

The RHA IN FOCUS

Newsletter 2020

NOVEMBER



THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is usually a time when families travel, celebrate, and eat together. As we all know, COVID-19 is still a global threat; with the holiday seasons approaching, the CDC has issued some guidelines and tips for celebrating still while being safe. Some of the low-risk celebrations include:

- Having a small dinner with people who live in your household.
- Preparing traditional dishes for family and neighbors, especially those at a higher risk, and delivering it in a contactless way.
- Having a virtual dinner with family and friends that would have to travel to attend.
- Watching sports, parades, and movies at home.
- Shopping online rather than in person on Black Friday
- Wait until Cyber Monday to shop discount deals on-line

While this all is very different from the regular holiday season we all know and love, we have to be safe and be conscious of others at high risk. Some moderate risk activities include:

- Having a small outdoor dinner with family and friends who live in your community.
- Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards where CDC guidelines are enforced.
- Attend a small outdoor sports event while social distancing and wearing a mask.



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We already know and implement the higher risk activities into our new typical day-to-day lives like going to crowded stores and going to large gatherings. Thanksgiving may not be celebrated the same as past years, but there are still traditional celebrations occurring, such as the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade.

The parade will still be taking place, just a little differently; instead of crowds gathering in person, the event will be televised-only and will focus on the area right in front of the Macy's on 34th Street. The balloons, floats, and even Santa will still be there, since most of us watch the parade on TV; only not seeing crowds of people, the parade will be very similar.



VETERANS DAY

Veterans Day is a time for Americans to pay respects to the brave men and women who have served. The holiday started as a day to reflect on the heroism of those who died in service to our country and was initially called "Armistice Day," which fell on November 11th, the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended World War 1.

In 1954, the holiday was changed to "Veterans Day" to account for all veterans in all wars. Veterans Day is a federal, bank, and in most states, a holiday. Federal employees and most schools get the day off to celebrate and honor American veterans for their patriotism and sacrifice for this country. Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11th, regardless of what day of the week it may fall on. Veterans contribute to American Society in many ways, not only during their active duty but also when they come home and are not in uniform. Veterans are the most active volunteers working to improve communities across the country for which they fought.

Thank a veteran this year and donate to an organization like the Wounded Warrior Project or the USO. On November 11th 2020, remember to think and thank the brave men and women who have served for this country and for the ones who continue to serve today. We thank you!



