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# Five Year Strategic Plan

A roadmap for the future

August 1, 2013

Facilitated by:



## Executive Summary

### Goal

The strategic plan of the Rockford Housing Authority, with input from members of all the different constituencies that RHA touches – the board of commissioners, the executive leadership team, staff, home board councils, residents and community partners – had the following goal; to facilitate the creation of a five year strategic plan for the Rockford Housing Authority by working with the executive and leadership teams to encourage ownership, and thereby implementation, of an effective roadmap for the future. This will include both long and short terms goals for the organization.

### Process

The strategic planning process is accomplished in five steps:

- 1) Preparation
- 2) Assessment
- 3) Development
- 4) Adoption
- 5) Implementation

### Four Focus Areas

In the preparation and assessment phase the committee decided to focus on four areas of concentration when laying out the plan. These areas are:

- \* Finance and Administration
- \* Products and Services
- \* Clients and Stakeholders
- \* Employees

With these areas of concentration, staff was asked to prepare a ‘state of the organization’ presentation that would begin the strategic planning process so as to ensure everyone was informed and knew where the organization stood in all four areas. The summary of the information is as follows:

- 1) **Finance and Administration** – RHA is managing through some challenging times with not only a reduction in revenues, to a projected \$21.0 M in 2013 from \$29.7 in 2010, but a sequester in Washington that puts future spending on hold. With additional need in the community, an increasing asset base and a shortfall in years prior to 2013, the

finances of the organization are in a delicate balance, requiring all departments to operate at maximum efficiency. The message from the HUD offices for RHA was to ‘make it or fail’. RHA has chosen to plan for the future, working additional revenue streams (grant sources, contract services, development fees and streamlined property cash flow) to make up for some of the loss.

- 2) **Products and Services** – A variety of different initiatives from new developments to programs designed to assist residents are moving forward. Escrow funds paid to FSS graduates has increased over 100% from its 2010 levels, putting residents in a stronger position for employment. Ellis Heights is beginning a creative asset development project that is designed to leverage artisanal talent to help residents ensure their economic future. RHA is continuing to push forward the effort to link Section 8 tenants to good landlords who can provide quality, affordable housing. And local community organizations are partnering with RHA to provide additional support services when needed. RHA is diligently investing in its housing stock to improve the appeal and value of its properties.
- 3) **Clients and Stakeholders** – New resident programming and involvement with community partners has put RHA on a path to improve relationships between all stakeholders involved with the organization. The Ellis Heights arts initiative, the increased standards for property inspections and the ability for residents to be hired for property improvement are all part of an increased focus to provide residents with opportunity, advancement, increased customer service and responsiveness.
- 4) **Employees** – Over time the employees have encountered issues with poor communication, management inconsistencies and resident frustration. RHA is undertaking a cultural shift designed to improve communication and increase trust levels between departments and throughout the entire management structure. A new communications plan has been developed and implementation is scheduled to start mid 2013 with the goal of improving the ability for employees to communicate not only with each other but with residents and management.

## Focus Groups

In the preparation for planning focus groups were conducted with four teams: the board, the leadership staff, resident representatives and community partners. Each team was asked to give input on current direction, ideas for the future and positives and negatives of the organization. Each team answered a set of questions that helped focus the planning sessions and ensure issues and initiatives were represented. The notes to these sessions can be found in the appendices.

## Mission

The planning team reviewed the mission and decided to simplify and focus. The result was a new, streamlined mission statement that everyone felt reflected the direction they wanted to take the organization. The new RHA Mission is:

**RHA partners with the community and responsible residents to transform houses into homes while guiding families to self-sufficiency**

## Values

An updated list of organizational values was developed, incorporating building on past value statements and adding others to ensure the organization was pulling in the same direction.

The RHA values are:

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Respectful</b>
<b>Quality</b>	<b>Accountable</b>
<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Consistent</b>
<b>Resourcefulness</b>	<b>Caring</b>
<b>Collaborative</b>	<b>Professional</b>

## Vision

The group discussed writing a vision that was general and broad or a vision that had more specific target to enable the team to focus. The team chose a specific vision and wrote the following:

**Within 5 years the RHA will re-establish itself as a high performing agency that is a leader in housing and sustainable communities by developing additional, non-HUD revenue streams, increasing our asset base and offering state-of-the-art resident initiatives.**

## Organizational Goals and Objectives

The Board provided direction for the planning team by remaining diligent in its focus on 11 key organizational goals and objectives. It was from these goals and objectives the planning team was encouraged to establish a strategy scorecard and annual work plan to establish a clear plan to achieve shared, desired results. In this plan Initiatives, Action Steps, Owners and Deadlines were identified.

