



OAK PARK REGIONAL HOUSING CENTER CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

Response to Village of Oak Park

Abstract

This is a response to the letter from Village of Oak Park Manager Kevin Jackson Dated
February 16, 2024

Athena Williams

awilliams@oprhc.org, March 4, 2024



February 28, 2024

Kevin Jackson, Village Manager
The Village of Oak Park
123 Madison St.
Oak Park, IL 60302

RE: Response to Letter from Village of Oak Park Manager dated February 16, 2024

Dear Manager Jackson:

Thank you for the feedback regarding the financial monitoring that has taken place with the VOP team. Herein you will find detailed responses to the letter dated February 16, 2024 that came from your desk.

Per your request, in an effort to move forward, a corrective action plan was requested for the Live in Oak Park program, which follows this letter. Although, prior to this monitoring, many of the actions being requested were already being addressed OPRHC. Please let me know if you have any other questions. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Athena Williams
Executive Director

OPRHC CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

Clear plan for the OPRHC Board of Directors financial oversight.

OPRHC sought and finally contracted in June 2023, Bhaveshri Patel, CPA, who has vast experience with NFP agency's (see attachment labeled Accounting). OPRHC is in the process of updating the existing Accounting and Financial Procedures. As currently in place, the Board of Directors will continue to receive a copy of all financials on a Monthly basis. In addition, the Board of Directors is in the process of establishing a Finance Committee and its procedures. Pursuant to the new procedure(s) being created, the Finance Committee will meet with the Executive Director and the agency CPA on a quarterly basis to review the budget vs. actual revenue and expenses. OPRHC, a recipient of the Stronger Non-Profits Initiative, Co-hort 2023, has been working with BDO Accounting Advisory Firm to move these tasks forward. In regards to operational oversight, as OPRHC moves forward to re-structure the agency, the Executive Director will continue to provide the Board of Directors with a bi-weekly agency check-in. The Board of Directors will continue to have monthly board meetings with an agenda that includes the E.D. report and previous months financials.

Identify immediate cooperation and responsiveness with the Village.

While we work with many funders and much information that requires immediate attention, we have always been open to funders and partners to send a quick text message when immediate attention is required. This has been done in the past by Jeff Prior and Tammie Grossman. Moving forward, all emails will include Michael Stewart, Associate Director and 30-year employee of the Live in Oak Park program, a Board Member, and the Executive Director. In cases in which additional time is needed, we will request that additional support. However, we will continue to respond in a timely manner, particularly when a deadline is provided.

Intent to participate with the Homes for a Changing Region Study and the Diversity, Equity, and inclusion Assessment (at the completion of the studies).

OPRHC intends to fully work within the study. OPRHC would like to work in concert with the Village staff and or governance and the Village of Oak Park community, much like the establishment of the Live in Oak Park program. Upon completion of the studies, we will form a committee to develop a framework which will interpret the outcomes in a manner toward program development. Even though it will be more effective to work closer with the community, OPRHC would like to propose working with the Village to create following programs and or policy, but programs that have been run by OPRHC successfully in other communities:

- 1) To address Barriers to Renting: a rental counseling program that includes provide security deposit as an incentive to those who complete the rental counseling program. This would also help with affordable rentals;
- 2) Renovation of older housing stock: creating a program to assist with identifying and managing contractors to renovate/remodel older homes and or prepare those homes for aging in place;
- 3) Diversity across Oak Park: OPRHC would like to re-institute our integration program to sustain integration throughout the Village.
- 4) Affordable Homeownership: OPRHC would like to propose several options- a) managing a down payment assistance program; b) working with the Village to acquire homes, renovate them and sell them affordably.
- 5) Race and Homeownership: OPRHC would like to research and create policy around the dissimilarity index of the Village.

Housing Center must identify the racial integration plan and how it concurs with the Village's goal for affordability.

In an effort to concur with the Village's goal for affordability, OPRHC is reassessing our approach to racial integration with a new outline for reaching Village goals, that include and is not limited to the following below.

