

Attachment C

# **City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment's Strategic Plan**

## **An Updated Vision for Affordable Housing in Chandler**

**2020-2025**



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## **I. Purpose of the Strategic Plan**

The City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment Division (a.k.a. the Chandler Housing Authority) has historically served the housing needs of persons whose income is low and very low in the City of Chandler through HUD funded low rent public and Section 8 housing. CHRD has provided “decent, safe, and sanitary” low-income public housing to Chandler’s citizens since 1972. Throughout the decades the needs of our community have changed, and our agency needs a strategic plan to meet the changing needs proactively.

The Chandler’s Housing and Redevelopment Division (CHRD) is poised to transition from a provider of decent safe and sanitary housing to the provider of affordable housing that meets a higher community vision. This transition involves the potential disposition, demolition, or conversion of properties that no longer meets CHRD’s and City of Chandler viability and community standards. Strategies include redevelop opportunities through HUD’s repositioning strategies to leverage a public private partnership. In order to facilitate this challenging and lofty agenda, CHRD will pursue leveraging some of its limited resources to develop a creative plan that may allow CHRD to fund and execute the change. We must consider doing some things we have never done before.

The planning and achievement of our updated vision will result in the delivery of higher quality, affordable housing for our residents and applicants; and the utilization of staff intellectual resources to effectively direct the assets of the Chandler Housing Authority. Staff comprised of resources positioned in the Central Cost Center will investigate and potentially function more as a quasi-enterprise entity to become financially stronger and less dependent on unreliable HUD funding. This is one of the principle purposes of our Strategic Plan.

The Public Housing Authority Commission (the governing Board), the Housing and Redevelopment Manager, and staff of the CHRD, envision an evolving affordable housing product to better serve the modern needs of the City of Chandler. The older “Public Housing” product has served the needs of our community but is now at the point that it is dated and lacking modern design and functionality to fit the needs of our family residents. Meeting the needs is a challenging objective that significantly impacts the lives of our residents and the future of the community. To systematically transition our housing assets from the current federally funded “Low Rent and Section 8 Public Housing” to a product of mixed-income affordable housing products will take the coordination and cooperation of the CHRD, residents, City of Chandler and the federal government.

## II. The Vision Statement

### Vision Statement:

Creating and sustaining healthy, diverse neighborhood housing opportunities that promote individual responsibility, economic growth, human dignity and hope for the future.

## III. The Mission Statement

### Mission Statement:

The City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment Division (CHRD), together with our community partners, work to maintain safe, decent and affordable housing for low income individuals and families within our community.

## IV. Strategic Goals and Objectives:

### **1) Manage the Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing programs in an efficient and fiscally sustainable manner that will result in compliance and excellent customer service**

Continue to meet all criteria as a High Performing public housing authority in HUD's PHAS and SEMAP assessment. Promote a work environment that is motivating, dynamic and innovative. Provide staff training to keep pace with changing federal housing programs. Maintain policies and procedures in compliance with current HUD regulations and standards.

### **2) Maintain and strengthen financial viability**

Work to achieve positive cash flow within each managed program and asset. This includes continuing to increase the sources of nonfederal and federal funding. This may require a number of years of transition to accomplish. The Administrative and Management center may also look for opportunities to manage or acquire other affordable housing units and added them to the portfolio. When developing HUD income streams may involve developing partnerships with private or nonprofit entities through the use of tax credits and project based vouchers as well as other innovative financing vehicles. It may also include revenues from fee for service based professional property management services.

### **3) Improve public housing through demolition, disposition, or a combination of redevelopment and demolition, to transition our residents into more modern affordable housing family developments**

Upgrade and modernize public housing developments by developing a variety of housing

options including preserving current public housing, and/or reposition public housing into public/private partnership. Evaluate and implement rehabilitation of existing housing or replace existing stock with new construction, when feasible to increase livability and sustainability of our community.

