*(as approved by the CRHA Board of Commissioners 10/22/18)*

**CRHA Principles for Relocation**

As the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (CRHA) moves forward with plans to rebuild or renovate each of Charlottesville’s public housing neighborhoods, it is committed to minimizing the disruption experienced by existing residents who will be required to relocate during the redevelopment process. Most low-income residents have already experienced extensive housing instability in their lives as it is, so relocation for redevelopment must be planned carefully and implemented with the residents’ best interests in mind.

Displacing residents from their homes and communities is almost always disruptive in the short term, but CRHA’s goal is to implement a model relocation process that not only guarantees that no resident will become homeless as a result of relocation, but actually results in improved long-term housing stability for each affected household. Toward that end, CRHA’s resident relocation efforts shall be carried out in accordance with four key principles:

1. **CRHA will be transparent, inclusive and proactive in communicating with residents about the timetable and process for redevelopment and relocation.**  No residents will be blindsided by the changes that are coming to their neighborhood and to their own housing situation.
2. **Well in advance of any relocation, CRHA will engage with the residents of each household to develop an individually-tailored Relocation and Housing Stability Plan for that household, based on its own unique needs and aspirations.** The goal of this assessment is to identify the best possible short- and long-term housing outcomes for each resident, and to spell out the steps needed to accomplish those outcomes. Replacement housing shall be comparable or superior in quality and characteristics to the housing the resident is leaving behind, and must not leave any household cost-burdened.
3. **CRHA will provide substantial wrap-around services and support to each household in carrying out its Relocation and Housing Stability Plan** – and not just the minimum level of assistance that’s required by federal or state code, such as the Uniform Relocation Act. CRHA will cover 100% of the moving costs for each displaced household and provide hands-on assistance to residents in easing the transition to and from their new home.
4. **As specified in the Residents’ Bill of Rights for Redevelopment, any temporary relocation will be minimal in impact and duration**. Furthermore, all residents who wish to return to their former neighborhood once the renovation or rebuilding work is completed will have the right to do so, without needing to re-apply.

With these provisions and protections in place, relocation would be transformed from a typically destabilizing process to one that helps each resident make a smooth transition to a more stable and higher-quality housing future.

***Key Steps Needed to Accomplish CRHA’s Principles for Relocation***

Taking the following steps will ensure that relocation takes place with the residents’ best interests in mind, and is carried out in accordance with federal and state law, HUD regulations, and best practices from other communities:

1. **CRHA will be transparent, inclusive and proactive in communicating with residents about the timetable and process for redevelopment and relocation.**

* As soon as a redevelopment project is initiated in earnest, and no less than 12 months in advance of any relocation, notice of impending relocation shall be provided to all affected residents.
* Regular, accessible community meetings should then take place to keep residents fully informed and engaged on the anticipated timetable and process for redevelopment and relocation.
* Since many residents do not or cannot attend meetings, CRHA will also maintain open and ongoing communication with residents about redevelopment and relocation through door-knocking, written notices, newsletters, flyers, etc.
* CRHA shall provide 90 days advance written notice of the final possible move-out date.

1. **Well in advance of any relocation, CRHA must engage with the residents of each household to develop an individually-tailored Relocation and Housing Stability Plan for that household, based on its own unique needs and aspirations.**

* Within the 6-12 month period before relocation is expected to occur, agency staff (e.g., a full-time Relocation Coordinator working in collaboration with a team of local social services professionals) shall meet with each affected household to conduct an assessment of the residents’ current housing situation and desired housing goals.
* This assessment will help each household identify its best possible long-term housing outcome (returning to a renovated or rebuilt unit in the same neighborhood, moving to another public housing neighborhood, obtaining a Housing Choice Voucher, transitioning to subsidized or market-rate rental housing, homeownership or assisted living, moving in with family, etc.), and inform the creation of an individually-tailored Relocation and Housing Stability Plan that spells out the steps necessary to accomplished that desired outcome.
* For residents who will be relocated to temporary housing while awaiting the availability of a newly-renovated or rebuilt unit, this assessment and planning process will also help residents identify their best possible short-term housing option (moving to another unit on-site, moving to another public housing neighborhood, moving to newly-constructed relocation housing, obtaining a short-term Housing Choice Voucher, etc.).
* As part of this assessment and planning process, staff will ensure that residents are fully informed of the pros and cons of the various short- and long-term housing options, so that no resident is set up for failure. (For example: residents must be educated about the additional utility costs they would incur as Housing Choice Voucher holders.)
* Staff will also ensure that the housing options presented to residents are comparable or superior in quality, size, price, location, necessary accommodation, etc. to residents’ existing housing situation, and do not result in any household becoming cost-burdened. Proximity to jobs, services, schools, public transportation and other vital community amenities must not be impaired in the selection of replacement housing. If vouchers are used as a relocation strategy, the homes being utilized should be within city limits if at all possible.

1. **CRHA will provide or help secure substantial wrap-around services and support for each household in carrying out its Relocation and Housing Stability Plan**.

* Housing counseling assistance shall be provided to all households affected by relocation, not only to help them select their desired housing type (public housing, voucher, assisted living, etc.), but also to help them identify and secure a specific housing unit. All replacement housing units will be inspected to ensure they are decent, safe and sanitary.
* In addition, CRHA will assist each resident in securing other services and supports necessary to accomplish their housing goals. These may include, but are not limited to: financial management coaching, job search/job training assistance, access to eligible social services, etc. Toward this end, CRHA should explore the creation of a Financial Opportunity Center-type program (see <www.lisc.org/our-initiatives/financial-stability/financial-opportunity-centers>) in which all affected residents are automatically enrolled once notice of relocation is provided.
* CRHA shall provide financial assistance and hands-on support to help residents make the transition to and from their new homes, to include covering 100% of necessary moving and moving-related costs.
* CRHA shall move households at a careful, measured pace to ensure a successful transition for all residents; furthermore, follow-up support shall be provided once residents are moved in to their new homes (even if they are no longer living in CRHA housing) to ensure that they are faring well in their new environments.
* Children of displaced families shall be allowed to attend school in their current school districts if they so choose, and be provided transportation to those schools.
* CRHA shall make an extra effort to ensure that seniors, people with disabilities and other vulnerable residents do not experience any lapse in critical support services (health care, therapy, Meals on Wheels, etc.) as a result of relocation.

1. **As specified in the Residents’ Bill of Rights for Redevelopment, any temporary relocation should be minimal in impact and duration.**

* Residents should be placed in temporary replacement housing for no more than 12 months before moving into their permanent homes, unless they wish to return to their former neighborhood and the construction process exceeds 12 months (though shall not exceed 24 months). Hotels shall not be considered an acceptable option for temporary replacement housing.
* Residents will be guaranteed the right to return to a newly-renovated or rebuilt unit in their former neighborhood without having to re-apply or re-qualify.