

The RHA IN FOCUS

Newsletter 2022
JULY



LDI & FSS SUMMER GRADUATION OF 2022

The Lifeforce Development Institute and the Family Self Sufficiency Program's participants graduated on June 30th, meaning they completed all the necessary classes and training to receive multiple certificates and are now ready to join the work force and or buy a home.

The FSS Graduates included: Leticia Bowman, Lakeia Knight, Jennifer Matlick, and Lisa Patterson

The LDI Summer 2022 Graduates

Sharon Green: "I did learn a lot in LDI, but the program enhances your knowledge about job readiness. I am going to take that knowledge and continue my education in medical billing and coding."

Abria Mathis: "I enrolled to change my future. Joining LDI would be the best option out of any option to learn how to be professional. I am going to keep pushing to give my children the best future, just like I imaged."

Vachel Cumberlander: "Joining the LDI class helped me gain perspective and helped build work ethic. It talks about a lot of areas that employers don't usually talk about. I am going to take this and start a transitional shelter."

Jasmine Glover: "The biggest thing I learned from LDI was to never give up, ever. After LDI I am going to go to school to be a CNA and then go into medical assisting."

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 7

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Lori Tresemer: “I joined LDI because before the class I didn’t have very much hope left or anything to look forward to. I learned a lot from my classmates and instructors. LDI helps you find a career suited for you personally.”

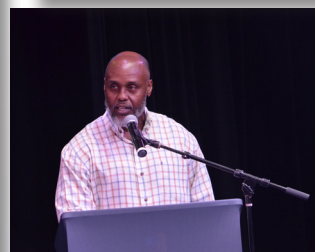
Family Self-Sufficiency Program

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program is a voluntary program established by HUD to promote economic self-sufficiency among RHA participating families. Family Self-Sufficiency Specialists assist you in developing a Service Plan that outlines your goals for the next five years. Emphasis is on full-time employment, credit readiness, and independence from public assistance.

Lifeforce Development Institute

The Rockford Housing Authority is proud to support and recommend the Lifeforce Development Institute’s Job/Career Readiness Skills-based training to both RHA Clients and Residents. The LDI Curriculum addresses the foundational skill gap in the workforce with a 12-week, hands-on learning program covering Job/Career Readiness Skills meeting the community’s workforce goals.

The next round of classes starts on August 9th, 2022! There is still time to register for the classes, please find more information and the online application here: <https://launchmyfuture.com/ldi/registration/>



NAHRO ANNOUNCES THE NATIONAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE WINNER RECIPIENT, THE ROCKFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) recently awarded 18 prestigious Awards of Excellence to 14 housing and community development organizations for creating innovative programs that improve their communities.

The 18 award-winning programs were selected by regional juries from a pool of Awards of Merit recipients. The winning programs must improve resident outcomes, resolve

problems, and be replicable by organizations of similar size. They must also produce tangible results such as cost savings, enhanced productivity, improved client services, and better service coordination.

“These awards put a spotlight on the vital work that NAHRO members do nationwide, and show how creativity and collaboration can lead to success,” NAHRO Interim CEO Mike Gerber said. “Congratulations to this year’s winners! You’ve set the bar high.”

The Rockford Housing Authority is proud to announce the winning of the Award of Excellence in the Resident and Client Services category for their Section 3 Promotion and Resident Awareness.

RHA's Section 3 Promotion and Resident Awareness is a robust training program focusing within the RHA agency. RHA trains Section 3 qualified individuals in the day-to-day operations of RHA, including all departments such as; finance, maintenance, human services, housing choice voucher, and property management. The promotion of this program has been mainly focused on the Section 3 portal.

Over the last eight decades, HUD has evolved itself to continuously meet the needs of our community's most vulnerable families, which extend beyond the boundary of providing a safe, clean and affordable place to call home. Programs like Section 3 were created as a strategy that would empower residents of government-funded affordable housing programs and low-income workers to a life of self-sufficiency and independence.

Section 3 advocates for local economic development, neighborhood economic improvement, and individual self-sufficiency, requiring that HUD-funded contractors, to the greatest extent feasible, provide job training employment opportunities and contracting opportunities for low or very low-income residents in our community.

RHA created an online portal on their website for RHA Residents and community members to self-certify as low or very low income and register to receive notifications regarding training and job opportunities.

This portal has been a vital asset in connecting Section 3 residents to jobs and training opportunities, not only from RHA but with contractors servicing our properties. Since establishing the portal, RHA has exceeded the 30% new hires requirement for Section 3. Over 50% of all of our new hires for FY2020 were qualified section 3 residents, and we believe the creation of the Section 3 portal played a vital role in this result.

