



# Eau Claire County Housing Authority

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER  
721 OXFORD AVENUE, ROOM 1219  
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN 54703  
(715) 839-6240

To the Honorable Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors  
Annual Liaison Report for the Year 2018

## **Background**

The EC County Housing Authority (HA) was established by action of the County Board on March 20, 1973 according to State Statute. While the HA is its own entity, it is still connected to the County through the County Board; two County Board members are required to be commissioners on the Housing Authority Board.

The HA was initially established to administer EC County HUD funds for home rehabilitation loans. Our jurisdiction is primarily Eau Claire County, outside the City limits of Eau Claire.

Since its inception, the HA has applied for and received a variety of State and Federal grants bringing many dollars into Eau Claire County to help low-income residents pay rent, buy and repair homes.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program (first Federal HUD grant received in 1987) provides about \$975,000 annually making rent assistance payments directly to landlords on behalf of very-low income tenants. We also have Security Deposit Loan assistance funds available through Wisconsin Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) program which we received in 1995.

The HA received Federal HUD Public Housing development grants starting in 1994 to purchase and rehab existing housing stock (13 homes) into rental units, and also to build 15 single family homes and duplexes in the City of Altoona and Town of Washington. These homes are rented to very-low income residents. The tenants may also participate in our Family Self-Sufficiency and Homeownership Programs. Once self-sufficient, they can purchase these homes. This is a revolving program where funds are taken from the sales of the homes and recycled to purchase replacement units. This program annually brings in about \$70,000 in HUD revenues, to assist in program operations and maintenance, keeping costs lower for tenants while they are working toward becoming self-sufficient.

In 2004 the HA was able to purchase the Fairchild Nursing Home that had been taken by HUD under foreclosure. The HA applied for and received grant dollars from several sources bringing about \$1,140,100 into the community. The building was rehabbed and developed into 11 Senior (55+) rental units with a common area kitchen, living room and laundry area. Tenants living in this building receive Section 8 Vouchers, so their rents are kept at affordable levels.

We are always looking for opportunities to expand and provide housing assistance in our area. Since April 2016, the City of Altoona Housing Authority has contracted with our HA to manage their 36 units of Public Housing (24 one-bedroom units at Golden Acres One and 6 two and three bedroom duplex units).

In addition to these rental programs – the Housing Authority has continued to apply for and administer home rehabilitation loan programs. We have received several grant allocations over the years from various funding sources. Repaid loans are revolving, meaning as funds come in, we continue to loan these dollars out to homeowners and landlords to make necessary repairs to their homes. These loans are 0% interest, and the owner occupied homes are not required to make payments while they still live there.

In addition to Eau Claire County agency funding, we have also managed CDBG programs for the City of Augusta and Village of Fairchild. In 2013 the State of Wisconsin began to distribute its Small Cities CDBG funds to seven regional consortia rather than to individual municipalities. We are part of the West Central Regional Housing Consortia. Chippewa County is the lead agency in our region, administered by the Chippewa County Housing Authority (CHA). In 2015, CHA sub-contracted to Eau Claire County Housing Authority asking us to assist in the administration of Eau Claire, Buffalo and Pepin Counties.

In 2016 we also contracted with Chippewa County Housing Authority to administer the Buffalo County Emergency Assistance Program issuing grants to homeowners in Buffalo County affected by the floods of 2016 & 2017.

Eau Claire County HA also has down payment/closing cost assistance and homeownership counseling programs to assist low-income residents wanting to purchase homes in Eau Claire County.

As of 12/31/18, we are responsible for ongoing maintenance of 223 mortgages totaling \$2,483,631. We issue approximately 20 loans each year averaging between \$20,000-\$25,000 each.

## **2018 Activity**

### **SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

The total monthly payments to landlords in 2018 averaged \$76,635. Since this program began in 1987, 63,460 monthly rent subsidies have been made on behalf of about 1,719 county residents. The monthly voucher payment per family currently averages \$393 and the length of time that a family participates in the program averages about 61 months. Total rent expenditures for the program to date equals \$19,088,952.

### **FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY (FSS) PROGRAM**

This program is operated in conjunction with the Voucher and Public Housing programs. Under this program, rental assistance and low-rent housing occupancy are coordinated with public and private resources to enable eligible families to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency. A total of 368 families have participated in the FSS program; 6 families are currently under contract and participating fully in the program. So far, 70 families have achieved self-sufficiency under the program, and \$282,714 in escrow account funds has been disbursed to 64 families since 1995.

PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM

The Eau Claire County Housing Authority currently owns 15-Public Housing units. Under this program, tenants pay a reduced rent based on 30% of their monthly income. HUD subsidies are received to assist in the maintenance and management costs of the program.

Net rents received from public housing tenants averaged \$121 per month during 2018, reflecting monthly household incomes of about \$1,240 each. \$11,164 is currently on deposit into the FSS escrow accounts of public housing families.

Under the Housing Authority's Homeownership Plan, the families occupying public housing units may be able to purchase them when they have achieved and maintained self-sufficiency for at least 12 months. Thirteen families have purchased their housing units. At least ten other families have purchased homes other than their public housing unit.

HOUSING REHABILITATION

The Housing Authority continues to administer reused revolving funds from past CDBG and HOME, Augusta and Village of Fairchild CDBG programs, and its Emergency Rehabilitation program for additional housing rehabilitation loans. These programs, plus with our contracts with the Regional Programs, our agency has assisted in 18 projects in 2018 totaling \$263,947.

HOUSING COST REDUCTION INITIATIVE (HCRI) PROGRAM

Repaid State HCRI and HODAP security deposit loan funds from a prior grant are re-used to assist additional families. Twelve security deposit loans (\$6,000) were made during 2018 using revolving funds. These loans are at 0% interest; however, the recipients are required to make minimum monthly payments of \$25.

STAFF TRANSITION TO HOUSING AUTHORITY EMPLOYEES

As a result of an interpretation of the Wisconsin Statutes by the attorney for Portage County that Housing Authority employees are not supposed to be County employees, near the end of 2016, the Housing Authority began transition from having a contractual relationship with the County for all its staff and services to creating a separate entity for payroll, taxes, and insurance. 2018 was the first full year following separation from the County.

The HA currently employees three full-time staff positions; an Executive Director, a Housing Specialist, an Eligibility Specialist and a part-time Administrative Assistant.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Eau Claire County Housing Authority:



Robin J. Leary, Chairperson  
Eau Claire County Housing Authority  
Supervisor, Eau Claire County Board



Lydia Boerboom, Commissioner  
Eau Claire County Housing Authority  
Supervisor, Eau Claire County Board