



Neighbors Helping Neighbors | Public Housing Authorities Care For Residents During the Coronavirus Outbreak

#Inthistogether

As communities combat the coronavirus outbreak, HUD is highlighting stories of communities coming together to help their neighbors in need.

Cincinnati, Ohio – During the coronavirus outbreak, The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) is continuing to care for its residents in new ways. After they realized some of their elderly residents were not able to get the essential products they needed, the Housing Authority decided to use funds from its Central Office budget to buy additional cleaning supplies, food, and personal items to help their residents. *“We’re staying in touch with our tenants, the senior tenants and everyone else, through the [resident advisory board] presidents,”* said Lesley Wardlow, who is a staff member at the housing authority. *“They let us know what the needs are. And if we can assist, we do. And if we can’t, we find a partner.”* The Housing Authority has also applied for funding from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation to purchase Kroger gift cards for residents in need. [Read the full story from WCPO](#)



[Photo courtesy of WCPO](#)

New York City, New York – For workers serving residents at the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) throughout the coronavirus pandemic, personal protective equipment was running short. That’s when HUD’s Regional office stepped in. Regional Administrator Lynne Patton and her team were able to deliver 56,000 masks to employees and residents right away, with more on the way. [Read the story from The City.](#)



[Photo courtesy of The City.](#)

Lynn, Massachusetts – In partnership with Jewish Families & Children’s Service, Salem Housing Authority, and the city of Salem, the Root has been supplying meals to seniors in Salem’s public housing during the coronavirus outbreak. Salem Housing Authority is one of the organizations that has redirected its efforts and resources to help communities in need through this unprecedented time. When Root, a Salem-based nonprofit organization, suspended its youth training program in the culinary arts to protect the health of their participants and staff, Chef Sam Hunt reached out to community leaders to see what the organization could do to help during the crisis. A week later, Root began to prepare and deliver packaged meals to Salem seniors in public housing. *“It is partnerships like these that have a huge impact during a crisis,”* said Root’s executive director, M. Scott Knox. *“There are people who are struggling and isolated in their homes, with little access to food. Providing these meals allows Root to meet an essential need in our community.”* [***Read the full story from Wicked Local Salem***](#)



[Photo courtesy of Wicked Local Salem](#)

Albuquerque, New Mexico – Keeping families safe during the coronavirus pandemic is the top priority, but the Albuquerque Housing Authority (AHA) also wants to help make sure their children have activities do while abiding by stay-at-home orders. AHA staff spent hours assembling and delivering 200 arts and crafts supply kits to homes of Public Housing and Section 8 residents. Furthermore, they worked with local retail outlets for donations to the cause - Target, Costco, Wemagination, Wal-Mart, and Albertson’s made the project possible. The community effort organized by the AHA and their hard-working staff was a complete success in support of AHA families, helping bring fun with arts and crafts into each household. Linda Bridge, Executive Director of the AHA, said *“This is a challenging time for everyone, but working with our community partners helped bring some joy to residents of the AHA, and that helped bring joy to the effort and everyone involved. I want to say thank you to all who made this project a great success.”*



[Photo courtesy of the Albuquerque Housing Authority.](#)

Harrison, Arkansas – In an effort to care for its most vulnerable community members, the Harrison Housing Authority partnered with Ozarks Share and Care food bank and community members to prepare and deliver more than 700 lunches, 1200 grocery bags of food, 800 rolls of toilet paper and other toiletries to more than 600 families. Given that Harrison is a city of less than 20,000 residents, this was a tremendous achievement. *“As we were all knee deep in the unknown and trying to plan and navigate how to operate virtually on a limited budget, we decided that if we could keep the families we serve inside, as well as others in the community, it could help stop the spread of COVID-19,”* said Harrison HA Executive Director Chonda Tapley. *“I am so grateful to my staff, friends, family, City of Harrison Public Works employees and the other volunteers, because without their labor to prepare the bags, drivers and vehicles to deliver the food, and monetary donations, we couldn’t have done this.”* The Harrison Housing Authority hopes this small deed will encourage families to stay in and practice social distancing, and they plan to repeat their community effort in the future.



[Photo courtesy of the Harrison Housing Authority.](#)

Birmingham, Alabama – One of the early goals of the #BhamStrong COVID-19 response effort was to find unique ways to help employees who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 quickly re-enter the workforce and play a role in the response effort. The Birmingham City Council recently approved \$1 million in funding for an AmeriCorps-style program that will involve putting paid volunteers to work on a variety of efforts around the COVID-19 outbreak. In a matter of days, staffing firm Vaco worked at an accelerated pace with #BhamStrong and the Housing Authority of the Birmingham area to pull together a 50-person remote call center staffed by recently displaced hospitality workers. The call center will survey thousands of public housing residents to understand their awareness of COVID-19, educate them about potential symptoms and connect them with the free resources available. Lindsey Tanner, a managing director at Vaco, had worked with Carpenter on prior projects and the firm had offered assistance with the #BhamStrong effort. On Saturday, March 28, she received a call about the screening and surveying project. By April 1, the call center was staffed and conducting surveys. *“This time is unprecedented for everyone. We’re all operating differently than we always have, whether that’s remotely or at all hours of the night or day,”* Tanner said. *“It was a lot of work, but the aspect of doing the right thing and helping out the city drives you.”* [Read the full story from The Birmingham Business Journal](#)



