



Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

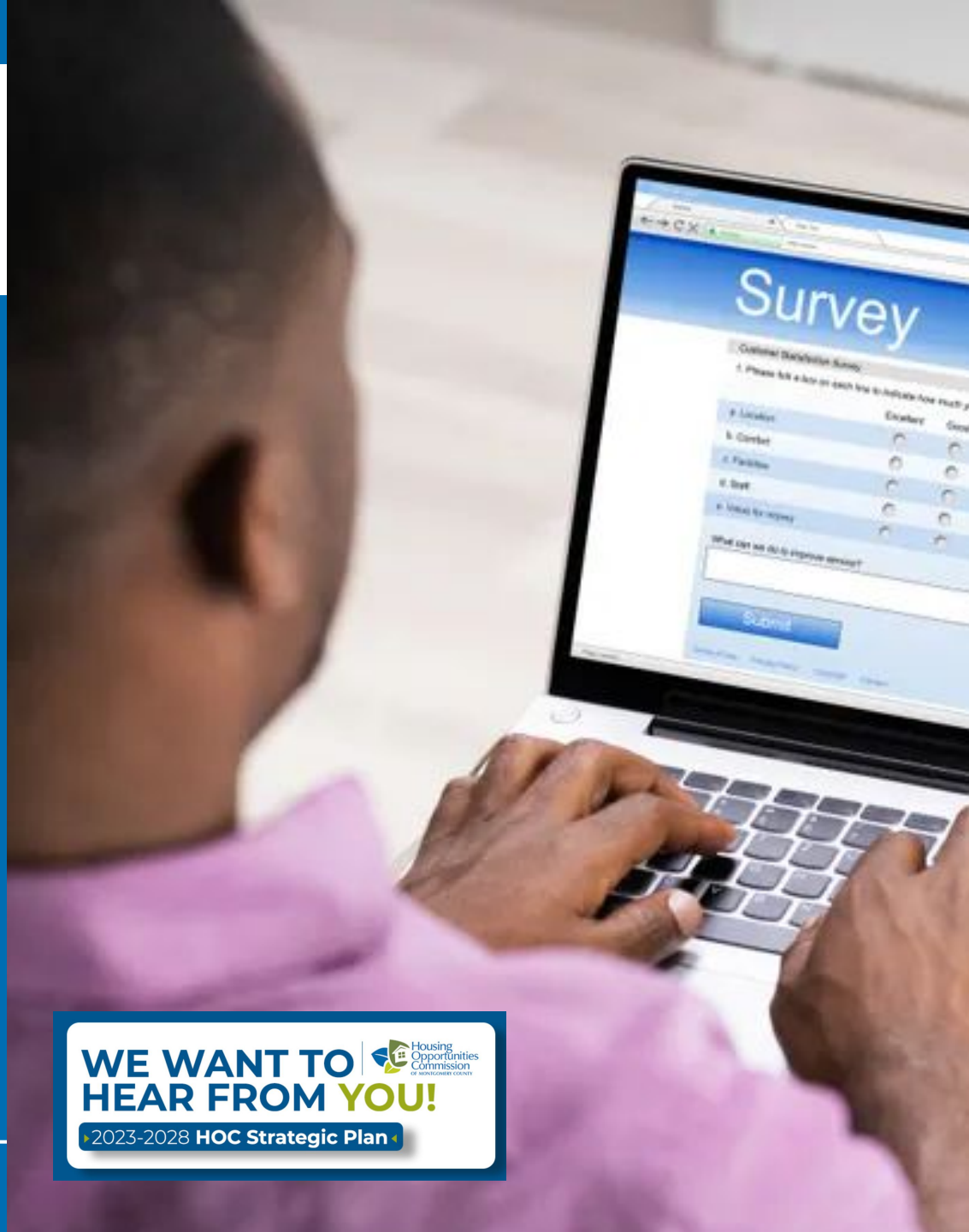
Chelsea Andrews
Executive Director

July 12, 2023

HOC AT-A-GLANCE: June 2023

June's highlights:

- Strategic Plan stakeholder engagement phase
- Upcoming Resident Advisory Board Elections
- Legislative Updates
- Highlights from our Resident Services Division
- Updates from our Housing Resource Division
- Real Estate Development activities and updates
- Updates from our Mortgage Finance Division
- Updates from Finance & Property Management Divisions

