

THE HRHA NEWSLETTER

News, announcements, and more from the
Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority



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Interested in subscribing? Questions?
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The Importance of Education

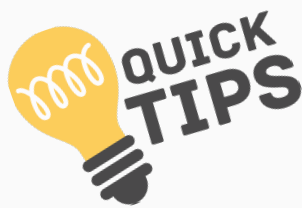
While the school year is thoroughly underway this fall, the children aren't the only ones learning a lot this year! So far, HRHA has given children the tools for success with our Back-to-School Bash and provided over 50 backpacks to families in need. And we are not stopping there. Education is the foundation for making the best-informed life decisions: such as ensuring sound choices when it comes to significant milestones like purchasing a car or home, as well as understanding the associated financial and legal responsibilities.



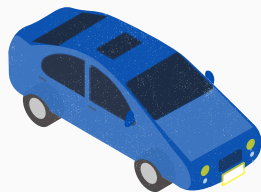
Pursuing additional educational opportunities helps individuals gain the necessary skills for positions in the workforce and follow their dreams and passions. Their educational achievements result in better job opportunities and higher incomes. HRHA is helping its adults succeed in financial wellness by hosting a credit repair workshop and working with Blue Ridge Community College to offer educational resources to our residents.

Credit Repair Workshop

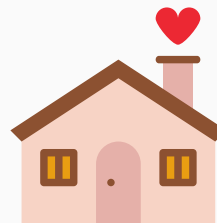
On September 22nd, HRHA welcomed Community and Business Development Manager Sarah Landram of Dupont Community Credit Union. She gave residents a presentation on "The Five Factors That Affect Your Credit Score." She shared the most prominent elements that play a part in the ultimate determination of one's credit score, including length of credit history and new credit. Despite the name, the discussion did not stop there; other topics covered were the breakdown and importance of credit reports that reflect an individual's loans, debts, and repayments.



Did you know that an
unrepaid debt will show
on your credit report for
up to 7 years?



This will impact the
interest rate when
you purchase a car or
home!



Sarah Landram also helped spread awareness regarding quick cash services. If there is a late repayment on a fast cash loan, hidden fees and very high interest rates can quickly become harmful and unintendedly add to one's debt pool! Thanks to Landram's workshop, our residents learned how to repair their credit scores, the benefits and challenges of using credit, and how to find a balance that helps them reach their milestones in life. HRHA thanks Landram for her amazing presentation and for sharing her knowledge and time with community members!

Continuing Education



On November 10th, HRHA collaborated with Blue Ridge Community College's (BRCC) Program Coordinator to bring educational resources to our residents. Learning new skills and subjects doesn't have an age limit!

HRHA is proud to help enable individuals with the tools needed to succeed. This BRCC program shared information on specialized classes for certifications. Some classes include Welding, Soldering, Medical Office Assistant, Machining, Customer Service and Sales, Commercial Driver's License, and Certified Professional Coder. It also included details on obtaining an associate's degree. Thank you BRCC for coming out and sharing resources with our residents!

Executive Director's Corner



In 1982, HRHA was one of the very first Virginia housing authorities to receive HUD grant funding to assist families in a work program. The program aimed to help families increase earnings and employment options through case management and connections to community resources. The program started with a part-time staff person and served approximately 15 families annually.

Forty years later, the program has evolved into the Family Self-Sufficiency program and currently consists of 1.5 staff serving up to 100 participants annually with an emphasis on self-sufficiency and homeownership. In September 2022, HUD approved HRHA's FSS annual plan, which outlines further expansion and scope of the program. Through input from program participants and as allowed by HRHA's Moving to Work plan, the program has been redesigned to assist families holistically to address not just employment achievement but also educational, health, and improved quality of life goals. Services will include coaching, self-directed plan development, access to services, and use of incentives to recognize goal achievement.