The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), Section 18 (disposition), and other innovative approaches (i.e. financed with low income housing tax credits, federal home loan bank, federal and other sources) enhances the quality of life, promote responsibility and accountability of our residents. Through HUD's repositioning strategy options consider increasing existing multi-family units count, reduce the number of existing multi-family sites to maximize operation efficiency, increase the number of units for seniors, consider mixed income housing, construct new rental housing developments, and provide homeownership.

Submit letter of intent for HUD's RAD program and analyze reposition strategies options by redeveloping public housing stock and expand overall affordable housing portfolio. Require resident input throughout the assessment process. Research and pursue local non-profit partnership for possibility of obtaining special purpose vouchers and/or project based vouchers.

#### **4) Reposition the Scattered Site (nonfederal and federal) housing stock**

Through rehabilitation, disposition, (sale of properties) reposition assets to more multi-family style properties that are consolidated and less costly to manage. Utilize the proceeds from the sale of any assets to support and develop a new rental units and a self-sustaining community enhancing homeownership program.

#### **5) Continue to expand case management for our housing residents and participants and link to other human and social service providers**

Target and acquire available grants for continued development of innovative approaches for aiding responsible residents to achieve increased family self-sufficiency. Continue to increase the Family Self Sufficiency

To determine how to identify the different tenant population types that utilize our affordable housing products and examine how to best serve those individuals and families to aid them to become self- sufficient or less reliant on the safety net programs. Connect with the transportation, family support services and other business community to increase self- sufficiency.

The challenge is to find resources to evaluate, match and link tenants/families that have social/human services needs with providers that can assist our families. Tenant self-sufficiency will free up existing affordable housing for others to use. This will bend the curve for the growing need for more affordable housing.

**6) Require greater accountability for participants and landlords of all HCV programs**

Educate and train staff, participating and potential landlords in how existing HCV program regulations support stricter lease enforcement by landlords and lease compliance by participants to ensure that responsible and respectful participants are welcomed in every neighborhood. Expand Chandler's family self-sufficiency participation to demonstrate increased responsibility of participants to the community as more become self-supporting and free of all sources of subsidy.

**7) Achieve greater accountability for public housing residents through strengthened lease enforcement and lease provisions as well as enhanced monitoring and training.**

Develop, revise and refine lease provisions, administrative rules and supporting policies and procedures to create an enforceable lease that will sustain challenges through the hearing and court processes. Link appropriate infractions to a fee structure. Allocate staff time and resources to the timely processing of lease and rule enforcement.

**8) Continue to improve efficiency and effectiveness of our work force through targeted training programs, ongoing evaluations and hiring/retention practices.**

Key staff and leadership positions will be retiring and leaving the Housing and Redevelopment Division over the next five years. Recruitment and retention of qualified staff will become critical as the Division transitions to new leadership in all key supervisory positions. Training and elevation of qualified existing Housing staff will be necessary as long term experienced staff leave the Division. Consultants and on-site training may become necessary as vacancies occur.

**9) Continue to focus on curb appeal of the exterior and interior of all of our developments.**

Focus staff on the importance of attention to detail in improving resident and public perception as well as our ability to effectively market our buildings. Monitor Housing Division Performance Indicators within the Central Cost Center and report to the Housing and Human Services Commissioners.

**10) Provide a safe environment for our residents.**

Utilize lease enforcement, pre-lease screening, as well as city security efforts to screen or remove from tenancy those who are irresponsible and / or disrespectful with respect to the lease, vision and mission objectives. All programmatic efforts for families are to be focused on measures that will aid families to develop abilities necessary to move up and out of public housing.

**11) Develop and implement a streamlined online application and waiting list process.**

Utilize an online process for applicants to submit applications and update applicant

information without having to complete and submit a paper form.

