

Planning today for a greater tomorrow



2023 Annual Report

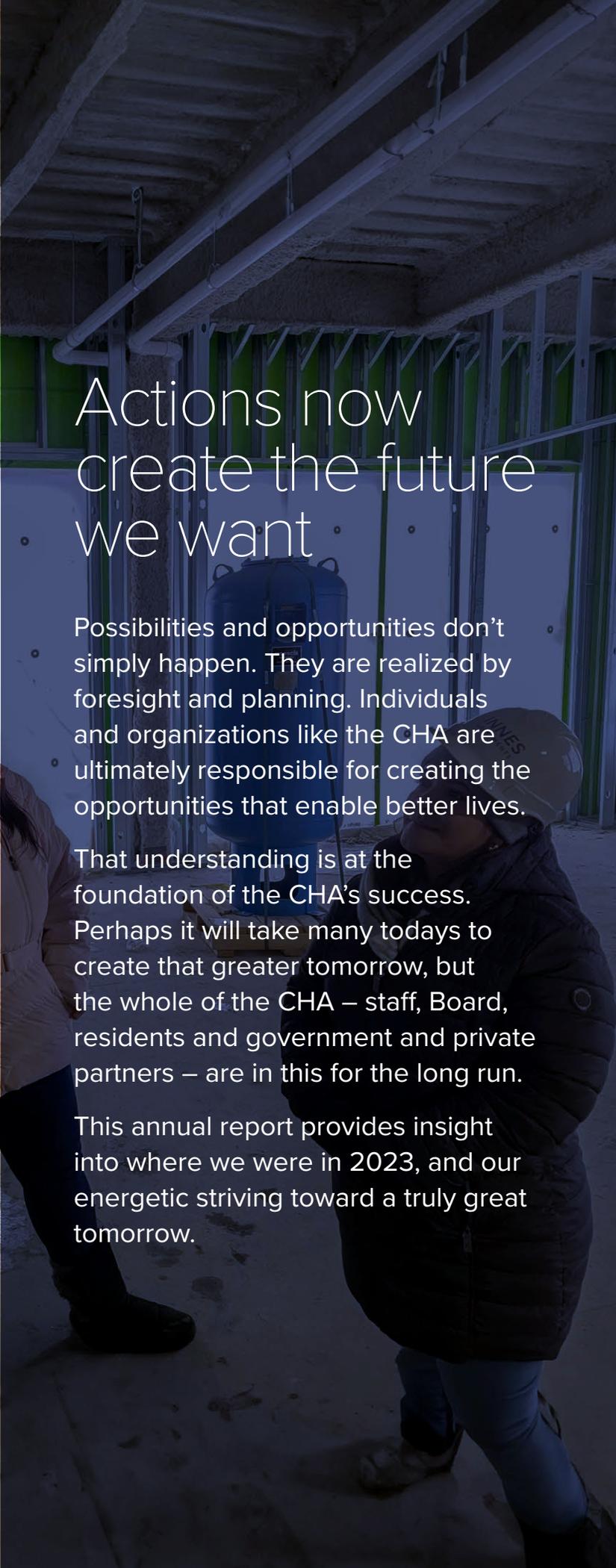


Actions now create the future we want

Possibilities and opportunities don't simply happen. They are realized by foresight and planning. Individuals and organizations like the CHA are ultimately responsible for creating the opportunities that enable better lives.

That understanding is at the foundation of the CHA's success. Perhaps it will take many todays to create that greater tomorrow, but the whole of the CHA – staff, Board, residents and government and private partners – are in this for the long run.

This annual report provides insight into where we were in 2023, and our energetic striving toward a truly great tomorrow.



Executive Director's message

To the Chelsea Community:

In 2023, the Chelsea Housing Authority underwent a transformative period marked by new leadership. I was honored to be hired as the Executive Director by our Board of Commissioners in April and we promoted several employees into key leadership positions. Throughout the year, we remained dedicated to resident services, fostering resident councils in every development, and maintaining professional services within our supportive services and property management departments, which provided stability, compassion, and opportunity for our residents. Our commitment as well as our creativity extended to bring initiatives such as affordable and accessible wi-fi to our Prattville residents, security enhancements and progress on our \$155 million redevelopment project, which was highlighted by a visit by the State's first-ever Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities to our housing authority.



This year's report underscores these commitments and showcases our innovative efforts. Before delving further, I express gratitude on behalf of staff, residents, and partners to former Executive Director Al Ewing for his invaluable leadership; we are all grateful!

Looking ahead to 2024, The CHA Board of Commissioners, staff and I are enthusiastic about planning for growth, reinvention, and enhanced services to our community. Our initiatives include a preservation plan for some of our developments, a redevelopment strategy for others and a blueprint for stronger collaboration with the city government. While these plans will not materialize in mere months, we embark on this journey with the passion to improve and better serve every day!!

Our Housing Authority is poised to tackle the challenges of a dynamic society, aiming to serve our great community in a more significant and bolder manner than ever before!