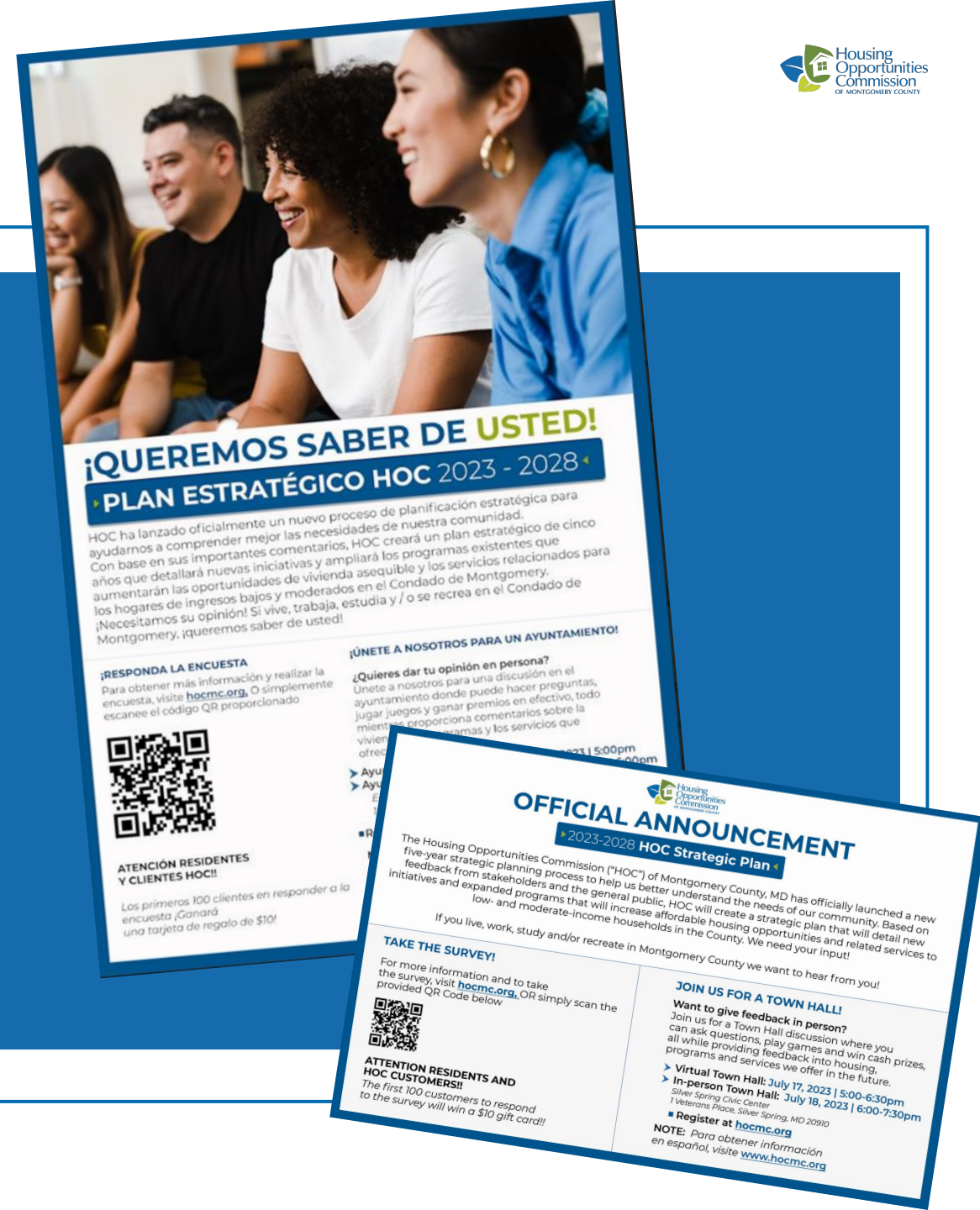


WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! 
▶ 2023-2028 HOC Strategic Plan ◀

ED's Choice for Spotlight:

