighty landlords and GRHC staff participated in a wide-ranging presentation that covered how NSPIRE differs from Housing Quality Standards (HQS) regulations, inspectable areas, types of inspections, health and safety determinations, and more.

Attendees also had an opportunity to get answers to their questions about NSPIRE. The GRHC started phasing in the new HUD inspection standards last fall, and full implementation got underway March 1.

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HUD NSPIRE Training Resources

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers a variety of free online tools and resources to help landlords and residents prepare for inspections under the new NSPIRE rules.

Scan the QR code at the right to access the latest NSPIRE updates, training webinars and more.



Draft GRHC Five-Year and 2025 Agency Plans Available for Public Review



GRHC Executive Director Lindsey Reames (standing) welcomes Housing Commission President Monica Steimle-App and representatives of community partner organizations to a mid-February Five-Year Agency Plan stakeholders' meeting in the Bobbie Butler Community Center

After a year-long strategic planning process, the GRHC has drafted a new Five-Year Agency Plan that will serve as a blueprint for our agency's activities during our fiscal years 2025-2030 as well as a 2025 Annual Agency Plan and a 2025 "Moving to Work" Supplement that reflect the insights gained through community input and our recent analyses of current and past initiatives. These draft plans lay out strategies, goals and objectives designed to help us optimize programs and services to meet evolving community needs related to such issues as rising housing costs, gentrification pressures, changing demographics, racial inequities and a challenging political environment.

Over the past year, our agency gathered input from a wide range of stakeholders about needs, emerging trends and the GRHC's role going forward. This included getting perspectives from the GRHC board and staff as well as residents, neighborhood groups, elected officials, funders, affordable housing developers, and service providers and other partners.

Many thanks to the staff and Housing Commissioners who contributed within our strategic planning work group, and to all of the staff, board members, partners and residents who participated in our strategic planning survey and/or public input sessions. We hope you will review the drafts linked in the public hearing announcement below and continue to provide input that will help us to refine our plans and deliver the most effective programs possible to the families we serve.

Public Hearing on Agency Plans Slated for April 8

The GRHC will hold a public hearing regarding our draft 2025-2030 Five-Year Agency Plan, 2025 Annual Agency Plan and 2025 Moving to Work Supplement on Tuesday, April 8, 5:00 p.m. at the Bobbie Butler Community Center at Creston Plaza Apartments. The Center is located at 1080 Creston Plaza Drive NE.

Scan the QR code at the right to reach links to the draft plans.



Jean McKee Resident Scholarship Program Offers Academic Awards of Up to \$2,000



The 2025 Jean McKee Resident Scholarship competition is underway! Established in 2000 in memory of longtime Housing Commissioner Jean McKee, the Resident Scholarship Program offers college scholarships to eligible residents of GRHC housing programs. Scholarship winners receive \$500 per year for up to four years, for a total scholarship award of up to \$2,000.

The Jean McKee academic scholarship is open to...

- Graduating high school seniors
- Current college or vocational school students
- Adult residents seeking to begin or return to college or vocational school

The Scholarship Program offers priority status to graduating high school seniors, undergraduate students and participants in the GRHC Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program. Scholarship awards are provided directly to the student and can be used for any school-related expense.

Complete information about the Jean McKee Resident Scholarship Program and an online scholarship application form are available at: www.grhousing.org/jean-mckee-scholarship

Family Self-Sufficiency Program Offers Orientation Meetings

The GRHC's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program is holding monthly orientation meetings to help interested residents learn about the program and sign up to participate. The FSS Program helps GRHC-assisted families build savings when earned income increases the household's share of monthly rent. During 2024, 26 FSS Program graduates received an average escrow award of \$7,995.

For more information and a link to the FSS Program Self-Referral Form that's the first step to registering for an orientation meeting: www.grhousing.org/family-self-sufficiency-program

GRHC Adopts New Mission, Vision and Values Statements

To clarify the focus of our activities during the years ahead and define the core values that are the foundation of our agency operations, the GRHC has developed new mission, vision and values statements.