RHA DIRECTORS SPOTLIGHT OCTOBER 2020

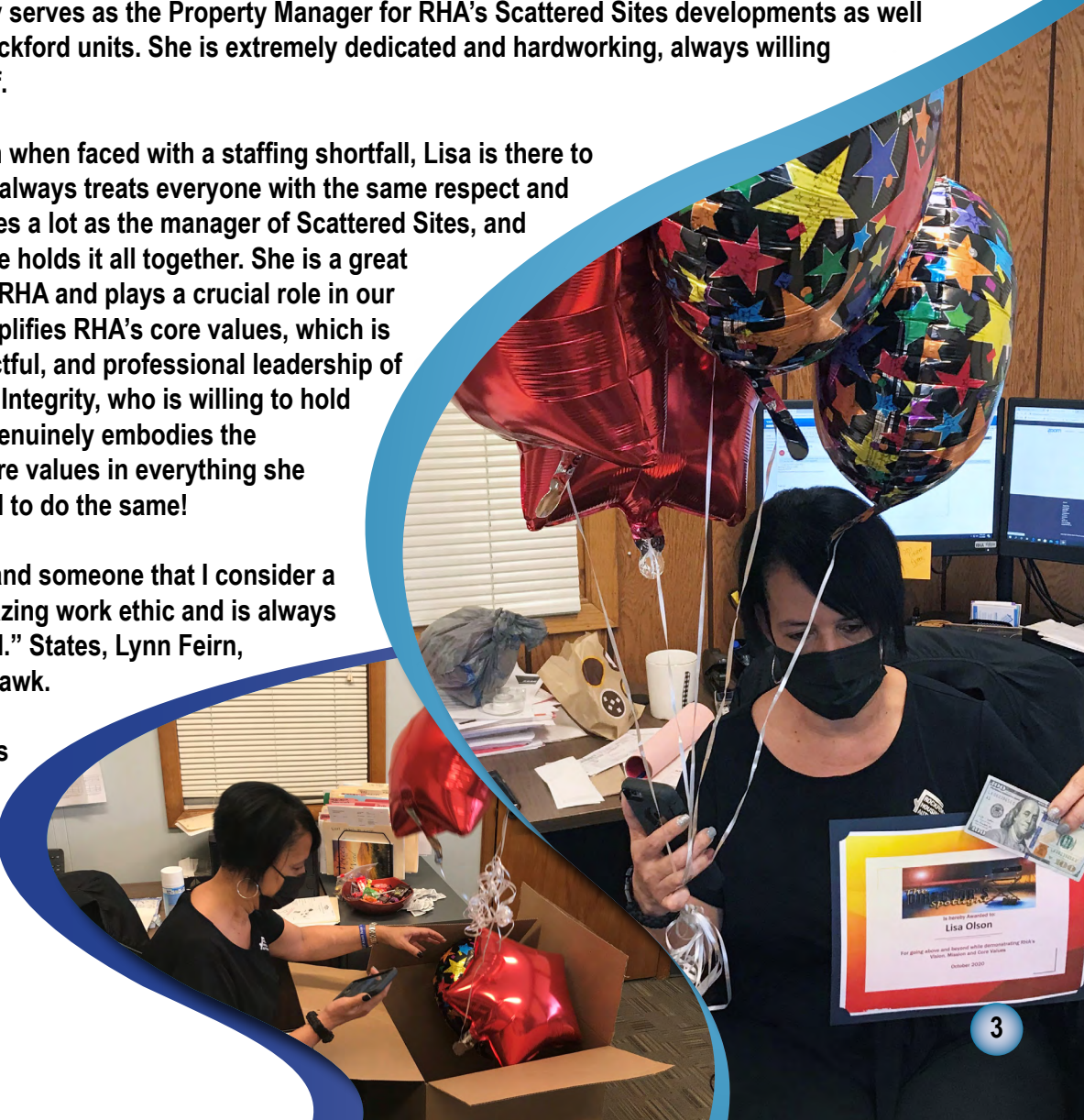
Ms. Lisa Olson has been a valued team member with the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) for more than 14 years. During her time with our agency, Lisa has served our clients in several different roles, advancing through the ranks with each role, and currently serves as the Property Manager for RHA's Scattered Sites developments as well as our non-profit, Bridge Rockford units. She is extremely dedicated and hardworking, always willing to lend a hand to fellow staff.

As stated by her peers, even when faced with a staffing shortfall, Lisa is there to assist when asked, and she always treats everyone with the same respect and positive attitude. "She juggles a lot as the manager of Scattered Sites, and I'm so impressed by how she holds it all together. She is a great example for all who work at RHA and plays a crucial role in our overall success." Lisa exemplifies RHA's core values, which is evident in her caring, respectful, and professional leadership of her site. "She is a person of Integrity, who is willing to hold herself accountable." Lisa genuinely embodies the company's spirit and our core values in everything she does, and she inspires us all to do the same!

"Lisa is a helpful coworker and someone that I consider a friend. She has such an amazing work ethic and is always willing to help where needed." States, Lynn Feirn, property manager of BlackHawk.

We are proud to have Lisa as a team member and love to see our team members making personal connections.

We look forward to Lisa's future at RHA.



LAUNCH MY FUTURE

LAUNCH MY FUTURE

Launch My Future is an additional website created by RHA which highlights the many opportunities for RHA residents.

On the website, you will find all the resident services offered, such as; Lifeforce Development Institute, Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Resident Opportunities Self Sufficiency, ConnectHome, and Section 3. All of these programs make up Launch My Future and RHA in their unique way.

