

THE HRHA NEWSLETTER

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



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Building Your Future: SERCAP Homeownership Workshop

On February 27, HRHA partnered with the Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP) to host a virtual Homeownership Workshop, providing valuable insights for residents looking to take the next step toward homeownership.

Led by SERCAP's HUD-certified housing counselors, the workshop covered key topics such as budgeting, mortgage navigation, credit improvement, and more! Participants gained access to expert guidance and free resources designed to help them make informed financial decisions as they navigate the home-buying process.

The session sparked engaging discussions, with residents asking insightful questions and expressing enthusiasm about the knowledge gained.

Many attendees shared how the workshop gave them a clearer understanding of what it takes to become a homeowner, from saving for a down payment to avoiding predatory lending practices. The positive feedback highlighted the importance of financial education and accessible homeownership resources.

SERCAP's Housing Counseling program provides ongoing support to first-time homebuyers, renters, and homeowners by offering free, one-on-one counseling sessions and educational classes. Whether you or someone you know are preparing to purchase a home, improving credit, or simply want to learn more about financial management, these services are available to help you achieve your housing goals. To connect with SERCAP housing counselors and their resources, you can visit their website at sercap.org/ or call 540-345-1184 to learn more!

Planting the Seeds of Community at Kelley Street Garden

On March 22, HRHA-assisted residents gathered for an interest meeting to learn about gardening fundamentals and have the opportunity to connect with fellow gardeners in the community. Participants who sign up for a garden bed will have tools and seeds available to them—all at no cost—thus eliminating cost barriers.

The Kelley Street Garden continues to serve as a vibrant community space where residents can cultivate not only plants but also friendships and knowledge. As the gardening season approaches, during the garden's monthly meetings, various learning workshops and short lectures are shared to help educate the community as well!

Breaking Ground: Commerce Village II Moves Forward

Exciting progress is happening at Commerce Village II. Commerce Village II has broken ground and construction is well underway, bringing us closer to adding 16 new affordable housing units for elderly, disabled, and veteran residents. The groundwork is in progress, and HRHA is excited about this much-needed project.

Commerce Village II is designed to provide safe and stable housing for some of our community's most vulnerable members. As construction moves forward, we look forward to sharing more updates on this initiative that will make a lasting impact in Harrisonburg. Follow us on Facebook to receive updates on the project's progress!



[HRHA Facebook Page](#)



Community Spotlight: Mercy House

HRHA is excited to introduce the new “Community Spotlight” section to our newsletter. In our newsletters, we will be highlighting non-profits and service organizations that help to provide resources in our community and surrounding areas! In this issue, we speak with Sabrina Herron, Shelter Manager, of Mercy House!

What programs and services does Mercy house offer?

Our shelter is solely for families with dependent children. However, we also have other programs, such as our **Prevention Program**, which helps people who are behind on rent. Additionally, we offer a **Rapid Rehousing** program for individuals experiencing homelessness in the area. This program assists with security deposits, first month's rent, utility deposits, and other necessary expenses. There is also the **Safe at Home** program which helps cover expenses like birth certificates, outstanding bills that need to be paid before securing housing, and even emergency clothing for children when needed.

What are some barriers clients face in their journey toward self-sufficiency?

Transportation is a major challenge. We work closely with the way to go program, but not all of our clients meet the qualifications for assistance. Another significant barrier is childcare—especially for children with special needs. Many daycares aren't equipped to accommodate children with autism or other special needs, making it incredibly difficult for single parents to find reliable childcare so they can work.

What's one success you've seen during your time at Mercy House or something that the organization is proud of?

I started working at Mercy House in 2020, right in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the projects I was deeply involved in was our motel program for medically vulnerable individuals. We were able to house many people from Open Doors who had medical conditions that made them more susceptible to severe COVID-19 complications. Through this program, we not only provided temporary shelter but also helped several chronically homeless individuals transition into permanent housing. That's something I'm really proud of.

What's one thing you wish people in the community knew about Mercy House?

I'd love for more people to know about our savings program. This is something that makes us unique as a shelter. While staying with us, residents are required to save half of their income each month. When they leave, they get all of that money back, which they can use for furniture, prepaid rent, or even a trip if they choose. It provides them with financial stability as they transition to independent living.



Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

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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

+ Kevin Coffman - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2027

+ Luciano Benjamin - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2028

+ Gil Colman - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2025

+ Shonda Green - Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2025

+ Kenneth Kettler - Commissioner

Term Expires: February 1, 2028

+ Amanda Leech - Commissioner

Term Expires: October 13, 2028

+ Janet Awkard-Rogers - Commissioner

Term Expires: April 25, 2027