HOC Launches Stakeholder Engagement Phase of New Strategic Planning Process

- **Stakeholder engagement tools:** Small group interviews, focus groups, surveys, town halls
- **Marketing vehicles:** Paid and earned media, social media, flyers, ads, PSAs, etc.
- **Progress to date:** Over 1,300 surveys completed to date and nearly 100 registrants for the upcoming town hall meetings



ED's Choice for Spotlight:

Resident Advisory Board Poised for Elections

- The RAB assists the Commission with the execution of its responsibilities as the PHA. RAB provides residents with a forum for sharing information.
- **June 16:** HOC announced a solicitation for candidates to serve on the RAB
- **July 17 - 31:** RAB voting including opportunities to vote before, during and after HOC's strategic plan town hall meetings



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

General Updates

Council Bill 15-23: Landlord-Tenant Relations -Anti Rent Gouging Protections

- Cap on annual rent increases of 3% plus regional Consumer Price Index (same used for Voluntary Rent Guidelines) not to exceed 6%
- Allows a "fair return" petition for rent increases over the cap and a process to apply a limited duration surcharge over the cap to recover capital costs. This would require application and approval by DHCA through a process to be defined in regulation after passage of the bill.
- Cap only applies to lease renewals, not to new tenants. Landlords can raise lease rates to market upon vacancy.
- Key exemptions from the law include:
 - New construction for first 15 years
 - Specialized housing such as shelter, hospitals/medical facilities, assisted living
 - Affordable housing units that are otherwise bound by a government agreement or regulation
- The law would take effect 6 months after final approval

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

General Updates

Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program: Preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing

- Introduced by Councilmember Andrew Friedson on June 20, with final action by the Council planned on July 18.
- Initial funding of \$20 million to come from future repayment of outstanding County affordable housing loans. Anticipated to receive additional funding in future years.
- HOC staff provide underwriting assistance but loans would be approved by DHCA's loan committee. HOC would receive a 1% origination fee to cover administrative expenses, except for loans to HOC.
- HOC is eligible for funding, but limited to 25% of the fund.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming

Workshops

- **June 20:** Facilitated Resource Sharing workshop
- **June 21:** Facilitated the Fundamentals of Housing workshop

Resident Well Being - Activities for Youth

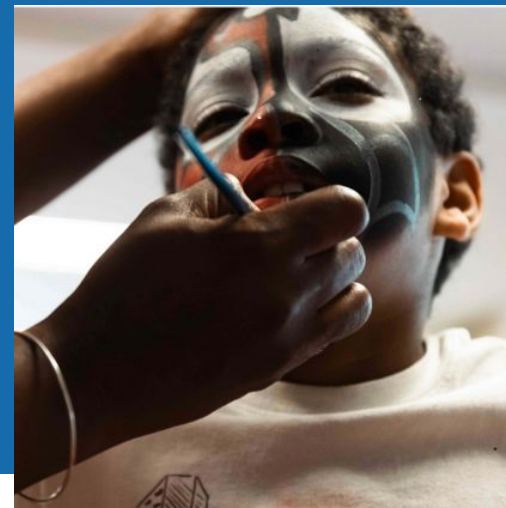
- **After-School Programs:** Services' Street Outreach Network ("SON") continued to facilitate the Safe Zones program at Cider Mill in June. Approximately 25 youth participated in group activities during their weekly Friday and Saturday gatherings.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming
(cont.)

Community Pop-Up/Resource Events:

- June 5: Washington Square
- June 13: The Willows and Towne Centre Place
- June 14: Shady Grove Apartments
- June 15: Magruder's Discovery
- June 16: Tanglewood
- June 29: Towne Centre Place



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Meet and Greets:

- Resident Services staff facilitated activities at Magruder's Discovery on June 5

Recreation:

- **June 5:** Family Bingo Night
- **June 15:** Food Preservation Workshop
- **June 28:** Budget Bingo



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Activities for Seniors: Arts for the Aging conducted the following activities at our communities:

- **June 9:** The Joy of Movement at Arcola Towers
- **June 22:** Feel the Beat (co-hosted by Teaching Artists Wall Matthews and Deborah Riley) at Forest Oak Towers

Health and Wellness Services:

- **June 8 and June 15:** Community Bingo at Forest Oak Towers
- **June 9:** Father's Day Party at Forest Oak Towers Including lunch, dancing, singing, raffles and prizes
- **June 14:** Field Trip to African American Museum at Forest Oak Towers in collaboration with Senior Connection, which provided transportation services

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Relocation and Re-Certification Assistance

- Assisted customers on an ongoing basis with relocations and other needs for RAD and renovation projects at Residences on the Lane, Stewartown Homes, Shady Grove Apartments, Willow Manor Apartments, Bauer Park, Town Center Olney, Sandy Spring, Willow Manor and Georgian Court.
- Conducted outreach to 45 residents who had not completed their re-certifications. Outreach was conducted via phone calls and emails.