## **12) Utilize a random lottery system for wait list placement.**

Utilize a lottery system for pre-applicant placement on the waitlist to be determined by a random lottery system to include preferences, thereby allowing all applicants with preferences the opportunity for an eligibility appointment no matter the place on the list.

## **V. Guiding Principles:**

1) Partnership and continued relationship and participation in Chandler's housing programs is contingent upon the partner maintaining alignment with Chandler's Vision and Mission quality criteria. This guiding principle applies to existing and future landlords, development partners, and recipients of housing assistance.

2) Affordable housing exists and Chandler may develop, and/or acquire affordable housing that delivers an income mix ratio to the maximum extent feasible with the following targets: (+/- 10 percent tolerance of):

- a. 80% - Low-Income/Public Housing/Housing Choice Voucher - Section 8
- b. 15 % - Affordable Housing /Tax Credit
- c. 5% - Market Rate or Near Market Rate income

3) For strategic planning purposes, planning term lengths shall be as follows:

- a. **Short Term** - 1 Year or Less.
- b. **Mid Term** - Greater than 1 Year and less than 3 Years.
- c. **Long Term** - Greater than 3 years

4) Homeownership - Chandler will seek to develop appropriate homeownership opportunities to assist in transitioning residents who demonstrate capacity to independently own and manage a home.

5) The Housing Division staff will build capacity for development, acquisition, and management of new/rehabilitated units through the Operating/Capital Fund Leveraging, Tax Credits, Acquisition, Partnership and other affordable housing opportunities with developers whose products align with our vision and mission.

8) Develop, acquire or rehabilitate affordable housing utilizing energy efficient building practices and environmentally friendly building designs/products to the maximum extent feasible.

## **Progress Report on Prior Five-Year Plan (FY2015-2020)**

The City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment Division (COCHRD) has worked toward achieving the goals outlined in the Five-Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Staff and Public Housing Authority Commission have embraced the challenging steps involved in working toward promoting affordable housing, creating opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and the availability of an affordable living environment free from discrimination.

### **Below is the progress towards each goal in the five-year plan ending FY2020 (June 30, 2020)**

**Goal One:** Assist the availability of affordable, decent, safe and affordable housing.

HUD released PIH Notice 2020-05 issued on April 10, 2020 that described COVID-19 Statutory and Regulatory Waivers available to PHAs pursuant to the authority provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Public Law 116-136). HUD waived and established alternative requirements for numerous statutory and regulatory requirements for the Public Housing program, Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, as detailed in the COCHRD Waivers attached to the PHA Five Year and Annual Plan submission. COCHRD Division adopted a list of the waivers to be used in the operations of the agency and posted on the website. These waivers were adopted by Chandler April 13, 2020 and continued through the next five year PHA Plan.

The Housing Division has managed to utilize close to 94 percent of the vouchers HUD has allocated to Chandler during this period. In an economic environment and limited available landlords accepting HCV, has presented our programs with uncertainties in leasing, however, the Housing Choice Voucher program families served has been fairly steady. The Housing Choice Voucher program budget is consistently managed to assure that Chandler has the best chance to utilize all 486 vouchers.

The vacancy rate for Public Housing continued to remain steady, with only approximately a 0.50 percent vacancy rate over the preceding annual term between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. Significant improvement in the vacancy rate is difficult to achieve, due to the migratory nature of the low-income population that we serve. Staff continues to monitor this area daily to turn units around and fill vacancies as quickly as possible.

Over the past five-years, the City of Chandler continues to manage and operate eleven (11) affordable housing (two townhomes - HOME funded, three condos, four scattered senior housing single-family homes, and two duplexes). The affordable housing stock will continue to be rented at below market rents that will be affordable to families that make between 50%-80% of area medium income with rents between \$1,102 and \$875.

We are a high performing Housing Authority in the Low Rent Public Housing Program and have been for the past year.