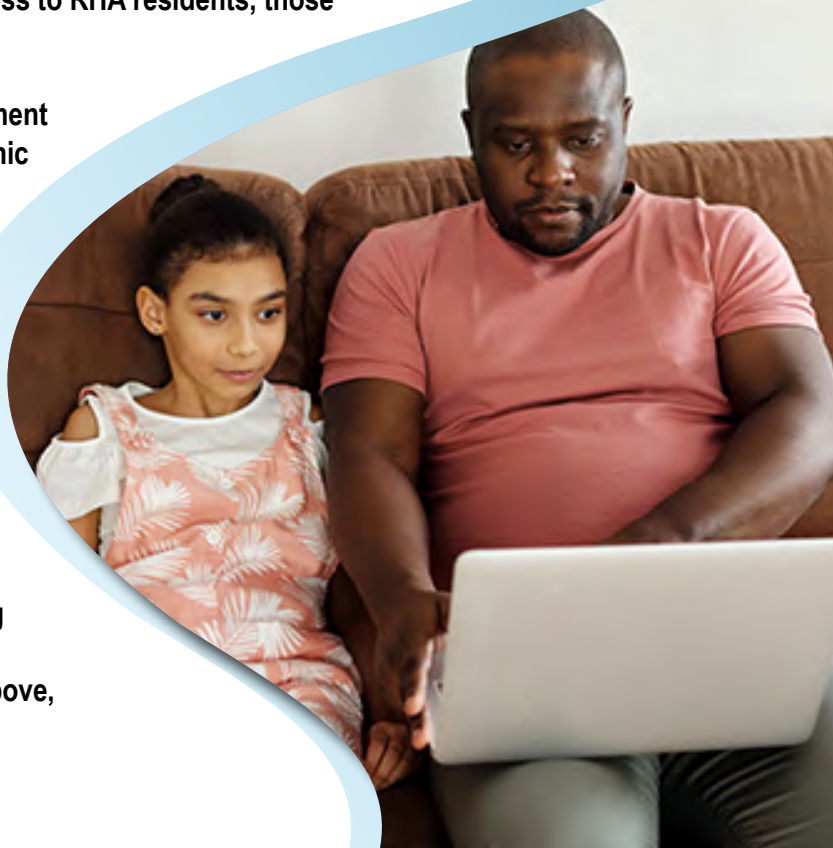
- Lifeforce Development Institute is a 12-week course focusing on critical foundational skills and job readiness. LDI introduces you to a new way of viewing yourself and others and will help you learn teamwork, decision-making, interviewing skills, and communication.

- Family Self-Sufficiency Program is a program established by HUD to promote economic growth among RHA families. Specialists help you develop a plan that is an overview of your goals for the next five years and assist you every step of the way.

- Resident Opportunities Self Sufficiency is a program funded through HUD to assist residents with supportive services. The purpose of ROSS is to work with our residents to create individual plans for, employment, education, and strategies to reduce and eliminate subsidy assistance.
- ConnectHome is an initiative for communities to expand high-speed broadband to more families across the country. In 2015, President Barack Obama announced ConnectHome. Among 27 cities and one tribal nation in the US, Rockford and RHA were one of the community partnerships. ConnectHome will bring high-speed broadband access to RHA residents, those who could benefit the most from the Internet.
- Section 3 is part of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 to ensure employment and other economic opportunities for low-income people. RHA utilizes Section 3 as a means of promoting stability and self-sufficiency to Residents.

Launch My Future is a deep-dive into what Rockford Housing Authority provides for the residents and the Rockford community. Our core values and beliefs are all shaped around our residents and leading them into self-sufficiency. Our Resident Services Specialists are prepared and willing to help with whatever challenges or obstacles are in the way of an individual getting a job and reaching their financial goals. For more information, FAQ, and testimonials from each of the resident services listed above,

view this link: <https://launchmyfuture.com/>



STROLL ON STATE

Stroll on State is a staple of the holiday season here in Rockford. Community vendors, a festival concert, and the annual tree lighting downtown Stroll on State is sure to get you in the Christmas spirit.

Stroll on State will be taking place this year, but reimagined. November 28th, 2020, is Small Business Saturday. RACVB (Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau) will be expanding activities and programs through December 24th to raise awareness around the importance of supporting local.

THIS YEAR'S STROLL EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Expanded decorations downtown Rockford
- A new location for the official City of Rockford Christmas Tree at Davis Park with extensive unique decorations throughout the park
- A day-of Merry & Bright Holiday television production on Channel 13 WREX that will feature a live online tree lighting program and conclude with fireworks at multiple locations city-wide
- A virtual version of the Fleet Feet Dasher Dash 5k
- An extended SantaLand at Rockford City Hall
- Six locations around town to drop off letters to Santa.

The tree lighting and firework celebration will be a televised special on Channel 13 WREX from 6-7 PM Saturday, November 28th. The City of Rockford invited families to spend their Stroll day decorating their homes and trees for the holidays and then gather at 6 PM to watch the special program together. The fireworks will launch from five different locations so residents can enjoy the festivities from their homes and neighborhoods.

Please find out more information about the new, socially distanced Stroll on State here: www.gorockford.com/stroll-on-state/
Have a safe and fun holiday season!



