

THE HRHA NEWSLETTER

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



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Funding Tools for First-Time Homebuyers

In September, HRHA hosted a Homebuying Workshop at the Lucy F. Simms Center, bringing together local partners and stakeholders. The event featured presentations on available grants, affordable loan programs, and step-by-step guidance for those beginning the journey to homeownership. Participants had the chance to ask questions directly during a Q&A session and later connect one-on-one with presenters at resource tables for tailored advice and support.

Homeownership is often considered a cornerstone of financial stability and long-term self-sufficiency; yet, many families face barriers, including rising housing costs, limited knowledge of financing options, and difficulty accessing resources. This workshop was designed to break down those barriers by connecting residents with trusted experts and practical tools to make homeownership more achievable.

By providing information in a supportive environment—with food and childcare included—participants were empowered to take the next step toward building equity, creating stability for their families, and investing in their futures. We thank our partners and attendees for making this event a success, and we look forward to continuing our efforts to expand access to affordable housing opportunities in our community.

The Learning Kitchen

Also during September, HRHA hosted The Learning Kitchen – Learn & Take Away Workshop at the Lucy F. Simms Center, offering residents a fun and interactive way to explore healthy cooking. Participants watched a live food demonstration and learned how to make simple, flavorful recipes using garden-fresh ingredients with minimal equipment. The workshop also provided hands-on takeaways, including jars of homemade hot sauce, pint containers of gazpacho, and bags of kale chips, giving attendees the chance to enjoy and recreate the dishes at home.

By making healthy cooking approachable and providing free resources, participants walked away with practical skills and confidence to prepare affordable, nutritious meals for their families. We are grateful to all who joined us for this engaging evening and look forward to offering more opportunities that combine learning, community, and wellness.

HRHA Garden Grove of Books & Money Smart Prize Winners

Congratulations to our youth program prize winners and to every child who dedicated time and effort this summer—we're proud of all your hard work!



In our newsletters, we will highlight non-profits and service organizations that provide resources in our community and surrounding areas. In this issue, we speak with Amber Robinson, Permanent Supportive Housing Supervisor, for the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Community Services Board.

What role does your organization play in addressing community needs?

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Community Services Board (HRC SB) is a community-based organization providing a range of behavioral and mental health services for both adults and children, including emergency interventions, residential crisis care, developmental disability support, jail-based assistance, permanent supportive housing (PSH), and school-based services.

The program adopts a solution-based approach, aiming to reduce homelessness, enhance both physical and mental health outcomes, decrease reliance on emergency services, and foster independence among participants.

What are some of the most urgent issues facing the community from your organizations perspective?

One of the most pressing challenges is transportation. Many affordable housing options are located in Rockingham County, where access to public transportation is limited. This makes it difficult for clients to attend appointments and maintain stability. Additionally, the transition from homelessness to housing presents challenges, including the need to develop life skills such as paying bills and maintaining a household independently. Many clients also lack a personal support system, making it crucial for HRC SB to provide ongoing assistance in their adjustment.

What trends or changes have you seen in community needs over the past few years?

There has been an increased demand for supportive services and resources to foster long-term stability. The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) program has grown significantly, offering intensive, wrap-around support that includes nursing care, clinical services, case management, and housing assistance. The ACT team provides 24/7 support to clients, ensuring their needs are met comprehensively.

What's one thing you wish more people in the community knew about your organization?

HRC SB offers a wide range of mental health services, including group therapy for children and toddlers. The organization is committed to promoting community wellness and harm reduction, striving to create a more supportive and informed environment for all residents.



Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

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Facebook



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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

+ Amanda Leech - Commissioner

Term Expires: October 13, 2028

+ Janet Awkard-Rogers - Commissioner

Term Expires: April 25, 2027