**1) Maintain and strengthen financial viability.**

Achieve positive cash flow within each managed program and asset. This includes weaning the Central Office Cost Center from the use of diminishing Capital Funds to maximize its use for capital improvement to the full benefit of our developments. This may require a couple of years of transition to accomplish. The Asset Management Group may also enter into partnership with private firms to manage acquired affordable housing units added to the portfolio.

**2) Develop Non-HUD income streams**

Development of Non-HUD income streams may involve developing partnerships with private 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) Through demolition, disposition, or a combination of redevelopment and demolition, transition our residents into modern affordable housing family developments.**

Develop a variety of housing options including mixed income housing, scattered site housing, homeownership options, tax credit projects, the utilization of project base vouchers and other innovative approaches which enhance quality of life and promote responsibility and accountability of our residents.

**4) Upgrade the Scattered Site program**

Through rehabilitation, demolition, and the sale of properties that are not financially viable to maintain. Utilize the proceeds from the sale of obsolete assets to support and develop a new rental units and a self-sustaining community enhancing homeownership program.

**5) Upgrade and modernize the high rise and low rise buildings**

For developments that will be retained, creatively utilize a variety of grant funding sources to leverage investment capital including; Capital Fund, Energy Performance Contracting, Capital Fund leveraging, tax credits and Choice Neighborhoods.

**6) Expand case management capabilities in our Resident Services Departments**

Target and acquire available grants for continued development of innovative approaches for aiding responsible residents to achieve increased self-sufficiency.

**7) 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

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participants to ensure that responsible and respectful participants are welcomed in every neighborhood.

Expand RHA'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.

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

**9) Continue to improve efficiency and effectiveness of our work force through targeted training programs and hiring practices.**

**10) 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 Dashboard Key performance Indicators within the Asset Management Group (AMG) and report quarterly to the Board of Commissioners.

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

Utilize lease enforcement, pre-lease screening, as well as private and city security efforts to screen out 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.

## Strategy Scorecard

With Mission, Values and Vision, the group took the four focus areas and developed strategic objectives, measures, targets and initiatives that form the basis for the strategic action steps that, together, with the strategic scorecard, will be the RHA strategic plan. The intention of the strategic scorecard is to present a top-level view of organizational goals and intentions while summarizing the direction in a one-page document for clarity and brevity.

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## ROCKFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY | STRATEGY SCORECARD

**MISSION:** RHA partners with the community & responsible residents to transform houses into homes while guiding families to self-sufficiency

**VALUES:** Leadership, Quality, Accountability, Integrity, Consistency, Resourcefulness, Caring, Collaborative, Respectful, Professional

**VISION:** Within 5 years the RHA will re-establish itself as a high performing agency that is a leader in housing and sustainable communities by developing additional, non-HUD revenue streams, increasing our asset base and offering state-of-the-art resident initiatives.

