



THE Oak Park Regional HOUSING CENTER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Tracey Wilk

Vice President
Fabiola Cardlish

Treasurer
Christina Dyson

Secretary
Kelli Harsch
Jeremy Howell
Cedric Johnson PhD
Maria Krysan PhD
Kelly LeRoux PhD
Sharon Lomasney
Alexis Robertson
Jennifer Roman

Chairman Emerita
Joy Peasley

Board Members
Richard Gleason Sr.
Rick Kuner
Gene Lawrence
Patricia Lucas
Mary Eden Mattheis
Sandra Sokol
William Turner

Executive Director
Roberta L. Raymond

1441 South Boulevard
Oak Park, IL 60302
(708) 844-7150

July 31, 2019

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

RE: Partner Agency Budget Request for 2020

Dear Ms. Pavlicek,

I am pleased to reach out to you upon the conclusion of the organization's strategic planning process with Mission + Strategies, a best-in-class nonprofit consulting shop that helped The Oak Park Regional Housing Center (OPRHC) fulfill its promise to the Village and Trustees to engage in such a process. Emerging from the planning process, OPRHC is underway working in ways that are more nimble, more technologically savvy both in terms of program operations and data tracking, and which will ultimately revolutionize the way that we promote truly integrated living in the neighborhoods of Oak Park. We request that the Village maintain its place as OPRHC's primary funder in order to validate the results of the planning process and enable the extraordinary changes that the agency is undergoing to better serve the present and future residents of Oak Park. The value-added changes that we have identified through the planning process will more than justify the Village's investment of resources because even amidst challenging market dynamics, we will demonstrate a dynamic set of program activities that promote and enhance the Village's character as a racially-integrated community that will continue to attract the families of the future to Oak Park.

OPRHC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and a proud and grateful Partner Agency with the Village of Oak Park. The Housing Center's mission (slightly restated as a result of the strategic plan) is to achieve vibrant communities and promote intentional and stable residential integration throughout Oak Park and the region. To that end, the Housing Center works in Oak Park to promote diversity and integration in the community's housing market, primarily through rental housing but also now in homeownership as an outcome of the strategic planning process.

In order to continue our mission, the Housing Center is requesting support of \$390,000 in General Funds, or level funding from our previous allocations. This amount would account for 38% of our total budget of \$1,028,888 for 2020. This funding is critical to provide our services to the Village and will allow us to deal with many things that we will be doing differently as a result of our new strategic plan – from technology to data tracking to community engagement.

Over the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2018, the Housing Center served over 2,000 households looking to move to Oak Park. Of those households 423 made moves that either sustained or improved the integration of the village. (Moves always lag behind registrations by about 3 months as people search for apartments and we work to get follow up information on their moves.) We continue to be involved in more than one quarter of all rental moves to Oak Park, at a significantly better integration rate than occurs without the Housing Center's assistance. That rate is estimated to be about 25% of moves based on academic research, demographic data, and anecdotal evidence from owners in Oak Park. Moves made without the assistance of the Housing Center integrate less than 50% of the time.

Please note that within meaningful statistical ranges, 2019 rates of registrations, assistance and affirmative moves remain consistent with the 2018 rates – even with a bullish and increasingly expensive rental market that continues to make our work more and more difficult. The Housing Center staff continues to produce results at a high level – which bodes well for the potential of the technological and programmatic improvements we are making as a result of our strategic plan.

Our service is essential to the community's social and economic well-being. The Housing Center has been a central institution for promoting the integrated character that Oak Park enjoys today. Our advertising and marketing of the community ensures that a diverse demand, reflective of the region, is continuously seeking housing in Oak Park. Our rental advising service provides prospective residents with factual information about the opportunities in the community and improves their understanding about neighborhood quality. This service is essential to overcome new residents' misperceptions and stereotypes, based largely on racial attitudes, about where to move in Oak Park. We are the face-to-face market auxiliary for the values that the Village holds dear and promotes through its own communications and public services.

In order to combat possible discrimination, the Housing Center also informs each of our clients about their fair housing rights and the remedies available at Village Hall. This work supports the efforts of the Village's fair housing task force recommendations and strategies.

We ensure a desirable supply of rental units as well. Annually we work with over 200 property owners, ranging from some of Oak Park's largest landlords to the owners of 2-flats, condominiums, and single-family homes. Through the strategic plan we have developed mechanisms to engage the newest high-rise buildings in Oak Park, including through our mobile App and beefed-up online offerings, but also through relationship building and community-building programming that will engage all new residents of the Village. Our ambitious engagement goals for 2020 include connecting with over 60% of the building owners in the Village to frame our services in new ways and engage their collaboration to promote Oak Park as one of the most authentically integrated places in America.