### *Resident Advisory Board*

As per federal requirements, the Housing Division established a Resident Advisory Board (RAB) comprised of both Public Housing residents and HCV Program participants to review the Annual PHA Plan and provide comments to program policies. The comment period is between Jan. 27, 2020 and March 12, 2020. RAB meetings were held on Nov. 14, 2019, Dec. 17, 2019, Feb. 21, 2020, and March 13, 2020 where plan and policy materials were distributed and discussed. There were no comments submitted for consideration.

**Goal Two:** Improve community quality of life and economic vitality.

At the time of the publication of this report, the City of Chandler, Housing and Redevelopment Division was recognized as a High Performing Housing Authority with a PHAS total score of 96 in Public Housing.

In the previous five-years, ending FY 2020, the City of Chandler invested considerable time and resources in training staff to become knowledgeable in the new methods necessary to promote a good work environment for employees that will ultimately benefit the customer. In 2019, the Housing Office made available online application for housing programs. The HCV waitlist opened on Jan. 27, 2020 to Feb. 10, 2020. 6,460 total pre-applicants were received during the time the HCV waitlist was opened (5,959 submitted online, 473 paper applications hand-delivered or mailed, 13 faxed, 15 emailed). Random computerized lottery was conducted 30 days after the waitlist closed and 4,000 pre-applications were selected. Letters were mailed March 10, 2020 to notify those that were selected be placed on the waitlist.

COCHRD continues to upgrade our housing software systems and purchased an on-line application module called RENTCafe late 2018 for our HCV and public housing programs. This program allows for residents in public housing to create work orders and when waitlist opens, it will allow applicants for PH and HCV to apply on-line. In addition, our City's web page is currently being upgraded. An in-house landlord outreach program, as well as the subscription use and links to Go Section8.com, are tools that have been a significant asset to staff, the public and other housing entities.

COCHRD operates in a fiscally prudent manner. The City of Chandler general fund contributes \$389,916 in annual ongoing funding, to support and help shore up the HUD Public Housing shortfall in subsidy. Our current Public Housing reserve is over one million dollars. These actions have helped to stabilize our maintenance and administrative financial picture. Staff has also been successful in getting and implementing

Management staff is keeping an eye towards diversifying financial interests in our HUD portfolio. Staff is in the initial phase of exploring and researching the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) and or Demo/Dispo programs to encourage redevelopment of 303 public housing units. In addition, Tax Credit projects, tax exempt bonds or other grants may play a role in transforming COCHRD revenue stream in this year.

In 2019, COCHD is in the process of facilitating the procurement of a financial consultant to

develop options for redevelopment. In addition, the COCHRD may submit to submit a RAD application in 2020.

Staff will continue to work towards expanding the availability and improving the overall quality of the affordable housing stock by continuing to modernize public housing and supporting efforts to improve the overall quality of the general housing stock. In 2018, the COCHRD was successful in keeping our elderly Kingston Arms Apartments designated for the elderly. The renewal of Kingston Elderly Designation is due August 2020.

Chandler has expanded the housing programs stock through the creation of housing location maps, landlord outreach, and by consistently monitoring the payment standard for the Housing Choice Voucher program. Our Housing Division adjusted the payment standards effective 12/1/19 to adjust for the recent increases in our local market rents.

Bedroom Size	Payment Standard
0	\$805
1	\$1,032
2	\$1,255
3	\$1,740
4	\$1,958
5	\$2,169
6	\$2,430

We have set systems in place to maintain a high voucher utilization rate and plan to work within the HUD guidelines to maximize the utilization of the Housing Choice Voucher program vouchers and/or budget. Maintaining our utilization rate will continue to be a challenge in 2020, as we work to maintain our ability to service those in need with the peculiar demands of managing varying costs within a budget based system of funding. In 2020, the COCHRD is looking to apply for Family Unification Program Vouchers and Choice Mobility Voucher.