FOCUS AREA	OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGETS	INITIATIVES
<b>FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Re-establish High Performer status</li> <li>2) Increase and manage revenues</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) PHAS/MASS/SEMAP scores</li> <li>2) Income statement, balance sheet</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Increase SEMAP and PHAS scores at least 5 points annually</li> <li>2) Grow revenues at least 5% overall</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Monitor indicators monthly</li> <li>2) Perform quarterly inspections with maintenance completed w/in 30 days</li> <li>3) Increase tenant rent collection policies</li> <li>4) Create a revenue-growth committee</li> <li>5) Search and apply for grants</li> <li>6) Acquire additional housing stock</li> </ol>
<b>PRODUCTS AND SERVICES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Provide safe, modern quality housing with respected/valued tenants</li> <li>2) Link tenants to landlords that provide quality, affordable housing</li> <li>3) Develop a strategy/plan to develop our family sites for the future</li> <li>4) Provide residents w/quality programming increasing opportunity and self-sufficiency</li> <li>5) Partner w/community agencies to provide opportunities for additional support services</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Through REAC and appraisals, monitor the appreciation in asset value. Deconcentration of poverty</li> <li>2) Annual tenant satisfaction surveys. Deconcentration of poverty. Landlord &amp; quality of product</li> <li>3) Deconcentration of poverty. Performance against market</li> <li>4) Deconcentration of poverty</li> <li>5) Increase tenant responsibility and self-sufficiency</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continued value appreciation of assets (10%/year) Reach and maintain high/stable REAC scores</li> <li>2) Survey 100% of residents @ move-in or re-cert. Reduce transfers by 25%/year</li> <li>3) Increase in value of adjacent neighborhood properties by 5%</li> <li>4) Decrease evictions by 20%/year</li> <li>5) Increase average tenant income by 5%/year at each development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Do market study in each development and develop deconcentration study</li> <li>2) Establish tenant and landlord satisfaction surveys</li> <li>3) Launch landlord outreach program</li> <li>4) Prepare tenants for independent, self-sufficient living by doing a needs assessment and partnering with the city to ensure access to resources</li> <li>5) Increase agency and programming partnerships</li> <li>6) Apply for additional grants</li> </ol>
<b>CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Increase customer service by improving working relationships between departments and increasing internal/external awareness of RHA services</li> <li>2) Provide clear and concise information related to the direction of RHA</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Internal and external referral tracking</li> <li>2) Constituent satisfaction surveys</li> <li>3) Quarterly news to community partners</li> </ol> <p>Year #1 baseline survey Annual survey post state-of-the-agency</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 50% of internal and external referrals and survey results will yield a positive result</li> <li>2) 50% (100%) of community partners would have a clear understanding of RHA direction</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Annual recognition of staff, clients and community partners</li> <li>2) Employee and resident incentive and recognition program (gas cards, gift certificates)</li> <li>3) Regularly poll clients for feedback on web and physically at property drop boxes</li> <li>4) Improving and developing properties</li> <li>5) Quarterly newsletter of residents</li> <li>6) Maximize social media. Improve/increase number of posts</li> </ol>
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Improve employees' abilities to accept change</li> <li>2) Improve employees' effectiveness and efficiency</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Employee satisfaction</li> <li>2) Employee effectiveness and efficiency</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Monitor and Improve satisfaction by 15%</li> <li>2) Improve overall knowledge of day-to-day operations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Benchmark employee satisfaction with confidential employee survey</li> <li>2) Create monthly newsletter</li> <li>3) Cross train employees intra-departmentally</li> <li>4) Provide educational training for employees</li> <li>5) Use communications plan to roll out changes to all employees</li> </ol>

## Strategic Action Steps

The following Action Steps support the 5-year Strategy Scorecard and will be created annually and submitted for approval.

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STRATEGIC ACTION STEPS FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION – YEAR ONE

Initiatives	Action Steps	Owner	Deadline	Cost
Monitor indicators monthly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Determine what is being scored</li> <li>2) Develop systems/ spreadsheets to chart and store</li> <li>3) Determine members that will contribute</li> <li>4) Plug in figures to get results</li> <li>5) Analyze the results</li> <li>6) Address weakness /areas of improvement</li> </ol>	Lead – CFO w/assistance from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Operations</li> <li>• HCV Program Dir.</li> <li>• Policies &amp; Procedures Mgr.</li> <li>• Finance Manager</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 9/13</li> <li>2) 10/13</li> <li>3) 10/13</li> <li>4) Thursday before board meeting</li> <li>5) Immediate after reports are generated</li> <li>6) Immediate</li> </ol>	1-3) 10 hours each 4-6) 4 hours each
Perform quarterly inspections and complete work orders in 30 days	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Schedule of inspections</li> <li>2) Review HAB outstanding w/o monthly</li> <li>3) Ask/analyze reasons for cuts w/o</li> <li>4) Assist to overcome and complete quickly</li> </ol>	Director of Operations w/assistance from site managers	1) 9/13	3 hours
Increase tenant rent collection policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Introduce and give a copy to all managers</li> <li>2) Enforce and monitor TAR monthly</li> </ol>	Director of Operations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 9/13</li> <li>2) Immediately following</li> </ol>	2 hours/month
Create Revenue Growth Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Seek volunteers</li> <li>2) Set meeting dates – routinely</li> <li>3) Set initial meeting</li> </ol>	Accountant Procurement and Contract Mgr.	1) 9/13	2 hours
Search and apply for grants (Cross reference with Products and Services)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Determine who is involved/responsible to apply</li> <li>2) Set initial meeting to discuss process of searching and applying</li> <li>3) Determine grant sources/websites and assign weekly monitoring</li> </ol>	Redevelopment Project Manager  Procurement and Contract Mgr.	1) 9/13	2 hours
Acquire additional housing stock	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Meet with developer to understand what is involved</li> <li>2) Should the opportunity arise, ask for investment</li> </ol>	Redevelopment Project Manager	1) 9/13	2 hours