Our technical assistance ensures that landlords act in compliance with fair housing law, provides advice on marketing and unit improvements, and serves as a helpful resource for questions ranging from rental pricing to parking to tenant selection. This collaboration also ensures that landlords understand the value of diversity within their buildings and gives us a direct line to communicate the Village's values to landlords in the course of our relationship-building with them.

A significant portion of this work happens directly with property owners enrolled in the Village's Multi-Family Housing Incentives Program (MFHIP). The Housing Center markets the units in the program and assists all the participating landlords. Our technological upgrades will assure renewed high compliance with MFHIP, and our community engagement upgrades will provide both housing seekers and landlords new ways to think about the Oak Park market. Our assistance ensures that units in the program remain attractive and that they will be rented in a timely fashion. Indeed, in a typical year Housing Center clients rent approximately 85% of all MFHIP units and at a significantly higher integration rate than would otherwise occur.

This work is coming at a critical moment in the rental market. Turnover in the rental market is at an historic low. Rents are increasing at a rapid pace. And, new development is overwhelming the imagery of the rental market in Oak Park. These three factors have made the effort to promote both diversity and integration more difficult. But we believe that the Village's continued support for OPRHC, on the heels of an election in which support for the Housing Center was a contested topic but the victors uniformly announced full support for OPRHC, will make a statement about diversity, inclusion and integrated living dynamics at a time that is critically important on the heels of the educational documentary "America to Me." As presidential candidates debate the importance of school busing to integration, OPRHC reaffirms the principle that residential patterns are critical to truly integrated schools, and OPRHC's planned community-building activities relating to priorities for integrated living are absolutely essential to the Village at this moment in time. And with Bobbie Raymond's passing, this is a critical moment to reaffirm the commitment to integrated housing.

The rapid increase in rents is deterring many from moving. Luckily, our collaborating owners report that a high rate of lease renewals has mitigated this somewhat. Because of the increase in rents, households of modest means are having trouble finding a unit they can afford in Oak Park. As people of all income levels register with our service in the hopes of finding a home, this has been a factor in our ability to serve clients and promote the community.

The new development that has been focused in downtown Oak Park has also changed the perception of renting in Oak Park. This change is akin to the perceptions of gentrification in Chicago neighborhoods. The overwhelming marketing and the visual change in the skyline are promoting an impression that Oak Park has changed into an exclusive community. While the Housing Center welcomes new development, we also have to manage the change in perception to assure potential residents that other options are also available. This is very difficult to do with the limited marketing budget we can afford. The large corporate buildings spend much more in marketing than we can. But with the encouragement of Tammie Grossman and the results of our strategic planning process, we are redoubling our efforts to work with the largest and newest rental buildings in the market. We expect that the creation of a mobile-enabled search app to promote inclusion and integration will be an easy on-ramp for large apartment building owners to list with us with minimal exertion, cost and trouble.

As a result of our strategic plan and our efforts to develop resource partners beyond the Village, we have already begun the process of developing a mobile App for integrated housing searches, that will serve both the rental and homeownership markets. Village funding is an important component to support this direction, but we are pleased to have initiated the development and taken the first steps with outside private funding. The App will enable all listing apartment owners, listing sales brokers and housing seekers to access information in real time, but through a lens that also promotes integrative moves and inclusive neighborhoods.

In the past two years we have built the capability to provide online counseling via Skype, FaceTime, Google Hangout, and other video conference methods. This additional convenience allows clients to go through the Advising process entirely online and will be fully integrated into the App so that our housing advisors and counselors can serve more people, and serve them all over the globe, in a greatly condensed period of time.

Funds to maintain and improve the online portal, our rental tracking database, and the more intense IT needs associated with App development and maintenance are factored into this request.

As part of our strategic plan we are also realigning our social media and online marketing strategies to more appropriately serve the pace of today's housing market searches. Our Google search numbers have been consistently up in 2019, and we expect that addition of an App and our participation in wider regional and national pro-integration networks will position the Housing Center as the go-to resource for those searching for housing throughout the Village. We are planning significantly expanded community outreach, community building and engagement activities for the 2020 program year, so that our expected numbers for registrations, counseling, and affirmative moves will rise across the board. The board and staff of the Housing Center have

recognized the need to do things in new, faster and more technologically savvy ways, and our resolve to change and the hard work we have engaged through the strategic planning period merit the Village's continued funding at the full level of support that the relationship has experienced to date. Our level funding request provides for level funding of our marketing function, as we look to put the Village's inclusion and diversity values out into the public domain in new and more creative ways.