“This Section 3 portal has brought a wealth of job and training opportunities to all registered individuals. Ours is unique in that we have opened the portal out to community partners to post their opportunities. This portal can be a springboard into a new job opportunity, tuition assistance, and increasing work experience and knowledge when well used by the residents. We are excited to see the continuation of Section 3 and its impact on our residents and the Rockford community,” Laura Snyder, RHA CEO.



COVID UPDATE

A virus that shows no signs of disappearing, variants that are adept at dodging the body's defenses, and waves of infections two, maybe three times a year — this may be the future of Covid-19, some scientists now fear, according to an article from the NY Times.

The central problem is that the coronavirus has become more adept at reinfecting people. Already, those infected with the first Omicron variant are reporting second infections with the newer versions of the variant — BA.2 or BA.2.12.1 in the United States, or BA.4 and BA.5 in South Africa.

Those people may go on to have third or fourth infections, even within this year, researchers said in interviews. And some small fraction may have symptoms that persist for months or years, a condition known as long Covid. "It seems likely to me that that's going to sort of be a long-term pattern," said Juliet Pulliam, an epidemiologist at Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

"The virus is going to keep evolving," she added. "And there are probably going to be a lot of people getting many, many reinfections throughout their lives."

Does my mask protect me if nobody else is wearing one?

While it's true that masks work best when everyone around you is wearing one, there is also plenty of evidence showing that masks protect the wearer, even when others around them are mask-free.

The amount of protection depends on the quality of the mask and how well it fits. Health experts recommend using an N95, KN95 or KF94 to protect yourself. Other variables, such as how much time you are exposed to an infected person and how well a space is ventilated also will affect your risk.



DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT



Ms. Terry Milton has only been a part of the Rockford Housing Authority team for under a year. During this short time, Terry has made a tremendous impact in the area of relocation for our clients. Always willing to go the extra mile, Terry accommodates everyone on her caseload & the landlords by working around their schedules, which means she comes in hours early & stays hours late.

As she always does, Terry has taken relocation efforts a step above by intentionally searching for landlords who are not yet registered in our Housing Choice Voucher program. She understands the importance of ensuring clients have options in securing a suitable home that meets the needs of their families.

Carandus Brown, Human Service Manager states, "Terry has been committed to learning all aspects of her job to provide the best services possible to residents. She is at work every day in the morning at 7:15 am wanting to discuss the overview of her day".

We are excited to have Terry as a member of the RHA Team, and we look forward to her future in this industry. Terry's diligence and detailed approach towards work has set a benchmark for the rest of the workforce. Great Job Ms. Terry!!



PEER-TO-PEER

Mr. Carandus Brown is intentionally recognizing and celebrating the accomplishment of staff & co-workers. Carandus's teamwork, enthusiasm, and support of team & co-workers demonstrate the RHA Core Values, which is the importance of the Screenwriter's peer-to-peer recognition.



HUD AWARDS MORE THAN \$220,000 TO ROCKFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR RADON TESTING AND MITIGATION

ROCKFORD - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded \$220,126 to Rockford Housing Authority to protect low-income families in public housing properties from radon. Rockford Housing Authority will use the funds to mitigate 36 residential units throughout two developments already tested and shown to have actionable levels of radon. It will also conduct additional radon hazard testing on the remaining 450 units to help guide future planning for radon mitigation.

The award is part of \$4 million awarded to nine public housing agencies (PHAs) throughout the country through HUD's new Radon Testing and Mitigation Demonstration Program. PHAs will use the funds in public housing properties where low-income families reside to conduct testing and, when needed, mitigate radon in public housing units they manage.