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### STRATEGIC ACTION STEPS FOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES\* – YEAR ONE

Initiatives	Action Steps	Owner	Deadline	Cost
Do market study for each development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Completed de-concentration study – PH</li> <li>2) Staff review and comment – MI</li> <li>3) Review results of market study to determine programmatic need</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) CEO- PH, MI</li> <li>2) Redevelopment Project Mgr.- PH, MI</li> <li>3) Resident Program Mgr. – RP</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) De-concentration study 9/13</li> <li>2) Market study – 9/13</li> </ol>	\$28 K de-con Market study \$10K-\$15K
Establish tenant, landlord and staff satisfaction surveys – PH, S8, RP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Decide on info to capture by department</li> <li>2) Establish calendar and procedure</li> <li>3) Create system to praise accomplishments and improve deficiencies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Policies &amp; Procedures Mgr.</li> <li>2) HR Manager/HCV Program Dir.</li> <li>3) Site Ops Dir./Resident Program Mgr.</li> </ol>	90 days	200 hours and \$10K in staff time
Landlord Outreach – S8, MI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Refine and implement training program and expectations – S8</li> <li>2) Develop ongoing training schedule- S8</li> <li>3) Create rental property database – MI</li> <li>4) Create outreach programs for those landlords – MI</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,2,3,4) HCV Program Dir./ Redevelopment Project Mgr.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 9/13</li> <li>2) 1/4/14</li> <li>3) 1/14</li> <li>4) 1/14</li> </ol>	20 hours – \$1K  200 hours – \$10K
Complete needs assessment to prepare tenants for self-sufficient living. Partner to ensure access and increase agency and programming partnerships – <i>Cross Ref. to Clients and Services</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Implement survey and analyze data</li> <li>2) Develop system to use data to improve processes</li> <li>3) Implement systems to connect residents to programs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,2,3) Policies &amp; Procedures Mgr., Site Operations Dir., Redevelopment Project Mgr.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 2/14</li> <li>2) 7/14</li> <li>3) 9/14</li> </ol>	
Apply for additional grants – <i>Cross Ref. to Finance and Administration</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Search for opportunity</li> <li>2) Apply</li> </ol>	Dependent on opportunity or grant	Grant driven	

\* PH – Public Housing, S8 – Section 8, MI – Mixed Income, RP – Resident Programs. If a product/program/service is not referenced, the initiative is not applicable for that product/program/service

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STRATEGIC ACTION STEPS FOR CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS – YEAR ONE

Initiatives	Action Steps	Owner	Deadline	Cost
Annual recognition of staff, clients and community partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Establish committee to plan and develop the event</li> <li>2) Set an annual date</li> <li>3) Ensure everyone is informed with save the date information</li> <li>4) Send invites to all</li> <li>5) Secure funding for the event</li> </ol>	CEO CFO HR/ADMIN Mgr Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 9–11/13</li> <li>2) 11/13</li> <li>3) 1/14</li> <li>4) 2/14</li> <li>5) 11/13</li> </ol>	Event \$15,000 Staff time – \$500 Admin/supplies – \$100
Employee and resident incentive and recognition program (gas cards, gift cards)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Establish committee – RHA</li> <li>2) Committee to develop guidelines and rules</li> <li>3) Secure funding for program</li> <li>4) Determine award timeframes</li> </ol>	HR/Admin Mgr.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 9/13</li> <li>2) 11/13</li> <li>3) 10/13</li> <li>4) 11/13</li> </ol>	Staff time – \$500 Admin/supplies – TBD by committee
Poll clients for feedback on web and physically at property drop boxes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Establish and promote property drop boxes</li> <li>2) Post information on suggestion cards to residents on website, Facebook and newsletter</li> <li>3) Collect data monthly from sites</li> </ol>	Policies and Procedures Mgr	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 8/13</li> <li>2) 8/13</li> <li>3) 9/13</li> </ol>	Admin/supplies – \$100 Staff time – \$400
Improving and developing properties – <i>Cross ref. Products and Services</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Establish a communication plan w/products and services group</li> <li>2) Establish a plan to coordinate the responses to residents on improvements and developments</li> </ol>	Site Operations Director Physical Asset/QA Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 9/13</li> <li>2) 1/14</li> </ol>	TBD based on designated and approved improvements and developments
Establish quarterly newsletter of residents, staff – <i>Cross ref. Employees</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) RHA staff committee established</li> <li>2) Committee to determine timeframes, content of newsletter</li> </ol>	CEO – lead w/review of need for Mkt/PR Mgr.	1,2) 1/14	Estimated staff – \$500 Admin/supplies – TBD
Maximize web & social media. Improve and increase traffic and posts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) In progress. Continue trend of regular posts related to all agency business</li> </ol>	CEO – lead w/review of need for Mkt/PR Mgr.	1) Review of need 2/14	Maintenance software – TBD