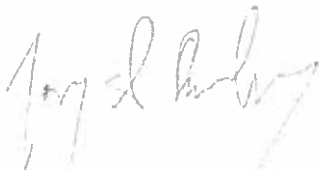
This request accompanies a strategic restructuring of our staff. The departure of both the previous Executive Director and the Assistant Director within one year's time left many questioning the organization's viability to continue. But the depth and vitality of the plans we have developed emerging from strategic planning should give all partners, especially the Village as our lead funder, confidence to move into the future. I joined the organization in February 2019 as interim executive director and have committed to remaining on board until new leadership is firmly in place. To that end, we have increased the responsibility of Associate Director Athena Williams to include Oak Park programming, have given increased staff leadership roles to Maggie Leininger and Michael Stewart, and have promoted two internal candidates to full time positions, Juan Arriaza and Gretchen Worley. We anticipate bringing on an additional staff leader in a program management role, but are confident that with the right coaching and mentorship, existing talent from within the organization stands the best chance of implementing the changes we have identified while maintaining fidelity to the relationships and functions we have built over decades of strong performance.

Finally, we have continued to grow our board in order to improve our fundraising and other technical capacities. This includes individuals with development experience, human resources experience, and accounting experience. We believe this highly engaged board will allow us to continue our efforts to improve internal structures and raise funds. We have taken on a number of dedicated volunteers in the development and event spaces, with ambitious plans for this year's benefit gala and other fundraising events.

The Housing Center continues to be essential to the Village's core values as outlined in the Village's Diversity Statement, its Comprehensive Plan, and many other ordinances and resolutions. Our work is at the heart of a diverse, welcoming, and increasingly equitable community. Furthermore, the Housing Center adds additional value to the community. Pursuant to conversations with Tammie Grossman, we are reinvigorating our efforts to work well with others in the Oak Park community and move away from any siloed operations. By effectively integrating housing in Oak Park, our schools, parks, businesses, and social networks are integrated as well. By promoting the community as an attractive and welcoming place to live, we further a sense of place that fosters harmony and affinity among all residents. And, by promoting inclusion in the community, we turn diversity into an asset that promotes strong and stable property values. In addition to supporting our necessary services, an investment in the Housing Center pays dividends to the community through these added values, both tangible and intangible.

Funding from Village Hall is essential to the Housing Center. We appreciate our strong and long-standing partnership with the Village of Oak Park and look forward to continuing to work with the Village in sustaining a diverse, inclusive, and prosperous community.

Sincerely,



Jay Readey
Interim Executive Director

**MFHIP Quarterly Report for 2018 Q1-Q4
Summary**

Oak Park Affirmative Rate*	64%
% of Available Oak Park Units Rented	78%
New Registrations per Move to Oak Park	3.57

*Ratio of Affirmative Moves to Moves

New Registrations

Total Registrations	1994
CDBG	1132
Oak Park Residents	467

New Moves to Oak Park

Total Oak Park Moves	559
Affirmative Moves	360

New Units Listed / Rented

Total Units Listed	778
Oak Park Units Listed	706
Oak Park Units Rented	553

MFHIP Quarterly Report for 2018 Q1-Q4
Active & Closed Registrations by Race, Ethnicity & Location

	African American		Asian		Multiracial		Native American		White		Total	
	Hispanic			Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic
Active Registrations	169	6	24	2	5	2	4	3	126	35	328	48
Closed Registrations	755	21	216	16	50	12	18	12	895	199	1,934	260
Moved To:	226	7	130	4	24	4	11	7	495	88	886	110
Chicago	29	1	16	1	0	0	0	0	49	8	94	10
Oak Park	126	3	78	3	19	4	7	5	329	54	559	69
Forest Park	16	0	15	0	1	0	0	0	31	4	63	4
Berwyn	6	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	8	5	16	5
River Forest	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	1	11	2
Other IL Location	42	2	19	0	2	0	4	2	62	16	129	20
Other Location	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	14	0
Not Moving	56	1	16	5	7	3	1	0	82	18	162	27
Client Not reporting	473	13	70	7	19	5	6	5	318	93	886	123

2019 Q1

Raw Data	Registrations	364
	Oak Park Resident Registrations	35
	Moves to Oak Park	56
	Affirmative Moves to Oak Park	34
	Units Listed	156

Relative Data	Oak Park Affirmative Rate (Affirmative Moves / Moves)	61%
	Moves per Unit Listed	22%
	Registrations per Move to Oak Park	6.50

2019 Q1	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiracial	Native American	White	Total
Clients Reporting Results	115	26	48	2	1	121	313
Moved to Chicago	35	3	13	0	0	22	73
Moved to Oak Park	39	7	9	0	0	35	90
Moved to Forest Park	4	1	0	0	0	3	8
Moved to Berwyn	2	1	0	0	0	2	5
Moved to River Forest	2	1	0	0	0	2	5
Moved to Other Suburb	19	8	19	2	1	38	87
Out of State or Other	14	5	7	0	0	24	50
Not Moving	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clients Not Reporting Results	27	2	6	0	0	11	46
Total Clients	142	28	54	2	1	137	364

Reminder

Move data always lags registration data by about 2 months. End of year report occurs after lag to catch all moves. Quarterly reports do NOT.