[Photo courtesy of the Birmingham Business Journal](#)

Chicago, Illinois – During the coronavirus outbreak, a Chicago Housing Authority resident has been “sew” busy helping her neighbors stay safe. Jerliner Jordan is a retired seamstress who recently started sharing her craft again by making face masks for her family, friends and other residents, including Margaret Harris. *“It’s not unusual for her to do something like this,”* Harris said. *“She is a very humanitarian person and I very much appreciate her and I’m sure a lot of people in this building feel the same.”* [Read the full story from the Chicago Crusader](#)



[Photo courtesy of The Chicago Crusader](#)

Olympia, Washington – During this spring season, families and loved ones are not able to gather for religious celebrations as they traditionally would due to social distancing guidelines. The Nisqually

tribe, however, found a way to safely bring holiday sprit to their communities while abiding by safety guidelines. The tribe arranged for a group of trucks to make surprise visits to more than 170 homes of Tribal members between Olympia and Tacoma. Accompanied by the Easter Bunny, the group delivered 180 turkeys and hams and 300 goody baskets to tribal members and their families. At each home, they even took the time to hide some Easter eggs on neighborhood lawns. *“They’re just really shocked and surprised,”* said Woodard, a Tribal member. *“We’re happy to be seeing their smiles.”* [Read the full story from the Nisqually Valley News](#)



[Photo courtesy of Nisqually Valley News](#)

Corrigan, Texas – The Corrigan Housing Authority (CHA) recognized that action was needed to assist their elderly, disabled, and low-income tenants struggling during the coronavirus pandemic. The CHA and the Corrigan Fire Department (CFD) helped rally the city to feed these vulnerable residents, securing funding for food from local employers Georgia Pacific and Roy O Martin, with Brookshire Brothers supplying donated milk. The CFD was able to deliver groceries to 56 CHA residents. It was a welcome surprise to public housing tenants, who also received guidance identifying emergency food resources for the elderly and high-risk residents of Polk County. Of their effort, CHA Executive Director Johnna Gibson said, *“This was the community coming together to help those who are most vulnerable. We are so proud of the city and local partners for making a difference in this moment of extreme need.”*



[Photo courtesy of the Corrigan Housing Authority.](#)

Fort Myers, Florida – The Community Supportive Services team of the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers distributed meals and resources door-to-door to their senior residents in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. The team wanted to make sure the 340+ residents in three developments had necessities and were aware of the visits from local food banks, such as Salvation Army Mobile Pantries. The Housing Authority also worked with a local distillery, who donated enough hand sanitizer to all their senior residents. *“We are just so elated that we were able to connect with the brewery here to be able to get the sanitizer for our residents,”* Vivian Watkins said. *“He said, ‘Bring your bottles, and we’ll take care of you.’ A lot of these seniors don’t have transportation. They can’t get out, so we want to be able to help them by providing them with these resources.”* For their public housing families, the housing authority has also partnered with LEE County School District to add two additional community-based food distribution sites to feed their students. Community Cooperative Soup Kitchen is serving families with takeout meals. [Read the full story from Wink News](#) and [Learn more about the housing authority’s efforts to serve their neighbors on their Facebook page](#)



[Photo courtesy of Wink News](#)

New Brunswick, New Jersey – The New Brunswick Housing Authority (NBHA) has partnered with the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Community Health Promotion Program to deliver meals to their senior residents amid the coronavirus outbreak – and these deliveries don't take a day off. On Easter Sunday, the group was able to partner with First Baptist Church-Lincoln Gardens and the Franklin CDC to deliver over 200 meals to seniors and disabled tenants at New Brunswick and Franklin sites. While making the deliveries, staff and volunteers observed proper social distancing guidelines to ensure safety of all involved.



[Photo courtesy of the New Brunswick Housing Authority.](#)

HUD Resources – To find key resources from HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing for public housing authorities on emergency preparedness, resident health, and other topics related to COVID-19 pandemic, [click here](#).

In response to the Coronavirus outbreak, HUD launched its www.hud.gov/coronavirus website with resources for those impacted by the coronavirus, including [COVID-19 FAQs for the Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher \(HCV\) \(including the Project-based Voucher Program \(PBV\)\) and Native American Programs](#)

HUD continues to work closely with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) to counsel communities and states on protecting their most vulnerable citizens from infectious diseases.

To find HUD resources related to the coronavirus, visit [\[www.hud.gov/coronavirus\]](http://www.hud.gov/coronavirus) www.hud.gov/coronavirus.

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