Through the upgrades and exterior improvements made to the public housing units, specifically at site 4, the tenants have a renewed respect for the developments. LED lighting improvements, fencing improvements and new landscaping have increased the overall security and look of each development. We also continue to upgrade cabinetry at our sites, painting, roofing, irrigation and shower/tub projects with capital fund which adds to the aesthetic appeal of the units. Our flat rent program encourages higher income residents to stay or join the public housing program. Our partnership with the Chandler Police Department also provides a direct link to their resources to help screen all tenants and to address and mitigate problems as they arise. We continue to have our resident council involvements to include our resident beautification participants.

As of December 31, 2017, Chandler is smoke-free on all public housing sites. The annual plan submitted to HUD on April 17, 2017, Chandler's smoke free policy was submitted as required per federal regulation prior to HUD's July 31, 2018 deadline. Staff continue to provide resources and counseling letters for residents that may need assistance in cessation of smoking.

The Public Housing Youth Staff main hub is the Housing Youth Center (HYC), which was newly renovated in 2018 and has a computer lab with 12 computers. Recent adjustments were made the Youth Program starting in March of 2020, as the City began to shut down due to the Coronavirus, the six staff members of the Chandler Public Housing Youth Program were asked to reimagine and redesign their service to the Public Housing families quickly. Suddenly, the hundreds of kids who would normally be participating in the Spring Intersession Program, the After-School Program, and the Reading Tutoring Programs, were all sheltering inside their homes away from staff, friends, and school. The staff turned into door to door deliverers offering to pick up and deliver school lunches to all Housing families that requested them. From March 25-May 28, over 6,000 lunches were hand delivered by Youth Program staff! Over 640 Book Rich Environment books were delivered to the youth's homes in March and April. The staff began creating weekly activity packets for each program participant filled with educational worksheets, puzzles, games, crafts, snacks and personal messages. In May, when the word came that in-person programming would begin in June. During the normal Summer Youth drop-in program, the staff would provide recreational and creative activities for groups of 40-50 kids at a time, along with trips to public pools, museums, the library, and more. This year, however, they had to design a new program that would serve small groups of only 6-8 youth at a time who needed to stay 6 feet apart and wear face coverings. "The Summer of Learning" was conceived and implemented. Special interest "classes" for 3 different age groups were designed and offered in 3 different time slots throughout the day. Participants registered for the classes and were placed in the small groups on a first come-first served basis. Over 40 session topics were available for the youth to explore including crafts of all sorts, stop motion animation, world travel, chess, American Sign Language, exercise, poetry, growing plants, and so many more. Transportation was provided, school lunches were provided, all supplies were provided, and all at no cost to the participants. By June 18, with Coronavirus cases surging in Maricopa County, the in-person programming came to an end. Once again the youth began to shelter at home, and once again it was time to innovate. The Youth Program staff returned to delivering school lunches, books, and bigger and better activity packets to the youth at their homes. They also began rethinking, recreating, and redesigning the Youth Program so as to be ready to best serve the Housing families when the youth return to on-line and/or on campus learning.

**Goal Three:** Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of families and individuals.

COCHRD has annually applied for and received a Public Housing/Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator grant in 2019. This program strengthens our existing Housing Choice Voucher and Public housing programs and provides additional links to accredited higher education and job training skills. Currently, 120 families participate in the FSS programs.

Most discretionary policies and programs are created to promote self-sufficiency of tenants through a system of comprehensive supportive programs. Staff works to assist housing residents that need assistance by matching resources to promote tenant education and self-sufficiency. Our principle mission is "affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing" in conjunction with meeting HUD rules and policies augmented with preferential local controls. We support this mission through other social service/educational programs, which include the

Housing Youth Center, Youth Recreation Program, the Capital Improvement Program, and Social Service partnerships with other social service providers.

In 2018, COCHRD became a Book Rich Environment (BRE) Public Housing Authority. COCHRD brings vibrant culture of books to public housing residents. COCHRD brings free, high quality books to children and families, engage our local library, and build literacy partners in our community. The COCHRD is in our third year of the Read to Succeed tutoring program. Volunteers tutor afterschool at the HYC twice a week for an hour to assist our youth that are reading below second grade reading level.

