



# Building Pathways to Affordable Housing and Homeownership

The Rockford Housing Authority's Proven Model for Resident Success

RESIDENT SUCCESS PRESENTATION

# A Two-Pronged Approach to Housing Success

## The Challenge

"Building homes is only half the solution. Preparing families to purchase and sustain homeownership is equally important."

- **HUD's FSS regulations** promote a structured, supportive pathway to self-sufficiency and empower families to become homeowners through education, incentives, and partnerships

## Our Approach

- **Build Partnerships** Create and establish long lasting relationships for affordable housing opportunities throughout Rockford
- **Prepare & Educate** Equipping families with skills to manage homeownership residents to successfully become homeowners
- **Guidance & Support** Maintain financial stability by building escrow accounts as families increase income and savings



# Core Principles of HUD FSS

Empower low-income families to achieve economic independence to promote self-sufficiency through coordinated services and assist families in transitioning to homeownership and stability.



## Family-Centered Approach

Customized service plans addressing individual family needs



## Incentive-Based Model

1. Escrow savings as motivation
2. Rewards for achieving milestones



## FSS Program Components Supporting Homeownership

1. Transition from rental assistance to ownership
2. Planning for mortgage readiness



## Partnership and Coordination

1. Collaboration with job training, education, and housing programs
2. Engagement with community resources

# More Than 50 Years of Housing Leadership

Established in 1951, it wasn't until the 70's programs like FSS was created. Since then, RHA has built the systems, relationships, and expertise needed to support an affordable housing strategy. Our goals and initiatives:



## Public Housing to Home Owners

Create & establish pathways to affordable homeownership



## Housing Choice Vouchers & Family Self-Sufficiency

Assist families from renting to Home ownership



## Homeownership Initiatives

Step by step strategies for families that may not have access to mortgage opportunities



## Community Partnerships

Build and unify local relationships to amplifying our impact with building a thriving community in which all can find stabilization and value

# The Foundation of Homeownership Readiness

HUMAN SERVICES

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

RESIDENT OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM



## Every Participant Follows an Individualized Service Plan

RHA prepares residents **before they ever apply for a mortgage**. Long-term financial health — not just housing placement — is our measure of success.

Full-Time Employment

Credit Score 620+

Cash Assistance  
Independence

Savings Accumulation

Escrow Account Growth

# From Renting to Owning

HUD's FSS regulations promote a structured, supportive pathway to self-sufficiency.

## Financial Literacy

Understand budgeting and credit basics



## Homebuyer Education

Attend workshops and know the process



## Credit Counseling

Improve credit and create a plan



## Savings Development

Build escrow and down payment funds

Escrow savings accumulated through the FSS Program often serve as a critical down payment resource, bridging the gap between aspiration and ownership.

RHA walks alongside every family through each stage from financial education to closing day.

# Results That Demonstrate Success

These are real Rockford families building real financial stability — and our numbers prove it.

**101**

## Active Participants

Currently enrolled in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program

**62**

## Escrow Account Holders

Building tangible savings and wealth through structured accounts

**15**

## 2025 -2026 Program Graduates

Families who have completed the full self-sufficiency pathway

**300+**

## Fully Independent

Families who achieved complete independence from cash assistance



# A Proven Track Record of Homeownership

## Decades of Homeownership Outcomes

SINCE 1996

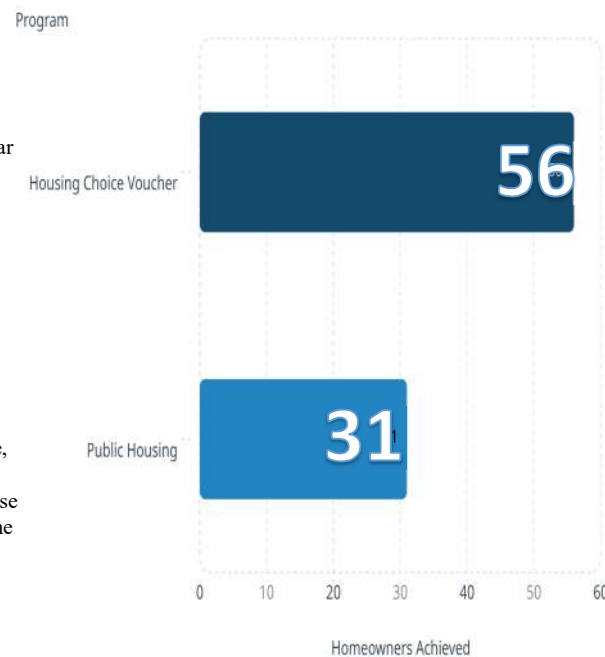
### HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 982 & 984