MFHIP Quarterly Report for 2019 Q2
Summary

Oak Park Affirmative Rate*	62%
% of Available Oak Park Units Rented	67%
New Registrations per Move to Oak Park	4.39

*Ratio of Affirmative Moves to Moves

New Registrations

Total Registrations	601
CDBG	326
Oak Park Residents	144

New Moves to Oak Park

Total Oak Park Moves	137
Affirmative Moves	85

New Units Listed / Rented

Total Units Listed	218
Oak Park Units Listed	202
Oak Park Units Rented	136

MFHIP Quarterly Report for 2019 Q2
Active & Closed Registrations by Race, Ethnicity & Location

	African American		Asian		Multiracial		Native American		White		Total	
	Hispanic			Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic
Active Registrations	18	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	20	7	43	7
Closed Registrations	144	4	42	4	9	2	8	6	191	38	394	54
Moved To:	45	0	30	3	3	1	4	3	124	18	206	25
Chicago	6	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	9	0	19	1
Oak Park	26	0	17	3	2	1	3	2	89	11	137	17
Forest Park	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	16	1
Berwyn	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	2
River Forest	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0
Other IL Location	5	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	12	3	24	3
Other Location	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4	1
Not Moving	10	0	6	0	1	0		0	20	3	37	3
Client Not reporting	89	4	6	1	5	1	4	3	47	17	151	26

MFHIP Quarterly Report for 2019 Q2
Closed Registrations by Race, Ethnicity & Move From Location

	African American		Asian		Multiracial		Native American		White		Total	
Closed Registrations		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic
Moved From:	45	0	30	3	3	1	4	3	124	18	206	25
Chicago	12	0	4	0	1	1	0	0	27	3	44	4
Oak Park	19	0	7	2	0	0	2	2	28	4	56	8
Forest Park	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	
Berwyn	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
River Forest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Other IL Location	9	0	6	0	1	0	2	1	32	7	50	8
Other Location	5	0	12	1	0	0	0	0	35	4	52	5

MFHIP Quarterly Report for 2019 Q3
Summary

Oak Park Affirmative Rate*	65%
% of Available Oak Park Units Rented	84%
New Registrations per Move to Oak Park	2.89

*Ratio of Affirmative Moves to Moves

New Registrations

Total Registrations	508
CDBG	296
Oak Park Residents	116

New Moves to Oak Park

Total Oak Park Moves	176
Affirmative Moves	115

New Units Listed / Rented

Total Units Listed	222
Oak Park Units Listed	204
Oak Park Units Rented	172

MFHIP Quarterly Report for 2019 Q3
Active & Closed Registrations by Race, Ethnicity & Location

	African American		Asian		Multiracial		Native American		White		Total	
	Hispanic			Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic
Active Registrations	166	3	35	1	6	3	4	2	141	34	352	43
Closed Registrations	223	9	64	3	16	6	12	10	303	62	618	90
Moved To:	56	3	44	2	9	3	4	3	183	27	296	38
Chicago	5	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	19	2	30	2
Oak Park	28	2	26	1	5	1	2	1	115	18	176	23
Forest Park	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	14	1	23	1
Berwyn	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	5	1
River Forest	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Other IL Location	14	1	7	1	2	2	2	2	29	5	54	11
Other Location	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	4	0
Not Moving	9	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	34	11	48	12
Client Not reporting	158	6	18	1	5	3	7	6	86	24	274	40

MFHIP Quarterly Report for 2019 Q3
Closed Registrations by Race, Ethnicity & Move From Location

	African American		Asian		Multiracial		Native American		White		Total	
Closed Registrations		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic		Hispanic
Moved From:	56	3	44	2	9	3	4	3	183	27	296	38
Chicago	18	0	4	0	4	2	1	1	31	5	58	8
Oak Park	13	1	7	0	1	0	0	0	32	6	53	7
Forest Park	5	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	5	0	14	1
Berwyn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	1
River Forest	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Other IL Location	10	1	17	2	1	0	2	2	62	11	92	16
Other Location	10	1	12	0	2	0	1	0	50	4	75	5