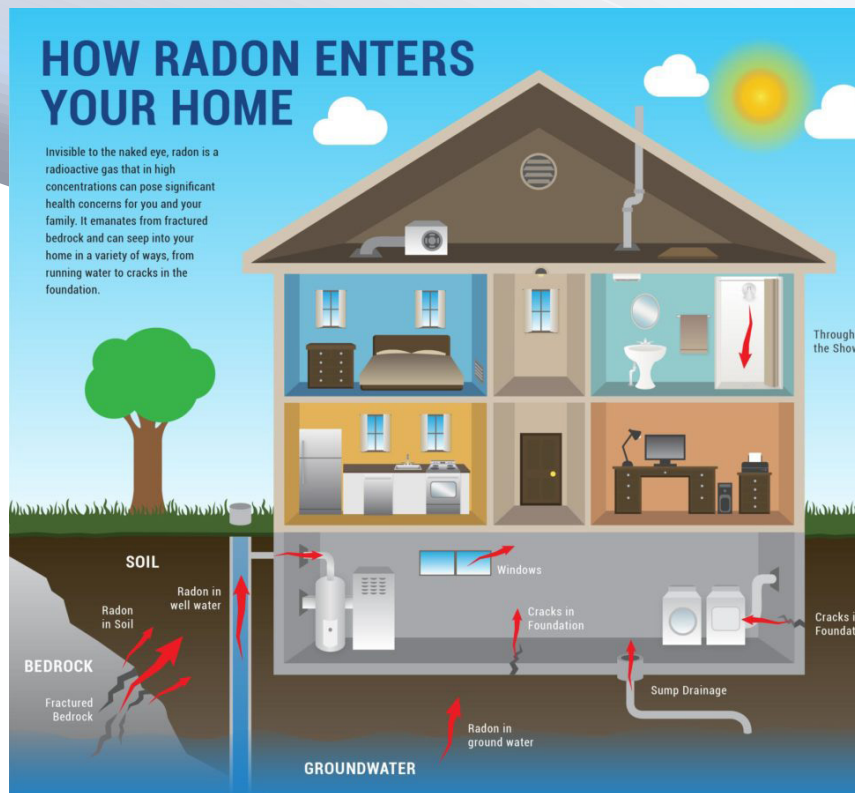
Realizing the likelihood of Radon occurring, RHA took a proactive stance and tested properties commencing in early 2020. "According to the CDC, Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, and it may take years before health problems appear. This Radon Testing and Mitigation grant will support our continued efforts to provide safe indoor air quality for our residents, staff, and guests, states Laura Snyder, Chief Executive Officer of the Rockford Housing Authority."

"With this funding, the Rockford Housing Authority can strengthen the link of healthy housing and health by mitigating radon issues and reducing risk of serious illness because of exposure," HUD Midwest Regional Administrator Diane M. Shelley said. "This program is only one of HUD's many efforts to reduce disparities in the health of low-income families."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates about 1 in 15 homes (7%) in the U.S. have elevated radon levels and about 21,000 people die in the U.S. annually due to lung cancer from radon exposure.

Radon is an odorless, colorless radioactive gas that is a decay product of elements in soil and rock and is present in every part of the country. Low levels of radon are found in the outside air. Radon gas can move through the soil and enter buildings through small openings in the foundation or basement and become concentrated in the indoor air environment. When radon is inhaled, it can damage DNA in lung tissue and increase the risk of developing lung cancer. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, according to EPA estimates.

About the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. For more information on HUD and its programs, visit www.hud.gov or www.hud.gov/espanol. Also, connect with HUD on social media, follow HUD Secretary Fudge on Twitter and Facebook, and sign up for HUD news alerts. For Midwest-specific HUD news, follow @HUDMidwest and subscribe to the region's e-newsletter.



BREWINGTON OAKS DECONSTRUCTION JOURNEY

Last year on Monday, May, 24th, workers began setting up secure Safety Fencing surrounding Brewington Oaks Apartments preparing the aging structures for safe and prudent demolition.

The Brewington Oaks housing development opened in 1969 in the city's ORCHID neighborhood, to provide housing for senior citizens and the disabled. The buildings were originally called Campus Towers because they were located close to the original site of Rockford College, which is now Rockford University. The Towers were renamed to Brewington Oaks Apartments after Al Brewington, to honor an RHA staff member who worked his way from maintenance to the RHA Assistant Executive Director in his twenty-one years with the Rockford Housing Authority.

RHA first announced the intention to deconstruct the property in 2018. At the time, occupancy at the buildings was at 42% and 90 of the 418 units were deemed uninhabitable. This was due to functional and technical obsolescence. The building's mechanical, electrical and conveyance systems (elevators) performed poorly in comparison to modern standards, where energy-inefficient, and moving into the future may have become unreliable and unsafe. Such issues as roofing and original internal construction materials were deteriorating beyond repair.

The deconstruction of Brewington Oaks took from May of 2021 to June of 2022. The two buildings that once stood high above the Rock River started its journey of deconstruction by taking out walls and all the interior electric wires, the crew then went on to the exterior and brought out the rubble from the walls. The concrete, and other rubble that was taken from the construction site were brought back to NTrack to recycled and repurposed. The crew then moved on to use the crane and started on the left side tower, beginning at the top sides and moving into the middle of the buildings. In the month that followed, the two Brewington Oaks towers were completely down and the deconstruction is now completed.

The land that once was home to so many Rockford Housing Authority residents is now awaiting its new project. RHA is hoping that there will be a beautiful green space for the community to enjoy, but the plans of the once Brewington Oaks location, is still in the process of consideration and due diligence.



JULY IS UV SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

Nearing into the middle of summer and with temperatures rising RHA would like to inform our residents and community about UV Safety Awareness Month. We all love some good fun in the sun, but everyone must remember to protect their skin and eyes from the damaging effects of the sun. The sun emits UV-A and UV-B rays that can damage the skin and eyes.