We also work closely with nonprofit homeownership programs and our Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program to create Individual Development Account opportunities and FSS Escrow accounts to provide both financial and education support to prospective new homeowners.

**Goal Four:** Ensure Equal Opportunity in Housing for all Americans.

In 2019, the COCHRD purged the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher waiting list.

The waiting list for Public Housing is currently closed and the Housing Choice Voucher was opened Jan 27, 2020 to Feb. 10, 2020. Pre-applications were available in multiple ways. Pre-applicants could apply and submit an online pre-application: [chandleraz.gov/applyforhousing](http://chandleraz.gov/applyforhousing) or request a paper pre-application or in person at 235 S. Arizona Ave., Chandler, AZ 85225; or by phone 480-782-3200; or by fax 480-782-3220; or by email [chandler.housing@chandleraz.gov](mailto:chandler.housing@chandleraz.gov). The submission of a paper pre-application was available to dropped off in person at 235 S. Arizona Ave., Chandler, AZ 85225; by phone 480-782-3200; by fax 480-782-3220; or by email [chandler.housing@chandleraz.gov](mailto:chandler.housing@chandleraz.gov); or mail through the U.S. Postal Service to City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment, Mail Stop 101, P.O. Box 4008, Chandler, AZ 85244-4008, postmarked on or before Feb. 10, 2020.

The City accepted requests for reasonable accommodation, modification, and auxiliary aid and services at any time. Requests included (but not limited to) pre-applications in large print or Braille, readers, sign language interpreters, or assistance explaining forms due to disability. If you require a reasonable accommodation, please contact the office by phone at 480-782-3200 (7-1-1 TTY options: English 800-367-8939 / Español 800-842-2088), or in person at 235 S. Arizona Ave., Chandler, AZ 85225; or by fax 480-782-3220; or by email [chandler.housing@chandleraz.gov](mailto:chandler.housing@chandleraz.gov). In addition, Request for Language Assistance: Persons with limited English proficiency are entitled to language assistance with written or oral communication. These services are available at no cost. To obtain language assistance, anyone can contact our office by calling 480-782-3200. Notice to Individuals with Disabilities: The City of Chandler is committed to compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and to maintaining accessible facilities, services, programs and activities; promoting inclusion through reasonable modification; and striving to make all interactions with City government positive and successful for all. In addition, you may contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Jason Crampton, at 480-782-3402 (or 711 via Arizona Relay Service) or [ada.coordinator@chandleraz.gov](mailto:ada.coordinator@chandleraz.gov). Requests should be made as soon as possible before the scheduled event or meeting. For more information and FAQs, go to the website at

[chandleraz.gov/affordablehousing](http://chandleraz.gov/affordablehousing).

*Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)*

In response to the federal requirement for an expansion of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Housing Division implemented revised policies in both the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Public Housing Programs that expanded awareness of rights under the Act. The Housing Division provides awareness and notification to VAWA victims through written information regarding their rights when a family completes a pre-application to be put on a waiting list(s), during the briefing in the packet for new admissions, during the annual reexamination process, at termination or notification of eviction, at denial of assistance or admission, and upon request or when staff suspects a family member may qualify for VAWA. The VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights is an attachment and considered part of the Public Housing lease agreement. The VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights document is available in English and Spanish, as well as other languages upon request.

When a family requests VAWA protections, victim's rights information is provided to connect the family with resources. An emergency transfer policy was put in place for both Public Housing and the HCV Program to provide protections and additional housing opportunities for victims of domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence.

All information related to families requesting VAWA protections is kept confidential and not entered into a database or other format available to staff or the general public. It is the policy of the PHA to maintain the highest level of security possible for all families on the waiting list or participating in housing programs.