In Service,

- Michael Wong

Staff Highlight: Kim Haines

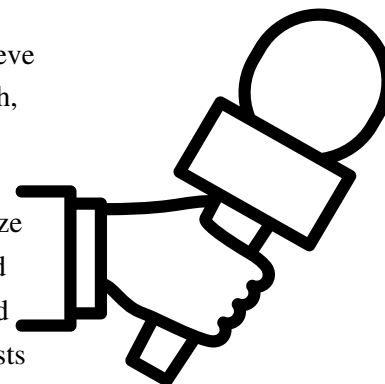
HRHA manages a variety of programs, grants, and initiatives. We serve hundreds of families through housing vouchers, programs like Family Self-Sufficiency, and city-wide campaigns. Through 2022, we plan to highlight members of the HRHA team who make this work possible.

1. What is one of your favorite aspects of working at HRHA?

My workplace priorities are working with nice people and for a cause I believe in that improves some aspect of life in our community. HRHA provides both, and I am very happy to work here.

2. What is your role with HRHA?

I am the Community Development and Grant Coordinator. I write or organize our grant applications to HUD and other funders and make sure our required reporting gets done and submitted. I draft and submit our Annual Report and Moving to Work supplements. Recently I have been helping with our requests to secure more vouchers and special fees when those opportunities open.



3. Do you have any goals or aspirations in your position?

Obviously, I want meet the requirements to keep the funding we have. I continue to look for funders for projects we would like to do that HUD does not cover. It is an exciting time to be here with our Moving to Work flexibilities starting and potential opportunities to build new housing units.

4. What is one unique fun fact others may not know about you?

When I turned 40 I started taking tap dancing lessons and continued for about 17 years. It is a lot of fun, and most years I did the recitals with my class.

5. What do you wish more people in our community knew about affordable housing, our families, or the voucher program?

I wish people understood the scope of the shortage of affordable housing here in our city and across the country. If the shortage is unaddressed, eventually essential workers such as teachers, fire fighters, police officers and service workers cannot afford to live locally. We have already seen this in cities across the country, especially expensive tourist towns. Local employers say they are having a hard time hiring because of the shortage of and expense of our housing. I wish people viewed this as a community challenge for all of us to solve – which it is – as opposed to the hard luck of unhoused people.

Welcome Mary, David, and Kaitlin!

HRHA is pleased to welcome Mary Walala, David Mutombo and Kaitlin Heatwole to our team!

Mary Walala– Housing Choice
Voucher Manager



David Mutombo– Western Virginia
Continuum of Care Coordinator



Kaitlin Heatwole– Data Specialist





Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

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Fax: (540) 615-5558

+ *HRHA Lineweaver & Annex*



To reach all HRHA offices, call: (540) 434-7386

Website



www.harrisonburgrha.com

Facebook



@harrisonburgrha

HRHA Board of Commissioners

HRHA is governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Harrisonburg City Council. The Board establishes the Authority's policies and procedures and appoints the Executive Director.

Board of Commissioner meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00PM.

Meeting location/access will be posted prior to meetings and in line with local health guidelines.

+ Michael Wong, (Not a commissioner)

Executive Director/Secretary-Treasurer

+ Dany Fleming - Chair

Term Expires: November 29, 2023

+ Christine Fasching Maphis - Vice Chair

Term Expires: November 29, 2022

+ Kevin Coffman - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2023

+ Luciano Benjamin - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2024

+ Gil Colman - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2021

+ Shonda Green - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2024

Kelley Street Garden Wrap-Up

2022 was another excellent year for the residents using plots in the Kelley Street Garden! As the year slowly ends and the cold fronts of the fall and winter seasons begin to draw in, we take a moment to reflect on the many successes and fun times made in this garden. HRHA would like to thank our Master Gardeners for not only their continued support but for dedicating their time and sharing their knowledge with our residents to help produce healthy vegetables for a true farm-to-table feeling!



Kelley Street Garden 2022
Photo by Victoria Hill