



August 7, 2020

Ms. Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager
Village of Oak Park
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, IL 60302

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1041 South Boulevard

Oak Park, IL 60302

(708) 848-7150

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RE: 2021 Village of Oak Park Budget Request/SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Dear Ms. Pavlicek,

It brings me great honor to be the permanent Executive Director for an agency that has a partner such as the Village of Oak Park. As stated in the Oak Park Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement, "Creating a mutually respectful, multicultural and equitable environment does not happen on its own; it must be intentional.", please be reminded, the work of Oak Park Regional Housing Center is intentional as well. It is the work of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center, that helps create the environment we are all very proud to call home, the Village of Oak Park.

As I embark upon completing my first year as Executive Director, I have been faced with many challenges that I am aggressively addressing day by day. Those challenges include internal relationships, external partnerships, and overall agency growth and development. All of this in addition to the global pandemic that caused several setbacks. Even though, I have begun to set the agency on a pathway of mission sustainability and growth.

In order to continue this pathway, Oak Park Regional Housing Center is requesting support of **\$300,000.00** from the Village of Oak Park general funds, in the form a a two year contract, \$300,000.00 per year. This would allow time for the development and implementation of work that needs to happen for the continued growth of this agency. This support is an important marker for the sustainability of OPRHC and the services OPRHC provide the Oak Park community. Attached to this letter you will find the following and or an explanation of the following: 2019 Audit; 2021 Program Budget; 2020 YTD Budget Actuals; 2020 Accomplishments; 2021 initiatives; and a Spreadsheet with existing program staff and salaries.

Under my leadership, OPRHC will continue to strive to be an essential partner to the Governmental Body and the Community of the Village of Oak Park as outlined in the Diversity Statement and other resolutions and ordinances. Therefore, funding from Village Hall is essential to Oak Park Regional Housing Center as we strive forward.

We appreciate our strong and long-standing partnership with the Village of Oak Park and look forward to continuing to work with the Village to sustain a diverse, inclusive, and prosperous community.

Sincerely,

Athena Williams
Executive Director

Oak Park Regional Housing Center 2020 YTD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There were many setbacks due to COVID-19. They will be explained below.

SERVICE PROVISIONS

- Multi-Family Housing Incentive Program: seventeen buildings were approved to receive the grant; thirteen buildings were approved to receive the Marketing Services Agreement. More than 50% of the units have been occupied through OPRHC.
- Jan 1- Jun 30 reporting: Total registrations- 525; total listings given out- 2325; Oak Park Moves- 145; Affirmative moves- 78.
- Non- VOP designated/supported COVID relief: OPRHC called 1800 clients beginning March 15th thru July 15th to inform them of support available to them during COVID. We provided 250 OPRHC COVI-Care Kits (face masks; hand sanitizer; gloves; etc.).

STAFFING

Due to COVID-19, we had a few people resign due to complications with COVID. We also had difficulty filling positions. I am proud to inform you that we have hired individuals for the following positions:

- Development Coordinator
- Grant Writer/Strategic Initiatives Specialist
- Accounts Manager
- Communications Coordinator

We have also made changes to our Board of Directors. Some people resigned, others have shifted their positions. We are also working on our By-laws to reflect many needed changes such as establishing sub-committees which includes an Advisory Committee, and a Junior Board. Tracey Wik is no longer Board Chair. She remains on the Board as a member at large. Dr. Maria Krysan is no longer a Board member. She remains engaged on our Advisory Committee.

We are actively recruiting members for the Board and for the Ad Hoc Committees.

TECHNOLOGY

A large part of the work that needs to take place regarding our technology had a large slow down due to the following factors: COVID; and the agency having to set fundraising aside. Below is the status of work:

- Due to COVID-19 the process pivoted from establishing a professional app to creating an internal virtual system. OPRHC now provides virtual registrations. **Eighty percent of our client base is now virtual.** Even though, **OPRHC is 40% of the way complete with the app.**
- The development of the professional app lead to the discovery that we need to update our website for a better virtual positioning. We will launch **a new site for the oprhc.org on September 1, 2020.** The launch of this new site will better position the agency to engage better with clients as well as a better configuration for the app.
- Our new Client Management System was met with a slow down due to COVID. We are 40% of the way complete with the new CMS.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

While we were unable to move forward with a pro-bono team to provide an updated Strategic Plan, we are doing a couple of things: 1) were able to hire the Prescott Group who has been working with OPRHC to formulate our messaging as well as to update the oprhc.org website. The PG will also utilize the information formulated from the messaging report to be instrumental for a strategic planning session; 2) an experienced strategic planning team will work pro-bono with OPRHC for a one day strategy planning session.

