



**BUILDING AN AMERICA THAT**  
**WORKS FOR**  
**EVERYONE**

Public Housing Authorities Pioneer  
Workforce Development Initiatives



**CLPHA**  
Strengthening Neighborhoods. Improving Lives.



**IMPROVING LIFE OUTCOMES** is embedded in the missions of public housing authorities (PHA). To this end, PHAs are supporting residents in their efforts to enter, stay, and grow in the workforce.

For many years, members of the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA) have been in the vanguard of this work, connecting innovative programs to their residents that provide access to job training, apprenticeships, financial literacy education, youth programming, education initiatives, self-sufficiency programming, and more services that contribute to the development of America's workforce.

25% of PHA residents are able-bodied adults, most of whom work at low-wage jobs. The remaining 75% of PHA residents are children, elderly, or disabled—not work-able populations. PHAs are focused on offering able-bodied adults workforce development and self-sufficiency opportunities with support from HUD programs and local partnerships.

One HUD program offered by many PHAs is the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, in which participants sign a five-year contract that outlines their financial goals (such as obtaining employment, pursuing education, or improving financial literacy) and set aside funds in an escrow savings account. As participants meet their stated goals and earn increased income that leads to higher rent payments, the PHA credits the difference of the payment into this escrow account. Upon successful completion of the program and fulfillment of their goals, participants receive the accumulated funds, which can be used for purposes like homeownership, education, or starting a business.

Low-income individuals served by PHAs want to access the American Dream like anyone else, but PHAs recognize there are many obstacles to achieving this dream including housing instability, access to employment, low wages, and economic insecurity. PHAs offer opportunities for residents to surmount these impediments and join the economic mainstream through rental assistance, workforce development initiatives, and self-sufficiency programs.

This publication highlights several examples of CLPHA member PHAs from across the country who are pioneering efforts to connect residents to the American Dream, and to make America work for everyone.

# AKRON METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY

AKRON, OH



The Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority manages the Reach Opportunity Center, a neighborhood hub established in 2012 that offers wrap-around services to support families and promote self-sufficiency. Programs focus on early childhood education, youth enrichment, workforce development, family events, support groups, and more. Center clients made 677 appointment bookings in 2024 to connect with community partners and access their workforce development and self-sufficiency services.

In 2024 the Reach Opportunity Center hosted over 100 hours of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education at their state-of-the-art, built-in STEAM Lab, and in 2025 AMHA will continue these efforts with a yearlong STEAM Club that is available for free to youth in public housing or voucher households.

AMHA also supports workforce development through the following initiatives:

- OhioMeansJobs provides services on-site twice a week, including job fairs, orientations, and workforce development workshops.
- Local agency partnerships offer short-term certification programs (e.g., customer service, logistics, CPR/First Aid).
- FSS and Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) service coordinators support residents with resume-building and interview prep workshops.
- Financial assistance is available for transportation (bus passes, gas cards) to job interviews and employment sites.
- AMHA collaborates with Summit County on the NEXT program, helping residents overcome “benefits cliffs” and maintain economic stability after income increases reduce public assistance.

# HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN

AUSTIN, TX

237 families participate in HACA’s FSS program, and Chante Wright-Haywood is one of its many success stories. The mother of 6 works for HACA as a community healthcare worker while pursuing a registered nurse degree from Austin Community College. She recently completed the birthing doula program at Huston-Tillotson University.

“Being in the FSS program has benefited both myself and my family in so many ways,” she said. “FSS has assisted me in funding many of my continuing education courses, plus paying for my course books and supplies. My FSS coordinator connected me to community resources to help educate me in financial literacy. Through the guidance of my FSS coordinator, I was able to raise my credit score by over 50 points, start a savings account, and start an emergency fund.”





# BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

BOSTON, MA



Since 2019, the Boston Housing Authority's FSS program—run in partnership with Compass Working Capital—has enrolled over 1,600 families who have earned more than \$12 million in escrow by increasing their income. The first group of 62 graduates recently completed the program with a combined \$890,000 in escrow and average income gains of more than \$35,000.

BHA also partners with Building Pathways to help residents access careers in construction and the skilled trades. Through the Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program, participants gain industry knowledge, practice hands-on skills, and compete for union apprenticeship slots.

Additionally, AMP Up is a three-year program for BHA and Cambridge Housing Authority residents that offers financial coaching and job support. Initial estimates show an increase in employment by 9% and an increase in the percentage of residents with savings by 12%. AMP Up is part of a research study led by EMPATH.

# CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGE, MA

The Cambridge Housing Authority's award-winning Work Force Program has been offering low-income teens comprehensive life skills and vocational training since 1984. Through this initiative, CHA provides educational enrichment and employment opportunities, as well as college prep and coaching for persistence support (that is, programming that helps individuals develop and maintain the determination to work towards goals despite challenges or setbacks), to over 365 residents from sixth grade through post-secondary degree completion.