Rental Assistance

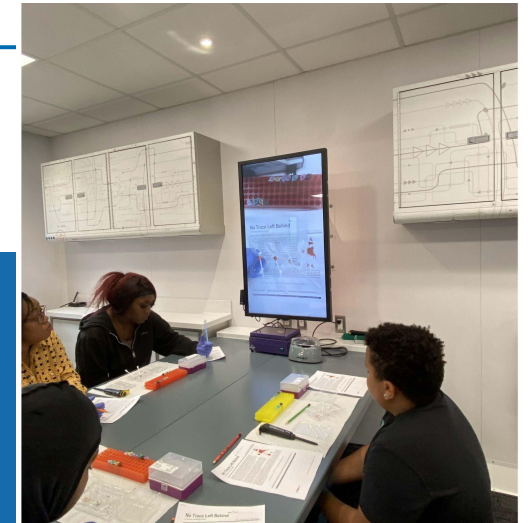
- Approximately 500 households received supplemental food with the assistance from HOC staff.
- CKC farm delivered fresh produce (approximately \$25 per bag) to 10 households at Fenton Silver Spring. In the future, Resident Services staff will use the grant to provide food vouchers that families can use to shop directly at the Farm.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

HOC Academy (cont.)

Youth Education/Enrichment

- **June 5:** Family STEM event at Gaithersburg High School (PICTURED RIGHT)
- **June 19-23:** Magruder's Discovery STEM Program with partner "Mad Science"
- **June 20:** Microsoft's "MineCraft Space Camp" field trip



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

HOC Academy (cont.)

Adult Education and Workforce Development

Small Business Strategy Course (“SBSC”) alumni continue to report their progress and new business ventures. Four (4) SBSC alumni are currently working with ALSTNTEC, LLC to legalize their businesses



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Financial Literacy

Financial Literacy Coach continued to work with HOC's customers and individuals on the Housing Path waitlist:

- Provided one-on-one financial literacy coaching to 27 HOC customers and 8 individuals from the Housing Path waitlist
- The financial literacy coach also facilitated financial literacy workshops
- Facilitated financial literacy workshops: 2 HOC customers attended the workshops



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Supportive Services

- Program **served 293 participants by** conducting home visits with program participants, providing case management services, and paying rent and utilities
- Continued to help Emergency Voucher recipients secure housing by providing housing location services, as well as financial assistance for application fees, security deposits, moving expenses and household items
- Program staff continued to implement the Rent Supplement Program (“RSP”), which provides a shallow rental subsidy (up to \$600 monthly) to county residents, including a large number of seniors on fixed incomes

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Fatherhood Initiative

- **June 23:** Program graduated 31 fathers from the June cohort



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Housing Choice Voucher (“HCV”) Program

- Currently, 158 families with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent; and 155 contracts are pending execution
- 200 families were selected from the HCV waitlist last month
- Eight (8) requests for voucher extensions beyond the initial 90-day period
- Two (2) extension requests warranted a referral to the Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Civil Rights for possible discrimination



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

RENTCafé Used to Support Online Annual Recertifications

- HOC introduced use of RENTCafé to assist with annual recertifications
- Customers with recertifications effective June 1, 2023, were required to submit electronic annual recertifications
- Overall, 390 of 615 customers submitted their paperwork electronically
- Forty-seven (47) customers were recommended for program termination effective June 1, 2023. The Resident Services Division worked in collaboration with the Housing Resources Division to assess client needs and to determine why recertifications were not being completed.

HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

RENTCafé Used to Support Online Annual Recertifications (cont.)