Kudos to the staff team who gathered stakeholder input and spearheaded the creation of the statements below: Jill Brand, Custodian; José Capeles, Policy and Program Planning and Implementation Manager; Toni Coristine, Policy and Program Analyst; Shawanna Thompson, HCV Coordinator; Mia Gutridge, Human Resources Manager, Lynn Simone, Director of Asset Management.

Our Mission

We are committed to offering quality affordable housing, essential resources through advocacy and partnerships, and promoting self-sufficiency to strengthen communities.

Our Vision

To create communities where housing is affordable, opportunities are impactful and self-sufficiency is the goal.

Our Values

We create HOMES with:

Housing: We believe that everyone deserves a place to call home.

Open Communication: We share ideas in a collaborative setting by building trust through clear and consistent communication.

Mutual Respect: We honor and value each individual, fostering a culture where every voice is heard and respected.

Excellence: We strive for excellence in everything we do, promoting a culture of accountability and continuous growth.

Supportive Communities: We create communities that emphasize well-being and offer holistic support, motivating individuals and families to thrive.

PBV-Supported Samaritas Development Opens in Spring Lake Township



GRHC Executive Director Lindsey Reames represented our agency at an early February ribbon cutting for The Landing at Spring Lake, a \$16.4 million affordable rental housing property developed by Samaritas. Located at 734 E. Savidge Street in Spring Lake Township, the 53-unit development includes eight units that are supported by Section 8 Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) awarded by the GRHC. Families in the assisted units will typically pay 30 percent of monthly household income on rent, with the GRHC's PBV Program making up the difference between that amount and the established rent for the unit.

The Landing at Spring Lake serves households earning 30 to 80 percent of Ottawa County's area median income. Through a partnership with the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, eight units are reserved for tribal members. Amenities include community spaces and a digital learning hub.

Partner Supports Hope Community Store



Seven24 Men's Ministry volunteers with the home goods the group donated to Hope Community

New community partner Seven24 Men's Ministry recently donated a wide variety of baby care, laundry, cleaning and paper products to the Hope Community Store. The store provides household staples to Hope Community residents.

Hope Community is a GRHC-owned Rapid Re-Housing Program that serves families experiencing homelessness. Applicants are referred by The Salvation Army.

To learn how you can support this nonprofit 501(c)3 organization: www.grhousing.org/pdf/hope-community-facts.pdf

GRHC Resident Services Hosts “Thanks for Giving” Luncheon Honoring Community Partners

GRHC Resident Services staff hosted a mid-November “Thanks for Giving” Luncheon at the Gerald R. Ford Job Corps Center in celebration of the community partners who provide direct services to our residents. The menu featured a turkey feast prepared and served by Job Corps Culinary Arts students as well as partner recognition awards presented by GRHC Executive Director Lindsey Reames.

Our staff appreciated the opportunity to personally thank representatives from some of the organizations that work with us to offer residents supportive programs and services. We are sincerely grateful to all of the community partners and volunteers who support our residents and agency, including those recognized during the luncheon...

Area Agency on Aging of Western Mich. Assoc. for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Avanti

Black Impact Collaborative
Caption Call
DonnaCare at Home
Care Resources

Catherine’s Health Center
City of Grand Rapids
Dept. of Health & Human Services
Disability Advocates of Kent County
East Grand Rapids Public Schools

Family Outreach Center
FE Insurance

Feeding America West Michigan
Fountain Street Church
Grand Rapids Black Nurses Association
Grand Rapids Fire Department

Grand Rapids Symphony
Grand Rapids Police Department
GRPD Mental Health Co-Response Team
GVSU Kirkhof College of Nursing

Harmonycare Medical Group
Home Instead – Be a Santa to a Senior
Horizon Bank

Home Repair Services
Humana
Humane Society of West Michigan

Huntington Bank
Hurst Mechanical
ICCF Community Homes
Independent Bank

Ivanrest Foot & Ankle Specialists



GRHC Executive Director Lindsey Reames (left) thanks Veronica Horsley-Pettigrew and Rashea Nidefski from Care Resources