#### 24 CFR Part 982.

- **One-Year Residency Requirement for Homeownership Assistance:** To be eligible to use their HCV assistance toward mortgage payments, a participant generally must have been a participant in the HCV program for at least one year before they can apply voucher assistance to homeownership costs.
- **Purpose:** This one-year requirement helps ensure stability and readiness, encouraging participants to establish a period of tenancy and compliance with program rules before transitioning to homeownership.

#### 24 CFR Part 984.

- Homeownership Eligibility and Participation:
- **Continued Monthly Payment Assistance:** As part of the FSS program, participants can receive ongoing monthly assistance, which may be integrated with voucher assistance (such as Housing Choice Vouchers). This assistance supports households in covering mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, and related homeownership costs during and after the transition.
- **Voucher Assistance for Buying a Home:** HUD permits voucher holders to use their vouchers toward homeownership costs, including mortgage payments. The program includes requirements such as approved counseling, a suitable home purchase, and compliance with local and federal regulations.



Homeownership success has long been a core aspect of RHA's history. Despite market challenges, families persist in their pursuit of ownership, and our ongoing eligible participants reflects the demand for homeownership opportunities.

# A Proven Track Record of Homeownership

## BMO LIPH Partnership

Our collaborative partnership with BMO has successfully empowered LIPH residents to achieve homeownership, exceeding expectations and demonstrating a clear need for innovative solutions in the affordable housing sector.

This pioneering initiative has:

- **Demonstrated Impact:** Assisted LIPH residents in securing homeownership, addressing a critical need in the community.
- **Fostered Collaboration:** Attracted the attention of leading financial organizations and realtor companies, eager to partner and address the gap in HUD's current programming.
- **Identified Opportunities:** Highlighted the potential for expansion and replication of successful models, promoting a more comprehensive approach to affordable housing.

## Midland & Associated Bank Partnership

Our collaborative partnership with Midland Bank and Associated Bank has enabled Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) residents to transition into homeownership through the effective use of escrow accounts. This initiative has led to numerous residents achieving their goal of homeownership, with some even going on to become landlords, contributing to the program's sustainability and cycle of self-sufficiency.

**Currently:** 2 HCV families and 3 Public Housing families are actively pursuing homeownership today.

# Collaboration Creates Opportunity

Homeownership doesn't happen in isolation. RHA has cultivated long-standing community relationships that amplify every dollar and expand every opportunity.



## City of Rockford

Historically, RHA collaborated closely with the city municipality on developing housing strategies and securing funding for affordable housing.



## Habitat for Humanity

Engages residents to contribute sweat equity towards home improvement, making affordable homeownership a reality.



## YouthBuild

Engaging youth through workforce development and fostering personal investment to drive neighborhood revitalization.



## Local Banks & Credit Unions

Upon completing the programming, financial institutions ensure access to a streamlined mortgage process.

# Why the Rockford Housing Authority?

RHA is uniquely positioned to connect residents to affordable housing developments by preparing qualified homebuyers to the right programs.

## ✓ Proven Outcomes

Measurable results spanning more than 50 years of service

## ✓ Existing Infrastructure

Systems, staff, and processes already in place and operational

## ✓ Financial Literacy Programs

Comprehensive credit counseling and homebuyer education resources

## ✓ Direct Access to Eligible Families

Serving the exact population the City seeks to support

## ✓ Established Partnerships

Deep community relationships ready to be leveraged immediately

## ✓ Long-term Commitment

RHA guides families completely through all homeownership stages despite any challenges.

# Building the Future Together

"Our goal is not simply housing families. Our goal is to empower homeowners, strengthening neighborhoods, and build a thriving community together."

For more than 50 years, the Rockford Housing Authority has helped families move from housing insecurity to housing stability. We stand ready to help the City of Rockford explore the **next generation of affordable housing opportunities** — ensuring residents have the tools, resources, and support needed to become successful homeowners.

ROCKFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