- a) Creating a new method for property owners to work with under-represented renters. This would include:
 - i) Re-committment to block by block integration efforts.
 - ii) Creating a campaign to work closer with property owners and real estate agents to ensure every opportunity for affordability is met through fostering integration. This includes but is not limited to obligated, community-wide Fair Housing Training.
 - iii) Create incentives for property owners to work with affordability in the Village. This may include implementing rental assistance for a select number of units. For homeownership, OPRHC would work with the Village directly to establish a down payment assistance program.
 - iv) Working closer with property owners to establish a protocol that would provide greater opportunity for affordability such as renter coaching that includes
 - 1) Rental counseling
 - 2) Financial Coaching
- b) Collaborating directly with VOP regarding the MFHIP.
- c) Working with the VOP to re-imagine marketing for affirmative marketing

Housing Center must identify Village involvement with the Center's operations.

As OPRHC moves forward with new strategic planning and an effort to sustain community integration, OPRHC has identified the need to create a committee around Cultural Viability Impact through affordability and Homeownership. The CVI initiative. It is our hope that two people from the Village would work with us and other community residents to further build out the framework which includes setting goals and creating active benchmarks to create and sustain a more inclusive community. This committee would work on the following: improved marketing the Oak Park community; creating affordable housing programming in sync with the Housing Study for a Changing Region; Increase multiracial civic participation through the OPRHC established Neighbors Knowing Neighbors initiative; and the Annual Affinity Fairs.

Housing Center must restructure their financial management system to provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the expenditures of all funds provided by VOP.

The housing center has been in the process of restructuring its financial procedures as well as the current QuickBooks (QB) accounting software. The QB software restructuring will reflect accurate and consistent recording of all revenues and expenses by program and by funding source. In addition, with the direction and instruction of our CPA consultant, we are re-valuating the current "**classes**" in QB so that we can modify them to more accurately reflect the programs and sources. In addition we are seeking additional operational funding so that we are able to hire a person to work in a full-time capacity as finance manager, working closely with our CPA.

Housing Center must develop a new reporting (voucher) template to detail expenditures related to the funding agreement.

We have re-created previously submitted vouchers using a new template which provides the monthly expenses paid for the program and the amount we are asking for reimbursement (**see attached vouchers for October 2023 through December 2023**). Even though this document has been created, we request time to meet to discuss the layout and reimbursement style.

The Housing Center must ensure Housing Center staff are paid their wages at the time they are due.

Housing Center staff are paid their wages when they are due. Because 75% of OPRHC funding is reimbursable, when payments are delayed coming into the agency, it may pose a threat to timely payments. In 2023, there were several instances with multiple payors that delayed payments. At the time of this situation an HR consultant was contacted who provided information of how to handle such a scenario. This included informing the staff of the situation and providing the staff with options. Those steps were taken. However, moving forward, in the event that payments are not received, staff will be furloughed. In an effort to not furlough staff, and to maintain cash flow, OPRHC had made multiple efforts to secure a line of credit. In late August 2023, after two attempts, OPRHC was finally approved for a line of credit. Moving forward, this line of credit will be used in the event payments are not received.

Housing Center must identify all funding sources and identify if any Live in Oak Park staff salaries or programmatic expenses are reimbursed through other funding sources.

See attachment labeled Accounting. This is the staff allocation plan for 2023. This identifies all funding sources and staff salaries allocated to other grants. Programmatic expenses are identified in the new voucher template.

Housing Center must submit their 2023 unaudited financial statements, including state of income and expenses. These financial statements must breakdown expenses by administration, program and capital expenditures.

See attachment labeled Accounting.

CONCLUSION

Many of these corrective action items may seem open as they require collective efforts on the part of the Village including how OPRHC will be contracted moving forward. In addition, there are other items OPRHC has under consideration per the January 23, 2024 goals which require the final Homes for a Changing Region Study and the Diversity, Equity Inclusion Assessment. In final, OPRHC would like the opportunity to engage in ongoing conversations regarding this corrective action plan and other opportunities to serve the Village of Oak Park.