Resident Services Counselors assisted 24 families with the recertification requirement and overturned the termination. Termination proceedings will continue for 13 families for the following reasons:

- 11 – Failed to respond to counselor outreach
- 1 – Voluntarily withdrew
- 1 – Vacated/skipped

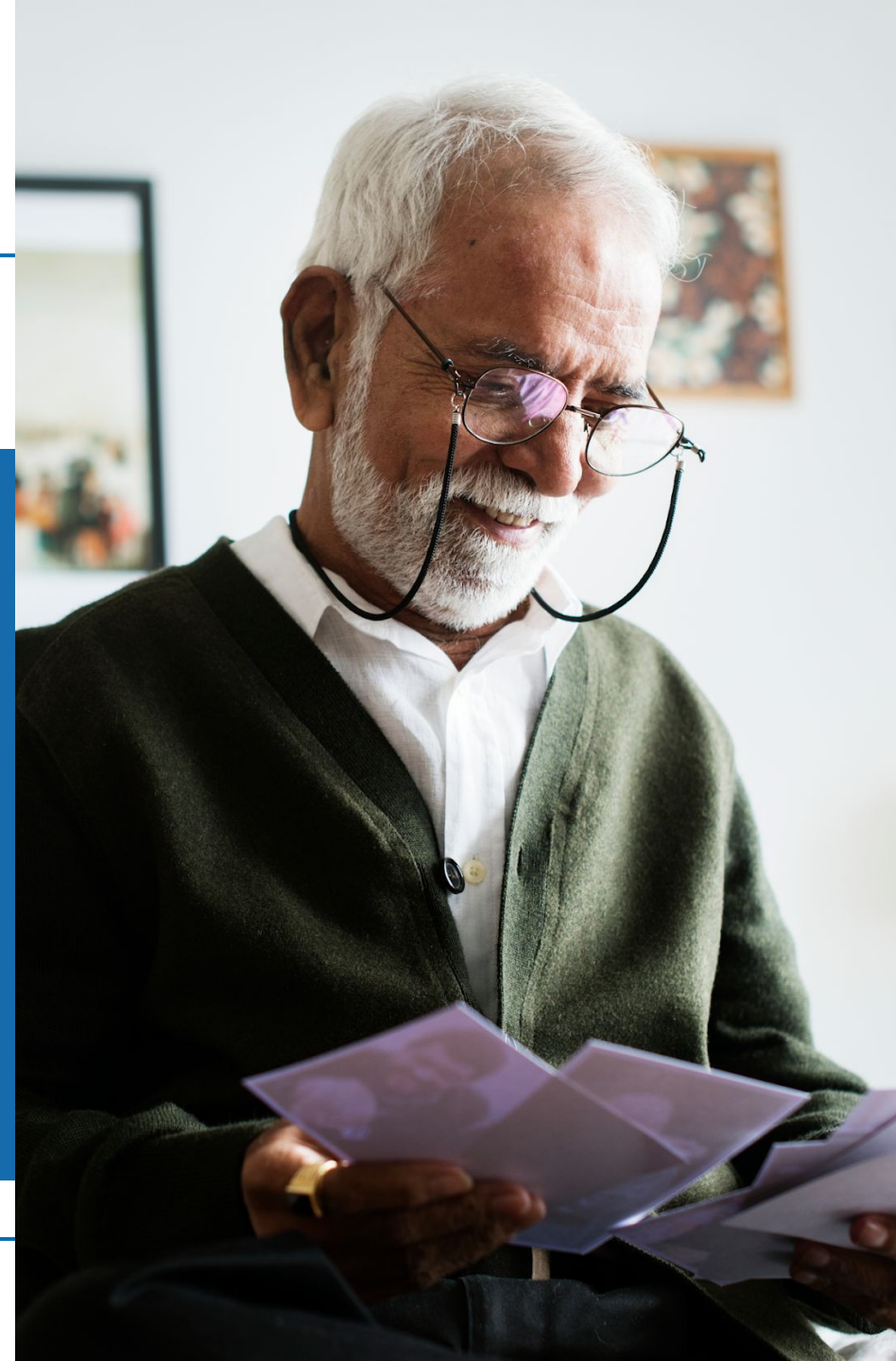
Housing Resources Division will continue to work collaboratively with Resident Services to assist customers facing termination

HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Emergency Housing Vouchers (“EHVs”)