Work Force employs a highly structured “whole person” approach: program staff maintain a regular presence at participants' schools and job sites and form partnerships among parents, teachers, employers, and other key people in the students' lives. The program's on-site location at CHA developments allows staff to have unique levels of accessibility and credibility with participants and their families.

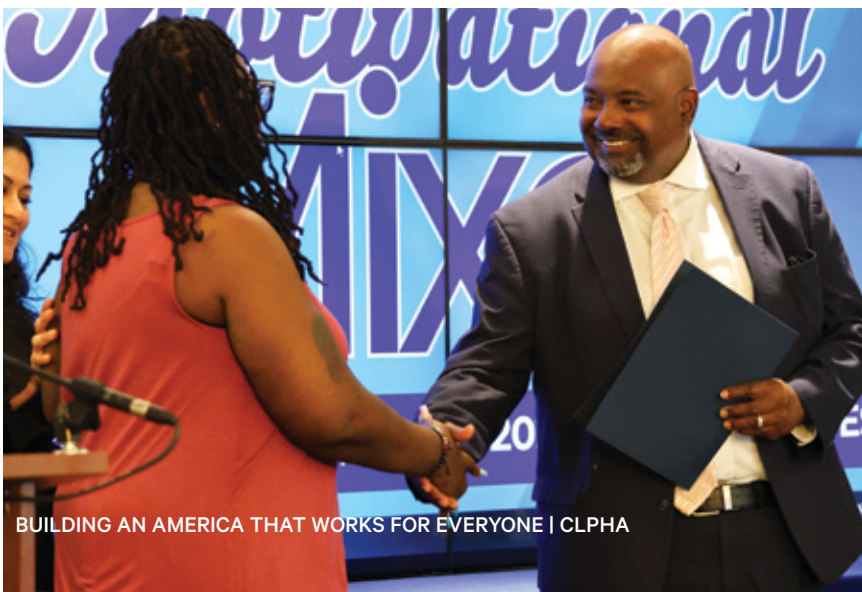


# CUYAHOGA METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY

CLEVELAND, OH

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority's FSS program empowers participants to achieve their goals, creating a lasting impact on the futures of families. CMHA's FSS program is voluntary and designed to assist families in becoming self-sufficient so that they no longer rely on public assistance. 28 participants graduated from CMHA's FSS program in 2024, and CMHA enrolled an additional 66 individuals in the program in 2024.

CMHA leverages public, private, and non-profit partnerships to link residents with supportive programs such as job training, educational opportunities, homeownership training/counseling, financial literacy, afterschool programs, childcare, and health care. CMHA also sponsors community job fairs that assist residents in securing open employment opportunities in the region and has held 60 workshops that provide residents with information and resources.



# FORT WORTH HOUSING SOLUTIONS

FORT WORTH, TX

In partnership with Tarrant County College and the Fort Worth Apartment Association, Fort Worth Housing Solutions offers a hands-on course that trains workers for employment in multi-family property maintenance. The program's first cohort of nine individuals, who completed 112 credit hours over the seven-week course, were awarded certificates of completion in 2024.

The course equips students with general property maintenance and workplace communication skills, and by the end of the course, students graduate with entry-level knowledge of HVAC, electrical, plumbing and appliance maintenance. Students are pre-screened for employment eligibility to ensure they are prepared for future job opportunities after they complete the course requirements.



# HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES, CA

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles has operated their Watts/Los Angeles WorkSource Center for over thirty years. This center, serving over 1,600 clients annually, receives funding from the City of Los Angeles Economic Workforce Development Department, amongst other grants, to provide residents with job training, client support, business development, mental health resources, job placement, and continued education. HACLA estimates they have placed nearly 15,000 residents in growth-sector employment industries and specializes in placement in health, construction and technology.

The Watts/Los Angeles WorkSource Center works hand-in-hand with HACLA's Section 3 team to train and refer residents for unique employment opportunities with HACLA's vendors and contractors. The Watts/Los Angeles WorkSource Center houses not only a team of trained job developers and case managers but also co-located partners including the Economic Development Department of the State of California, the Department of Rehabilitation, the County's Department of Public Social Services, the City's school district, and Epiphany Counseling, & Treatment Services, which provides individual and group sessions for participants.



# MIAMI-DADE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MIAMI, FL

Miami-Dade Housing and Community Development is deeply committed to advancing economic opportunity across its housing programs. The agency implements a strong Section 3 program, creating training and employment opportunities with partnering vendors, and collaborates with the local workforce investment board to connect residents with jobs. There are 167 active participants in the agency's FSS Program, which has helped some residents increase their annual income to \$50,000–\$75,000.