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### STRATEGIC ACTION STEPS FOR EMPLOYEES – YEAR ONE

Initiatives	Action Steps	Owner	Deadline	Cost
Benchmark employee satisfaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine survey team. Team to have representatives from each dep't</li> <li>Review/develop survey w/external input</li> <li>Implement baseline survey</li> <li>Report baseline results</li> <li>Establish bi-annual survey schedule</li> <li>Establish system to evaluate, act, implement and improve</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR/Admin. Mgr.</li> <li>Committee</li> <li>HR/Admin. Mgr. w/vendor</li> <li>Vendor w/CEO</li> <li>Committee</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9/13</li> <li>11/13</li> <li>12/1-15/13</li> <li>1/14</li> <li>1/14</li> <li>3/14</li> </ol>	10 hours Survey consultant TBD by quote 7 hours TBD by quote 8 hours
Create monthly newsletter – <i>Cross ref. Products and Services</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey employees as to what should be in newsletter</li> <li>Develop format, reporting process and person to compile and distribute</li> <li>Compile and distribute</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO w/review Mktg./PR Mgr. as needed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10/13</li> <li>2-3 days</li> <li>11/13</li> </ol>	# employees X 30 minutes  Varies
Cross train employees for flexibility and understanding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department heads to develop strategy</li> <li>Develop model</li> <li>Implement ongoing calendar/coordinate</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HCV Program Dir./Site Operations Dir./Redevelopment Project Mgr./Finance Mgr.</li> <li>HR &amp; Admin. Mgr.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11/13</li> <li>12/13</li> <li>1/14</li> </ol>	20 hours  # of employees X 56 hours
Provide relevant education for employees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and review upcoming training opportunities</li> <li>Include in newsletter</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR Assistant</li> <li>HR Assistant</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11/13</li> <li>Monthly</li> </ol>	2 hours  2 hours
Implement the communication plan throughout RHA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule RHA meeting to explain and discuss communications plan</li> <li>Implementation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO</li> <li>Staff lead by CEO</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9/13</li> <li>2/14</li> </ol>	# employees X 2 hours 1 hour

## APPENDICES – FOCUS GROUP RESULTS– COMMUNITY PARTNERS, RESIDENTS, STAFF AND BOARD

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS FEEDBACK

The Community Partners focus group began with 5 people. Everyone actively participated and expressed appreciation for being included in on the process before the planning actually started. First question: Looking at the last Strategic Plan and scorecard, what did we do well, what can we improve on?

A few of the participants said that didn't have the information to know whether or not RHA has performed to plan. That is to say, they weren't familiar with the plan and they hadn't seen measurements against the plan. Communication of the plan is an area for improvement. The following are ideas for improving communication of the plan and improving communication in general at RHA:

- Have it available to all invested organizations
- Once goals have been established, discuss how they will be achieved
- Make progress reports available online
- At the Mayor's task force meeting have a hard copy available. Send to those who would like via email
- Integrate progress on goals through Rock Stat process. If things are falling behind, tell us what steps you are taking and what support you need to catch up.
- Create a conversation
- Continuum of Care – HUD designates grant \$\$\$. What is happening? Display through dashboards.
- RHA should frame its own message with both strengths and accomplishments on a dashboard.
- Unravel the 'mystery' of government
- Ensure that acronyms are given definition so everyone knows what the terms in the documents mean

Second question: Do you agree with our direction? Is the direction we are setting out on still correct?