STROLL on STATE

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SECTION 3 JOB OPPORTUNITY

DID YOU KNOW?

The federal public housing program started as part of the Housing Act of 1937, passed during the New Deal. First intended to be a jobs program and slums-clearing effort, public housing was the result of powerful grassroots organizing.

UNDERSTANDING THE PAST, TO SEE THE FUTURE- The Past shapes our View of the Present. Our ability to envision the past strongly influences the future. The endeavor to provide insight into the interactions between housing, the economy, people's needs, and the environment has been an on-going struggle for many decades. As Carl Sagan once famously put it, "You have to know the past to understand the present." But the past is also complex and sometimes challenging. Subsidized apartment buildings, often referred to as housing projects, have a complicated and often notorious history in the United States. While the first decades of projects were built with higher construction standards and a broader range of incomes, over time, concentrated public housing increasingly became the housing of last resort in many cities.

The Beginning- The United States was in a deep economic depression; the 1930s brought The U.S. Housing Act of 1937, which enabled the State of Illinois to establish local public housing agencies. The Act came out of President Roosevelt's New Deal, which started in 1933. This Act aimed to improve unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions and lessen the extreme shortage of decent housing for low-income families. The 1930s worsened the already bleak economic situation of African Americans. They were the first to be laid off from their jobs, and they suffered from an unemployment rate two to three times that of whites. The urgent need for housing immediately became the primary concern, with funds a priority. The purpose of public housing and the financing and design have changed significantly since the passage of the 1937 Housing Act. In 1939 alone, 50,000 new housing units were constructed.

The Mass Migration- In World War II as in World War I, there was a mass migration of blacks from the rural South; Collectively, these population shifts were known as the Great Migration. Some 1.5 million African Americans left the South during the 1940s, mainly for the industrial cities of the North. As the Second World War came to a close and local veterans returned home, a new Act was passed, the first Housing Act. This Act came out of President Truman's Fair Deal for the veterans in 1949. The new housing was mostly developed for World War II veterans and did not provide much aid to those who were not. , high-rise building styles dominated the program, and Housing Authority's redoubled its efforts to reduce the shortage, beginning in the 1950s

The Freedom Struggle- In our society, the 1960s will long be remembered for the civil rights movement and the freedom

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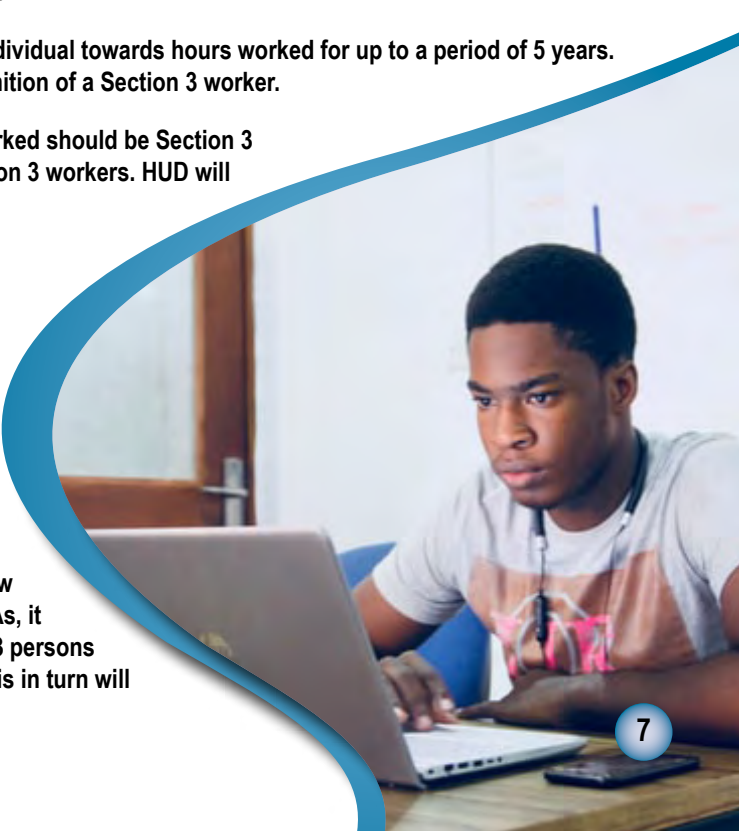