Lindsey Reames thanks Debbie Jones from Volunteers in Service

Kent County Community Action
Keystone Retirement Services
Lake Michigan Credit Union
League of Women Voters
Life EMS
LINC Up
Meals on Wheels Western Michigan
Mercantile Bank
Michigan First Credit Union
Michigan Secretary of State
Mobile Happy Lights – Community of Hearts
MSU Extension
Multitude Ministries
National Kidney Foundation
Network 180
Network 180 Mobile Crisis Team
New Hope Baptist Church
North American Senior Benefits
Oak Street Health
Other Way Ministries Mobile Farm Market

Pine Rest – Seeking Safety
Project Green
The Rapid
The Red Project
Renew Mobility
SALT
Senior Neighbors
Senior Project Fresh
Senior Sing A-Long
St. Alphonsus Parish
St. John’s United Church of Christ
SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access & Recovery (SOAR)
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Vibrant Futures
Volunteers in Service
Wholistic Insurance LLC
Xfinity/Comcast
YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin
YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids
Young Money Finance



Job Corps Culinary Arts students serve turkey with all the trimmings



Clockwise from top left: Honorees and staff gather at the Gerald R. Ford Job Corps Center; Lindsey Reames with Grand Rapids Black Nurses Association leaders Nina Western, Laura Moody and Earnestine Tolbert; Lindsey thanks GRPD Captain Cathy Williams; GRHC AARP worker Diane Perry gets a well-earned hug; Lindsey thanks Leonna White from DonnaCare at Home; Lindsey with Christina White, Joseph Gage and Brent Doornbos from Pine Rest; the GRHC Resident Services frontline team, from left, Resident Services Specialist Gregory Mason, Resident Services Manager Joyce Williams, Resident Services Specialists Eric Turkaleski, Latasha Maberry, Erin Shibley, Eulondon Reeves, Maria Lara and Rachel Siebert; Lindsey with Cathy Calvaneau from Mercantile Bank



GRHC Human Resources Update

Welcome, New Employees

Kristine Huston, Policy and Program Analyst. Kristine comes to the GRHC from The SOURCE where she was a Resource Navigator and Lead Facilitating Program Evaluator. She has also worked as a Case Management Specialist with the Kent County Department of Health and Human Services. Kristine has a master's degree in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University.

Lory Lopez, HCV Customer Service and Intake Coordinator. Prior to joining the HCV team, Lory was a Medical Assistant with Planned Parenthood. She has also held several retail customer service positions and has an associate's degree in Pre-Social Work from Grand Rapids Community College.

Joey Oosterman, Policy and Program Analyst. Joey comes to the GRHC from the Van Andel Institute where he was a Sponsored Research Administrator. He has also worked as a Business Intelligence Analyst for University of Michigan Health-West and as a Clinical Research Specialist for Corewell Health. Joey has a B.S. degree from the University of Michigan and is currently completing a Master of Public Administration degree at Grand Valley State University.

Ebony Robinson, HCV Customer Service and Intake Coordinator. Ebony joins the GRHC from Huntington National Bank where she was a Customer Experience Banker. She also honed her customer service skills as a CSR/Teller with Fifth Third Bank. Ebony has an associate's degree in Business Administration from Grand Rapids Community College.

Essence Trimble, Asset Manager for Antoine Court Apartments, Hope Community Rapid Re-Housing Program and Sheldon Apartments. Prior to joining our Asset Management team, Essence was an Assistant Property Manager with Trinity Property Consultants in Grand Rapids, and she has also worked as an Assistant Property Manager and Leasing Manager with Amp Residential. Essence has a B.A. in Communication from Michigan State University.

Daniel Wiarda is the Asset Manager for Campau Commons and Creston Plaza Apartments. Daniel is a Certified Property Manager and comes to the GRHC from a Senior Property Manager position at Green Property Management. He has also worked as a Property Manager for NAI Wisinski West Michigan. Daniel has a B.A. in Business Administration from Davenport University.

Paris Williams, Accounting Assistant. Prior to joining the GRHC Accounting team, Paris was a Revenue Audit Clerk for Gun Lake Casino in Wayland. She has an associate's degree in Accounting from Grand Rapids Community College.