- Positive about 'up and out' and increasing the impact of self-sufficiency programs
- We don't know what the outcomes have been so far from the direction but the direction is good
- Accountability is good. RHA is not embarrassed about focusing on improvement
- More transparency is good.
- Need more technology access both in and outside of residences
- The partnerships with community partners has gotten better
- The Boys and Girls clubs could expand to parents with RHA's help

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- Report good stats and stories with partners. Connect information to applications (of clients and residents). Needs to be a central information point
- Connect residents
- Connect partnerships
- How is RHA's performance measured? Communicate that. Communicate progress toward that. What is the community impact? What is the resident impact?

Third question: How are we working with you as partners? What should we continue to do? What can we do better? How is our performance on your team?

- We would like to move into all developments
- Space sharing program with us
- Share personnel information so we know with whom to speak. Who is in charge at specific buildings? Sharing lines of communication
- Email responsiveness good
- Everyone at RHA seems open
- Give us access to information with targets and goals
- Help us to keep issues from escalating
- Prioritize with goals

Fourth question: What do you want to see in 5 years? How do you see your organization and its relationship with RHA in 5 years?

- Close case management with joint efforts being well connected
- Having people see housing as an entry into a path towards success
- Community-wide commitment
- Coordinated system of helping people out of poverty
- All services to residents are part of ONE case plan
- One point of entry to everyone in the partnership to provide services through Workforce Investment.
- Virtual single-point entry
- Connections!
- Connections with formal agreements and partnerships

## RESIDENT FEEDBACK

The board focus group began with 9 residents. Everyone participated actively with comments and input to all of the questions. Like the staff and board the residents read the *The Dog Poop Initiative* to ensure that the whole leadership team was a part of the concept of 'pointers' and 'scoopers'. We asked an opening question which was "How does this story apply to all of us?" The answers were the following:

- Sometimes people prefer to remain a pointer but if you empower them they can move up the scooping chain

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- Help give a sense of ownership

First question: Do you feel you are a leader at RHA? Why or why not?

Everyone said they do feel like leaders.

Second Question: What is good about RHA? What needs improvement? Do you agree with the results of the survey?

- More maintenance/updating and replacement of obsolete fixtures/countertops/closet doors/cabinets/cupboards/kitchens/ drawers/opening doors
- Painting apartments. Some have not been painted in 14 to 15 years.
- Carpet on floor in hallway and in units is old
- Every apartment should have a tub or showers that can accommodate chairs
- Make apartments ADA compliant
- There are security concerns when power goes out
- Is there any way to have a PA system in the building so when the power goes out you can tell people what's going on in the building
- Give us feedback from compliance meetings and strategic plans so we can keep updated on progress
- Information needs to be disseminated back through resident council meetings
- Put a newsletter under resident doors
- Information needs to flow from RHA to resident council and from resident council to residents
- When issues come up there's no follow-thru from RHA
- Email works or manager from building but the phone response from RHA is not good
- RHA should move to alternative energy resources. What about solar panels? HUD was supposed to look into that. What happened?

Third Question: What is the most important thing we need to do in the coming year to focus our organization and succeed?

- Seal and wash windows
- We need to take better care of the inside of the properties as well as the outside
- The intercom system is not working
- The garbage chutes get clogged and need cleaning regularly
- Spend \$\$ on inside of apartments instead of just on community rooms
- The inspectors don't seem to be thorough. There needs to be accountability and an itemized check list to ensure everything gets checked and that it's not just a few, easy things
- Can we use Section 3 to help repair the apartments with the talents of the tenants that live there?

Fourth Question: How do you see yourself as part of the solution?

- Be proactive

## Rockford Housing Authority – Strategic Plan

- Communicate with each other
- Explain the monthly budget to residents
  - How can we overcome the lack of caring by residents because “it’s not theirs”?
  - Need to transmit personal pride
  - Get involved with residents
  - Need a roadmap for the future

### STAFF FEEDBACK

The staff focus group began with 14 people who were a mix of the leadership team and some volunteers who wanted to be part of the process. Most everyone participated actively with comments and input to one or several of the questions. The staff read a book that will be distributed to the organization called, The Dog Poop Initiative which highlights the importance of taking ownership and being involved in solving problems instead of just pointing them out. The terms ‘pointer’ and ‘scooper’ were used to identify those behaviors of pointing out the problem and those willing to solve the problem.

First question: Do you feel you are a leader at RHA? Why or why not?