Miami-Dade HCD administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) with a strong emphasis on job creation. The agency funds lenders to issue microloans tied to job creation and supports business expansion through its Special Economic Development Program that ensures at least 51% of jobs go to low-income individuals. The agency also targets public housing residents for training in industries like property management. Furthermore, Miami-Dade HCD's redevelopment work utilizes community benefits agreements that ensure job and training opportunities in new housing and retail projects are directed towards its low-income residents.





# OKLAHOMA CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

The Oklahoma City Housing Authority and Goodwill of Central Oklahoma are expanding their existing partnership to create and grow workforce development programming and other services for OCHA residents. Leveraging local, cross-sector partnerships, Goodwill will offer digital literacy training and accredited certifications such as forklift, employee readiness, and retention services to OCHA residents. Goodwill will also offer mobile learning labs at OCHA properties to mitigate residents' transportation barriers. OCHA will ensure that 100% of its residents receiving housing assistance will receive an invitation to participate in training programs and opportunities as the schedule rolls out to various sites.

Furthermore, OCHA will provide participants enrolled in Goodwill's job readiness programming access to real-life experiences for training. For example, Goodwill will offer "make-ready" certification, a process utilized in property management careers that verifies a rental unit is clean, functional, and ready for a new tenant to move in. OCHA will make available vacant units for participants to undertake hands-on training for this certification so that they are ready to join the property management field. Once participants have completed digital literacy and employment essentials certification, Goodwill will assist them in the application process to fill positions within OCHA's workforce. OCHA expects up to 12 individuals to participate in this program in 2025 and 20 individuals to participate in 2026.



# SALT LAKE CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY

SALT LAKE CITY, UT

The Housing Authority of Salt Lake City's FSS program has empowered numerous families to attain financial independence and successfully transition off HASLC rental assistance. Their program is meticulously designed to equip participants with the essential skills and resources needed to achieve financial self-sufficiency.

HASLC's dedicated resident support team continually plans employment opportunities and incentives to bolster FSS graduates' success, and the results speak for themselves: 50% of HASLC's 2025 graduates have purchased homes, and 100% have secured careers that sustain their financial independence and housing stability. Without the FSS program, many participants might have remained dependent on the voucher system. Instead, they have discovered sustainable pathways to independence, making positive contributions to both the community and the economy.

Among HASLC's May 2025 FSS graduates is a remarkable former refugee who has recently completed goat farming certification training. With an unwavering spirit and the practical support of the FSS program, she is prepared to start her own goat farming business. Her success showcases the tangible impact of FSS on HASLC's community.



# SPARTANBURG HOUSING AUTHORITY

SPARTANBURG, SC

Recognizing the pivotal role of employment in achieving financial independence, Spartanburg Housing has utilized resident feedback to organize on-site career fair events that provide residents with valuable resources to enhance their professional capabilities. These events include resume review workshops, mock interviews, and a job fair designed to directly connect residents with local employers aligned with their career interests.



Participating employers, such as Chartwells, offered flexible school dining positions for parents seeking schedules aligned with their children's school schedule. Healthcare organizations like the Charles Lea Center, First Responders Healthcare Services, and Circle of Angels Home Healthcare offered in-demand roles in nursing and healthcare. From their most recent job fair one individual received an on-the-spot job offer, while two others later secured positions with First Responders.

SC Works, a regional employment agency, shares countywide job opportunities and job seeking services with residents, while Re:Degree, a local initiative, highlights pathways for residents to resume their college education and achieve higher earning potential in Spartanburg's growing economy. So far two residents have successfully connected with SC Works and have started rewarding careers in local manufacturing. By equipping residents with necessary tools and facilitating access to stable employment, Spartanburg Housing's efforts aim to foster self-sufficiency, enhance economic mobility, and contribute to the long-term economic growth of individuals, families, and the broader community.

# LUCAS METROPOLITAN HOUSING

TOLEDO, OH

Lucas Metropolitan Housing's Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) operates under the premise that the best way to improve the financial situation of low-to-moderate income families is by helping them boost earnings, reduce expenses, and increase savings simultaneously. The FOC model emphasizes bundled services including one-on-one financial coaching, income supports, and employment services. These services, offered with help from local government agencies and community-based organizations, work together to maximize impact and build generational wealth for families and individuals within their community.

Since its inception the FOC has served over 600 individuals. LMH reports that 83% of participants received bundled services, 115 individuals accessed over \$440,000 in income supports, 21% increased their net worth by an average of \$2,580, and experienced a 6% increase in achieving key financial outcomes, such as paying down debt or opening savings accounts. LMH remains committed to deepening this impact through continued service innovation, intentional partnerships, and resident-centered program design.







The Council of Large Public Housing Authorities is a national non-profit organization that works to preserve and improve public and affordable housing through advocacy, research, policy analysis and public education. CLPHA's 85 members represent virtually every major metropolitan area in the country. Together they manage 40 percent of the nation's public housing program; administer more than a quarter of the Housing Choice Voucher program; and operate a wide array of other housing programs.

**Learn more at [clpha.org](https://clpha.org).**



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