



# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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As RHA continues to focus on improvement I offer you our latest information sharing platform – our quarterly Newsletter! A goal of our leadership team has been to elevate the quality of information sharing so that we all have our communication needs met. This newly designed newsletter is one more way to achieve this goal and we are proud to share it with you!

Over the coming months we will continue to improve the quality and effectiveness of our internal and external communication, increase our use of social media and leverage our newly created website! For #TeamRHA, we will also continue our use of “check stuffers” and site messaging and SharePoint. Through these multiple platforms of information sharing, we hope to keep you best informed. Please join us in this communication process by taking a few moments to read the latest information about RHA. If you would like to see or read more about specific topics or subjects, initiatives or programmatic activity – please let us know on our website contact page!

**Sign up for** our email newsletter at [rockfordha.org](http://rockfordha.org).

On behalf of the RHA leadership team – thank you for your continued interest!

*- Ron Clewer, CEO*

## WELCOME TO OUR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The Rockford Housing Authority is pleased to announce that Amanda Hamaker has joined our executive team of February 16, 2016. Hamaker will assume a new role, that of Chief Operating Officer, responsible for the financial and operational success of RHA.



Hamaker joins RHA directly ahead of the launch of some projects for which she will be responsible; namely, the upgrade and conversion of the agency’s accounting software, and the modernization of RHA’s approach to IT and connectivity. She will also work directly with the CEO to expand capacity for Bridge Rockford Alliance, RHA’s not-for-profit arm.

Hamaker holds an MBA from Marylhurst University, in Portland Oregon, where she studied global sustainability practices, including best practices in green building. She holds a B.A. from the Evergreen State College, in Washington State, where she majored in community development and not-for-profit business, and completed a semester of field work studying and reporting on group housing projects and intentional communities.

“We searched diligently over an extended period of time to find the right person to assist RHA in this capacity. Ms. Hamaker will work to advance the agency as an asset for our families, housing and community development,” stated RHA CEO Ron Clewer. “She will help lead this transformational journey into the future.”

Amanda Hamaker lives in Rockford with her husband and two sons. She is a hockey and Scout mom, and enjoys golf, gardening, and cooking.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 02 Accomplishments from the Human Resources Team

The RHA Human Services team has been working tirelessly to ensure residents are aware of programs that benefit as well as train residents to become future leaders.



### 03 Saving Energy and Giving Back

The completion of the Energy Performance Contract has led to the creation of energy improvements to high rises, scattered sites, and family units.



Did you know 54.3% of RHA residents are senior or disabled?

### Accomplishments from the Human Services team

The Human Services team here at RHA (Rockford Housing Authority) have been busy in our efforts to ensure that the residents who take advantage of the programs that we offer are receiving the services that they need and are requesting. We have put a huge emphasis on MPOWR which is the case management software that is used to better assist RHA residents. We are also increasing and strengthening the process in which we set residents up with referrals to obtain services from outside organizations.

Last quarter the Resident Council's at the RHA sites also started to make some significant strides. Resident Council officers, under RAB (Resident Advisory Board) participated in two much needed trainings. The first was a training called RADAR which is a training specifically designed to help residents and councils grow as leaders ultimately making a positive impact on each other and the communities in which they live and serve. One of the great things about RADAR is that it is a movement designed and facilitated by a woman who is a former public housing authority resident. The second training was a Robert's Rules of Order training. We believe that these two trainings are what the councils needed to move forward with great momentum.

*- Deryk Hayes, Manager of Community Development & Human Services*

### The lottery has begun for new vouchers

The Housing Choice Voucher (HVC) department has begun selecting applications from our April 2015, lottery drawing for processing.

On Monday 2/22/16, 19 new vouchers will be issued to program participants.

Over the past year, The Low Income Public Housing (LIPH) department has been reviewing the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy to make updates and changes where necessary. Over 116 pages of proposed changes, along with 8 newly generated or revised policies were posted for public comment on 1/19/16. Since posting the proposed changes, RHA staff has hosted meetings at each of our developments to review, discuss, and gather input from our residents. A final public meeting will be held on 2/18/16 at the RHA main office from 1:00 – 5:00 pm. After review of all comments, suggestions, or questions a recommendation for approval will be presented to our board on 3/9/16. Once approved, RHA will host training sessions for our management staff and look to implement changes on 4/1/16.

*- Laura Snyder, Director of Housing Operations*

### Injuries in the workplace Safety 1st

You may have heard CEO Ron Clewer say, Safety 1st and that we at RHA want every team member to return home every day - safe and healthy. As we strive to create and maintain a safe work environment, we must understand that injuries do happen.