Staff Lend a Hand at Habitat Home



Clockwise from top: GRHC management, HCV Program, Resident Services, and Policy and Program Planning staff gather for volunteer duty; Saquoya Hudnell installs a latch plate; Joyce Williams (left) and Olivia Reben get ready to help with trim work

During 2022 the GRHC made 23 undeveloped parcels purchased from the City of Grand Rapids years ago available to partner organizations planning to build affordable housing; all lots were offered at the original purchase price of \$2,000.

Habitat for Humanity of Kent County bought five lots with the goal of constructing affordable single-family homes. In late January ten Housing Commission staff had the honor of lending a hand with finish work at the Habitat home under construction at 362 Fox Street SW.

“There is a critical need for affordable housing in our area, and it is extremely gratifying to have the opportunity to support Habitat for Humanity’s efforts to make homeownership possible for low-income households,” noted GRHC Executive Director Lindsey Reames, one of the volunteers lending a hand.

The home at 362 Fox Street is expected to be completed this spring.

Looking for an exciting new career path? View the employment opportunities currently available with the GRHC:

<https://www.grhousing.org/employment-opportunities>

Resident Services Team, Partners Host Holiday Celebrations at GRHC Housing Communities

The fall and winter holidays were happenin' at GRHC housing developments, with the GRHC Resident Services team hosting or coordinating a variety of special events, including...

- Halloween party at Leonard Terrace Apartments hosted by Nursing students from the University of Detroit Mercy. Senior residents enjoyed cider, donuts and pumpkin decorating.
- Pumpkin decorating parties at Campau Commons and Creston Plaza Apartments.
- Hope Community Halloween party featuring holiday-themed coloring pages, costumes and plenty of tasty treats.
- Hope Community winter holiday cookie and lobby decorating party hosted by Nursing students from Calvin University.
- The staff of Hurst Mechanical hosted a mid-December holiday feast at Mount Mercy Apartments, continuing what has become a fun annual tradition for our senior residents there. The festivities included musical entertainment as well as turkey and all the trimmings.
- Tasty Christmas brunch and door decorating contest at Sheldon Apartments.
- Festive holiday arts and crafts parties at Antoine Court, Campau Commons and Creston Plaza Apartments.
- Gifts for GRHC senior residents provided by the Home Instead "Be a Santa to a Senior" Program.
- Senior Sing A-Long concert, plus pizza, carols, gift cards and holiday food baskets at Leonard Terrace.
- Christmas arts and crafts at Antoine Court Apartments.
- Christmas carol concert and singalong, holiday luminary craft and door decorating contest at Mount Mercy Apartments.



Pictured clockwise from top: GRHC Resident Services Specialist Latasha Maberry (standing) hosts a festive Halloween bash for the young residents of Hope Community and their parents; Resident Services Specialist Rachel Siebert helps a young resident show off a scary mask; partygoers enjoy their treats



Pictured clockwise from top left: Mount Mercy residents gather for the holiday feast provided by the employees of Hurst Mechanical; the diners enjoyed holiday music performed by Senior Sing A-Long artist and event volunteer Kevin Cavanaugh; Hurst Mechanical staff dish up the feast!

SOS Mobile Office Visits GRHC Developments



During October GRHC residents and staff welcomed the Michigan Secretary of State Mobile Office to Campau Commons and Creston Plaza Apartments. GRHC residents and staff appreciated the convenience of on-site services that included applying for or renewing a driver's license, vehicle title transfers and application for/renewal of disability placards.



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Rockford Construction Employees Hold Puzzle Drive to Bring Friendly Fun to GRHC Seniors

Rockford Construction crews have been working on the Community Hub that's being built across the street from the GRHC's Adams Park Apartments, and the team recently held a puzzle drive to benefit their Adams Park neighbors. Adams Park serves seniors ages 62 and older as well as adults with disabilities.

Many thanks to the thoughtful and generous employees of Rockford Construction for donating enough puzzles to keep not only Adams Park puzzlers busy, but also the residents of our other senior housing communities!



Clockwise from top right: GRHC Director of Resident Services Felicia Clay (center) shows off a few of the donated puzzles, with Rockford Construction's Angelina Densham (left) and McKenna Bland; Rockford Construction employees help load puzzles into GRHC staff cars; dozens of options offer puzzle fun for all interests and skill levels

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