SECTION 3 NEW RULE

On Monday, September 28th, 2020, HUD released a new final rule for Section 3. HUD believes that changing the core benchmarks will alleviate regulatory burdens on reporting PHAs as well as contractors. For decades, HUD has monitored section 3 compliance by the tracking of new hires. PHAs had to report on all new hires within their agency, as well as for all their contractors. The new rule has made the transition from counting new hires to reporting on hours worked. HUD believes this change in the key reporting metric will be instrumental in fostering long term, successful employment for Section 3 individuals. By switching to an hours worked metric, from the new hires metric, the focus is changed to a long-term opportunity, rather than a short-term hire. In the new rule, HUD changed and updated several definitions hoping to delineate goals and outcomes more clearly. Described below are key changes to such definitions:

1. Section 3 Persons: HUD split this definition into two categories; Section 3 Workers and Targeted Section 3 Workers.
 - Section 3 Worker: Any worker, within the service area of the agency, that is below the income limit established by HUD; or the worker is employed by a Section 3 business concern; or the worker is a YouthBuild participant.
 - Targeted Section 3 Worker: A worker who is a resident of public housing or Section 8 assisted housing; or a worker employed by a Section 3 business concern; or a YouthBuild participant.
2. Section 3 Business Concern: A business where at least 51% is owned and controlled by a low- or very low-income person; or over 75% of the labor hours performed for the business over the prior three-month period are performed by Section 3 workers; or a business at least 51% owned and controlled by current public housing residents or residents who currently live in Section 8 assisted housing.
3. Income: Income is now measured individually and not by household.
4. Time Frame: A PHA or contractor is allowed to count a Section 3 individual towards hours worked for up to a period of 5 years. This status can start at time of hire, or if/when they currently fit the definition of a Section 3 worker.
5. Benchmarks: The proposed benchmarks are 25% of total hours worked should be Section 3 workers and an additional 5% of hours worked should be targeted Section 3 workers. HUD will update these benchmarks no less than every 3 years.
6. Professional Services: HUD has excluded professional services from the hours worked requirement. A professional service is a non-construction service that requires an advanced degree or professional licensing such as legal services or financial consulting. However, if such contracts employ section 3 persons, they may count these hours towards the benchmarks without counting their non-Section 3 worker hours.

The effective date of the new Final Rule is November 30th, 2020 with a grace period until July 1, 2021. PHAs will be required to be operating under the new rule for their first full fiscal year after the effective date. Although the new rule will significantly change how Section 3 is tracked and monitored by PHAs, it will ultimately provide a greater incentive for businesses to employ Section 3 persons long term by allowing the employee to be counted for a period of 5 years. This in turn will provide greater opportunities for the Section 3 communities.

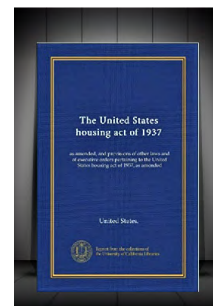




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(Did you know? Continued from page 6)

struggle. It was a departure from the previous two decades. The focus was now on the rights of the minority population of Americans. Ending legal discrimination by no longer allowing racially segregated projects, the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1965, the U.S. Congress established the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in a mostly symbolic move to bring housing and slum-clearance programs to the cabinet-level. By the close of the decade, further incentives were introduced to encourage the involvement of private developers and real estate interests in the development of low-cost housing in the form of public financing of private subsidized housing developments. By 1968, however, Congress passed the Fair Housing Act, which outlaws discrimination in housing and mortgage lending.



The Fair Housing Act- The Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act, is a landmark part of the legislation. It provided for equal housing opportunities regardless of race, religion, or national origin and made it a federal crime to “by force or by threat of force, injure, intimidate, or interfere with anyone ... by reason of their race, color, religion, or national origin.”

Scattered-site housing units were originally constructed as an alternative form of public housing designed to counteract the concentration of poverty associated with more traditional high-density units constructed in the past. They are intended to increase the availability of affordable housing and improve the quality of low-income housing. Housing vouchers is now one of the predominant methods of subsidized housing. The program began with the passage of the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act. The program, informally is known as Section 8. Through this voucher system, direct-to-landlord payments assist eligible households in covering the gap between market rents and the household's income.

The Future of Quality Affordable Housing- Each of these past events has implications and influences the events that follow it. The future of quality affordable housing works in the exact same way. The difference, of course, is that we do not know what will happen in the future. Instead, we have a wide range of possible futures. However, just as with a singular event in the past, the events happening today will shape our community's ultimate future and the residents in which we serve.