Do you know what to do if you get hurt or witness an accident? Here's a quick review:

1. Check your status or that of the injured person.
2. Notify your immediate supervisor and HR of the incident.
3. Seek medical treatment with the designated medical provider for RHA – HR will give clear instructions.
4. Complete the required paperwork as a witness or the injured person as soon as possible (within 24 hours), provided by your supervisor or HR.
5. Submit the completed paperwork to your supervisor.
6. Attend all follow up appointments and follow work restrictions, as instructed to insure your full recovery.
7. Keep your supervisor and HR informed of any updates or changes.

Your response to a workplace accident is time sensitive. Not following the proper protocol may result in delay or nonpayment of benefits and may be deemed as insubordination; let's not allow this to happen. Please take time to review the full accident protocol in the RHA Employee Handbook.

If you have any questions, contact the HR department.

Safety is making a difference. According to OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration)

#### #Safety1st

*- Bridget Weeks, Human Resources Manager*

- In four decades, OSHA and state partners, coupled with the efforts of employers, safety and health professionals, unions and advocates, have had a dramatic effect on workplace safety.
- Since 1970, workplace fatality rates have been reduced by more than 66 percent and occupational injury and illness rates have declined by 67 percent. At the same time, U.S. employment has almost doubled.
- Worker deaths in America are down—on average, from about 38 worker deaths a day in 1970 to 13 a day in 2014.
- Worker injuries and illnesses are down—from 10.9 incidents per 100 workers in 1972 to 3.2 per 100 in 2014.



See our newly designed website at [rockfordha.org](http://rockfordha.org)!



## Saving Energy and Giving Back

RHA's \$7.5 million dollar Energy Performance Contract has been come to a successful completion. A great big thank you to all staff and residents for the cooperation and understanding during construction. Worked started in May of 2014 and was completed in December 2015. The Energy Performance Contract allowed RHA to install energy upgrades to eight of its developments. Some of the energy improvements included lighting and water conservation measure, building automation systems for our highrises, new furnaces and roof insulation at scattered sites, new energy star appliances in both family and elderly units as well as roof top solar panels at all three lowrises and the solar field at Blackhawk.

Often construction and rehab projects can be inconvenient and disruptive but the payoffs in energy savings can be great. RHA realized immediate savings. The total costs savings from 2014 to 2015 was \$100,110. This savings represents real dollars that that will be used to pay back the debt service incurred on the project. Additional and or future savings can be used to supplement operations and programming at each site. The chart below reflects the total 2014 and 2015 utility expense and the total cost savings for the eight developments where energy improvements were focused.

2014 Total Utility Costs	2015 Total Utility Costs	Total Costs Savings
\$774,876	\$674,676	\$100,110*

This project is an example of RHA's commitment to residents and the community as we maintain and strengthen financial viability, upgrade and modernize developments, and transition residents into modern affordable housing. Again thank you to all of our staff and residents and as we look to the future RHA will continue work to re-establish ourselves as a leader in housing and sustainable communities.

\* Savings excludes Scattered Sites where tenants pay their own utilities

- Jodi Stromberg, Redevelopment Project Manager



Rockford Housing Authority  
223 South Winnebago Street  
Rockford, Illinois, 61102

### Procurement and Contracting

The key to acquiring best practices with compliance management in an organization is to combine efficiency of people, processes and technology.

Compliance with contracts and procurement policies is a basic practice which is required in any organization. It is needed for deriving maximum benefits of sourcing and to improve chances of achieving the goals of an organization. Essentially procurement compliance in organizations takes place both internally and externally. Internally, it is best practice for companies to implement the use of software applications to ensure compliance with processes involved in sourcing, buying, contracts and suppliers.

Similarly, compliance with strategic sourcing is a best practice which is greatly regarded in terms of benefits. These strategies are guidelines for avoiding unnecessary costs and implementing the concept of importance of opportunity cost. Companies which procure compliance with the basic strategies required for best practices are guided to success without much risks attached.

The most efforts made by organizations ensuring best practices in compliance management focus on compliance with sourcing and buying processes. This involves sourcing best “pricing contracts” with suppliers. Companies ensuring procurement compliance employ technology and software applications to achieve their objectives. The two greatest challenges faced in ensuring best practices for procurement compliance are lack of resources and compliance tools.

Feedback from the people involved in ensuring compliances is also helpful. Technology alone is not enough.

Rockford Housing Authority has made great strides in working to exceed compliance goals through central procurement and inventory. As we advance our improved culture we will continue reviewing and auditing P-cards, Section 3 opportunities, and contracts to avoid unnecessary cost and to remain compliant with procurement policies.

*- Lewis B. Downs, Procurement, Contract and Section Compliance Manager*