Many of the participants spoke up and agreed with this statement. The following feedback was part of the feedback that the group gave in response to what leadership at RHA required of them. The comments were as follows:

- Being a leader means being willing to help
- Being a leader means speaking up
- There are two different kinds of leadership: positional and personal leadership
- Leaders want RHA to be successful
- Leadership requires us to overcome current negative impressions
- Leadership requires that we set short term goals and then achieve them to demonstrate performance
- Leadership requires turning negatives into positives
- Leadership asks everyone to support the goals of the team
- Being a leader means encouraging people and providing direction and help to lead people to their goals

Second question: What is good about your team? What needs improvement?

Good Team Attributes

- Ability to communicate
- Experience and diversity of experience
- Professional behavior
- Camaraderie
- Dedication and willingness to help
- Work ethic

## Rockford Housing Authority – Strategic Plan

### Things the Team Can Improve On

- Communication both with each other and the public at large
- Getting respect for resident programs outside and changing perceptions
- Promoting teamwork throughout the agency
- Having a mutual understanding that perceptions aren't always reality
- Shadow others at their job; know how one thing affects others throughout the organization
- Cross train/intermingle
- Just because something is different doesn't mean it is better. Trust me that I know my job. Don't second guess me.
- At the same time, be open to changes
- Tell our own story to the public. Don't rely on PR agencies to craft our story
- Treat residents the way you would like to be treated

Third question: What is the most important thing we need to do in the coming year to focus our organization and succeed?

- Believe in what we do
- Let the dust settle from all the changes. Help people to catch up.
- Prioritize with goals
- Empower each other
- Build each other up and work on our individual strengths
- Training/Cross Training and consistent standards will help us effectively implement our programs

Fourth question: How do you see yourself as part of the solution?

- Take initiative – Scoop!
- Set personal goals from organizational goals both direct and indirect.
- Be an example
- Keep an open mind
- Don't accept negativity. No gossip.
- Resolve issues directly with the person that you are having a problem with
- Learn how to give constructive feedback
- Walk the talk
- Lead when it's necessary. Follow when it's necessary.
- Notice when someone is having a bad day
- Take advantage of what we have here
- Know how to separate professional from personal
- Look at the whole picture
- When you notice a problem and point it out, provide a possible solution
- Improve the retaliatory culture which is detrimental to the team

## Rockford Housing Authority – Strategic Plan

- Take responsibility for your role
- If you mess up – own up!

### BOARD FEEDBACK

The board focus group began with 5 members of both board and staff. Everyone participated actively with comments and input to all of the questions. Like the staff, the board read the The Dog Poop Initiative to ensure that the whole leadership team was a part of the concept of ‘pointers’ and ‘scoopers’.

First question: Looking at the content of the past strategic plan, what did we do well? What can we improve on?

What we did well:

- We built credibility and a brand
- Our consistency improved
- We conducted ourselves professionally in the face of some tough issues
- Our vision statement remains fairly solid with some modification that allows for integration and blending – Multi-tiered communities. More clarity.
- Our mission statement doesn’t need to change

What we can improve on:

- We need to move from property management (tactics) to property development (strategic)
- We need to communicate (and thereby execute with more buy-in) the strategic plan better
- We need to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of our residents
- Respect the community heritage that currently exists
- Move to an asset-based approach
- It’s not just about real estate – it’s about people
- MUST HAVE respect and accountability not only for the residents but for our properties
- Commitment to quality
- We must have an honest picture of resident programs and their needs
- We must leverage connections with community partners (mental health, etc). We can’t do it all
- We have to establish that we are not the housing of last resort

Second Question: Do you agree with our direction? Is it still the right way to go?

Everyone agreed we were headed in the right direction and it was important to stay the course.

Third Question: We are changing culture. Is this the right thing to do? If so, what suggestions do you have to help make this happen? What do you see from your perspective?

- The culture didn’t change in the past. This is the first time we have had the environment to create a ‘scooping’ culture.
- Some scoopers are afraid of retaliation

## Rockford Housing Authority – Strategic Plan

- Ron has asked the board to call staff and ask for their impressions of how things are going
- Ask staff for suggestions and then listen

Fourth Question: What suggestions do you have for the director? How can he best implement the direction you believe he should take?

- Continue pursuing the environment of simplified information that is direct and honest
- Continue transparency
- Ron is spreading himself too thin. Needs to delegate
- Need to ensure, over time, there is a robust succession plan
- Get procedures documented
- Make the new system sustainable for future leaders