HOC has an allocation of 118 Emergency Housing Vouchers

- 103 families have successfully leased units
- 5 families with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent.
- Staff are reviewing 10 certification packets to determine program eligibility



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Family Self Sufficiency (“FSS”)

- This month FSS staff continued their recruitment efforts with current enrollment consisting of 372 families
- Six (6) new families enrolled into the FSS program this month, with four graduations occurring in June
- Amongst the four graduates, earned income increased significantly, ranging from \$12,744 to \$65,078
- The graduates obtained careers in the following fields: Health Care Technician, Secretary, UPS Package Handler and Building Engineer



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Family Self Sufficiency (“FSS”) (cont.)

- FSS hosted a graduation ceremony for 19 participants from 2020, 2021 and 2022
- Executive Director Andrews provided congratulatory remarks; former HOC Commissioner Jackie Simon provided a keynote address; and Chairman Roy Priest was in attendance
- Each attendee voiced enthusiasm about being recognized at the ceremony while some were brought to tears of joy!



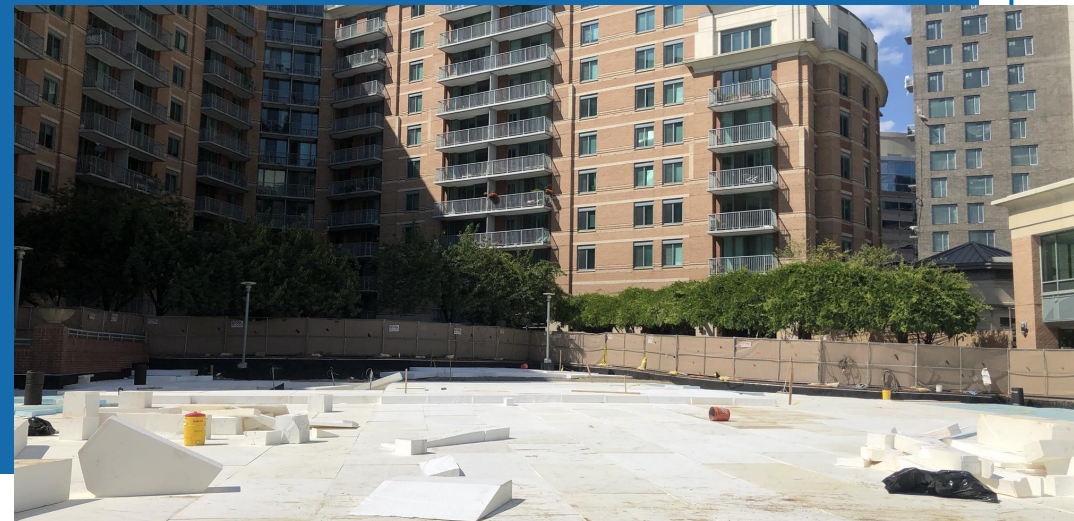
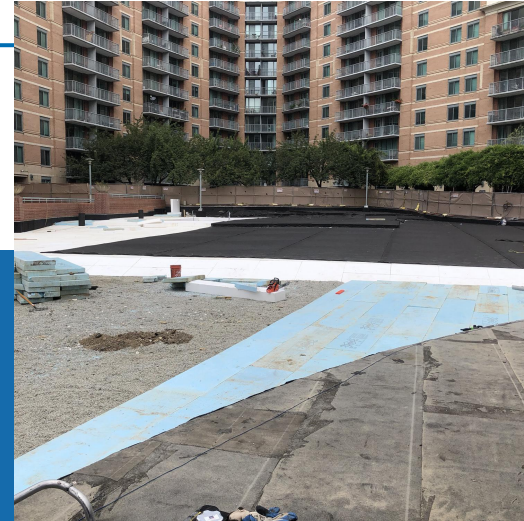
Family Self Sufficiency (“FSS”) (cont.) - FSS Graduation Recap



REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE: Construction Progress

Metropolitan Green Roof Repair

- The contractor, Contracting Specialists, Incorporated (“CSI”) has begun the second to last of five total phases concerning the green roof repair. The current phase is located at the south end of the courtyard, which is proximate to the County elevator and the pedestrian bridge. Completion is slated for Fall 2023.



REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:

Leasing Updates

- **The Laureate (Mixed-Income Family Community):** The Laureate continues at a robust pace with the community at 45.15% occupied and 57.46% leased. These occupancy trends illustrate a strong and positive interest for this mixed-income community.
- **The Leggett (Mixed-Income 62+ Community):** The Leggett is presently 21.35% occupied and approximately 41% leased, with just six households remaining to be relocated to the Leggett from the existing Elizabeth House.
- Following the vacancy of those remaining households, demolition contractors from the Berg Corporation will begin predevelopment activities to facilitate the more extensive demolition activities going into Fall 2023.



HOC STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2028)

Commission Update

5-Year Strategic Plan

Purpose

- Evaluate past performance
- Identify opportunities for improvement and new areas of focus
- Develop HOC's 5-year plan including:
 - Vision
 - Mission
 - Values
 - Strategic Priorities
 - Goals & Objectives
 - Implementation & Monitoring

Strategic Planning Team

Internal Strategic Plan Team

Chelsea Andrews
Executive Director

Kayrine Brown
Deputy Executive Director

Tia Blount
Director of Public Affairs and Communications

Ken Silverman (Contract Manager)
Director of Government Affairs

Consultant



5-Year Strategic Plan Approach

TWO-PHASE APPROACH

Phase I: Strategic Plan

- Stakeholder Engagement
 - Surveys, Town Halls, Focus Groups & Interviews
- Ecosystem, Needs & Current State Analysis
- Community Profile, Benchmarking & Best Practices
- Vision, Mission & Values
- Strategic Priorities, Goals & Objectives
- SWOT Analysis & Recommendations

Phase II: Implementation Plan

- Full approach to be finalized through Strategic Plan
- Operationalize, measure & monitor goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan
- Detailed action steps, metrics & dashboards

Project Timeline



Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Stakeholder Interviews

- Commissioners
- HOC leadership & staff
- County Executive & Council
- Partner agencies & organizations
- Nonprofit & business leaders

Surveys

- Customers: Residents, Voucher Holders, Waitlist Applicants (*Open July 5th to 31st*)
- General Public (*Open July 5th to 31st*)
- Staff (*Open July 10th to 31st*)
- Vendors & Partners (*Open July 14th to 31st*)

Town Halls

- Virtual: July 17, 2023 from 5-6:30pm by Zoom
- In Person: July 18, 2023 from 6-7:30pm at the Silver Spring Civic Center

Focus Groups

- Seniors & people with disabilities
- Immigrant community
- Black community
- Latinx community
- Wait List Applicants

Stakeholder Engagement Communications Strategy

Paid & Earned Media

- Press Release & earned media campaign
- Paid advertising in print & radio
- Placement of PSAs

Web, Social, Email, & Mail

- Prominent placement on HOC website
- Postcards to HOC customers
- Email campaign to HOC customers, applicants, and stakeholders
- HOC social media and leveraged partnerships
- Staff newsletters & meetings



OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

▶ 2023-2028 HOC Strategic Plan ◀

The Housing Opportunities Commission (“HOC”) of Montgomery County, MD has officially launched a new five-year strategic planning process to help us better understand the needs of our community. Based on feedback from stakeholders and the general public, HOC will create a strategic plan that will detail new initiatives and expanded programs that will increase affordable housing opportunities and related services to low- and moderate-income households in the County. We need your input!

If you live, work, study and/or recreate in Montgomery County we want to hear from you!

TAKE THE SURVEY!

For more information and to take the survey, visit hocmc.org, OR simply scan the provided QR Code below



ATTENTION RESIDENTS AND HOC CUSTOMERS!!

The first 100 customers to respond to the survey will win a \$10 gift card!!

JOIN US FOR A TOWN HALL!

Want to give feedback in person?

Join us for a Town Hall discussion where you can ask questions, play games and win cash prizes, all while providing feedback into housing, programs and services we offer in the future.

- ▶ **Virtual Town Hall: July 17, 2023 | 5:00-6:30pm**
- ▶ **In-person Town Hall: July 18, 2023 | 6:00-7:30pm**

*Silver Spring Civic Center
1 Veterans Place, Silver Spring, MD 20910*

- **Register at hocmc.org**

NOTE: *Para obtener información en español, visite www.hocmc.org*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

THE END