- UV-B rays have short wavelengths that reach the outer layer of your skin
- UV-A rays have longer wavelengths that can penetrate the middle layer of your skin

By learning about the risks and ways that you can protect yourself from these rays you can get back to having summer fun without worrying nor damaging you skin and eyes. Here are some things you can do to minimize the risk that come with being in the sun:

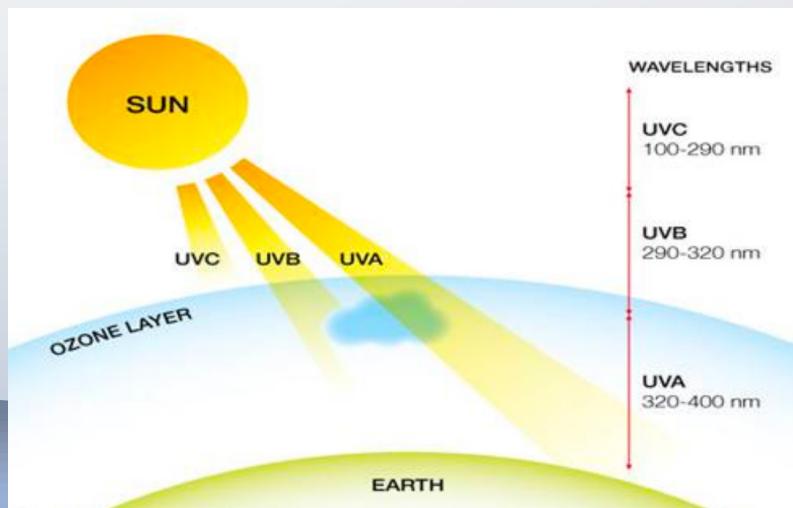
- **Cover up:** Wearing a hat or sunglasses can protect your eyes from the UV rays and wearing proper clothing can help too. Even if it's hot, a light long sleeve shirt can still protect your skin.
- **Wear sunscreen:** Sunscreen is an essential part of your day in the sun. Sunscreen comes in many sun protection factors (SPF) ranging from 15% to 100%. Typically, people choose to go with the 50% option, but all percentages will protect you from the sun.
- **Understand UV Index:** UV Index is a scale used to tell how much UV radiation is reaching the earth's surface. The scale ranges from 1-11+.
 - o About 1 to 3 low to moderate and you can use minimal protection.
 - o If the UV is ranging from 4-7 it is moderate to high, meaning that protection is needed and to stay in the shade for some time.
 - o If the UV gets 8 or higher it is very high to extreme, meaning that extra protection is needed and you should stay inside or in the shade.

Humidity levels are also something to consider before having a fun summer day. Humidity is the amount of water vapor in the air. High humidity can have a number of adverse effects on the human body. It can contribute to feelings of low energy and lethargy. In addition, high humidity can cause hyperthermia — over-heating as a result of your body's inability to effectively let out heat.

- Humidity levels from 0-20% are labeled as Uncomfortably Dry
- Levels from 20%-60% are labeled as the Comfort Range
- Levels in the 65%-100% is considered Uncomfortably Wet

Checking these levels and the UV Index of the day can help you with what to wear, pack, what times to be out in the sun, and for how long before it gets to an uncomfortably hot and wet day.

Bottom line is; use sunscreen and check the weather with UV index if you plan on being in the sun for long periods of time. RHA wishes everyone a fun and safe summer!





Rockford Housing Authority
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DID YOU KNOW?

THE LIFEFORCE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE CURRICULUM

Classes for the next LDI Semester will start on August 9th, 2022! Registration is now open!

The LDI Curriculum introduces you to a new way of viewing yourself and others. Learning these foundational skills will help you stay ahead of various changes and make the most of all the opportunities in the years ahead. If you are lacking pre-employment skills such as teamwork, decision-making, and communication, then the curriculum will help you grow and develop new opportunities. If you want to become an even more effective employee, then LDI is for you!

Please take a look at the videos of previous LDI Graduation Ceremonies, testimonials, and if you are interested and want to Launch Your Future today, please follow the link to start your application process! <https://launchmyfuture.com/ldi/>



THE ROCKFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY HAS BEEN SERVING THE ROCKFORD COMMUNITY SINCE JUNE 4TH, 1951.
THROUGHOUT THESE LAST ALMOST 70 YEARS, RHA HAS MADE IT OUR MISSION TO CREATE A QUALITY HOME, AND WE BELIEVE
IT IS THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIETY & COMMUNITY: QUALITY HOME LIFE PROVIDES HOPE AND THE PATHWAY TO OUR GOALS.
RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTFUL PEOPLE DESERVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTAIN A COMFORTABLE,
QUALITY HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD ALL CAN HAVE PRIDE IN.