Regards,

Paul Nowicki

Paul Nowicki
Executive Director



Stanley Troisi, Member; Sharon Caulfield, Vice Chairperson; Juan Vega, Chairperson; Betzaida Acevedo, Tenant Representative and Treasurer; Antonio Hernandez, Assistant Treasurer

Board of Commissioners

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, I would like to express our sincerest gratitude and admiration for the work of the authority's staff and leadership team. They carry out important responsibilities with the utmost professionalism and knowledge.

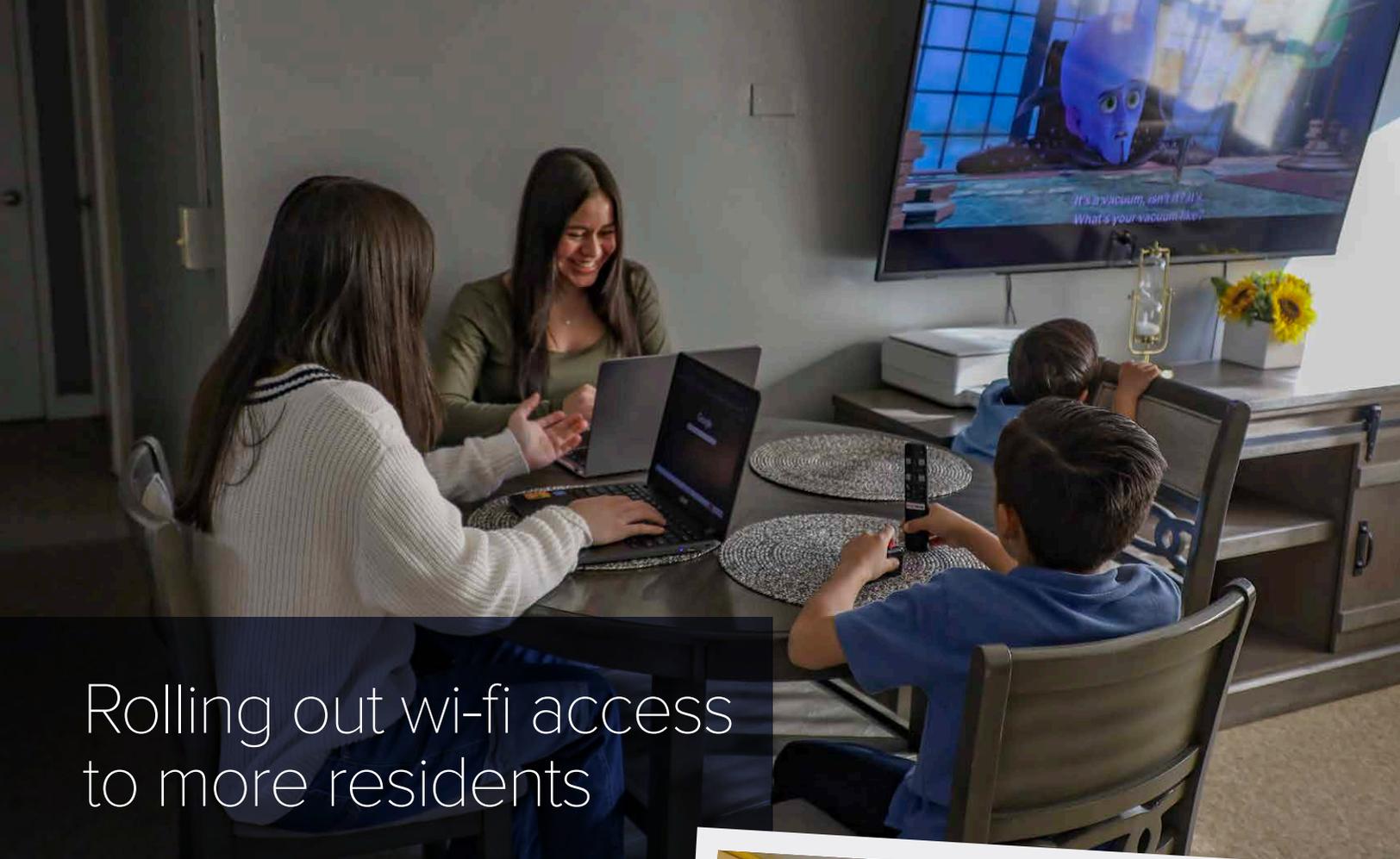
The Board would also like to thank all CHA residents for their engagement and support as we work together to ensure they receive the best and highest quality services.

In 2023 we offered our best wishes to our long-time Executive Director Al Ewing on his retirement after serving the authority with such distinction and integrity.

Then the Board was fully engaged in a comprehensive national search for its next director, which included receiving input from CHA resident leaders. Unanimously, the Board voted to hire Paul R. Nowicki as the next Executive Director. We wish Paul all the best and look forward to our continued service to the CHA residents.

Sincerely,

Juan Vega
Chairperson



Rolling out wi-fi access to more residents

As part of a drive for digital equity, Chelsea was selected as one of the three participants to have free wi-fi installed at one of our sites by the State of Massachusetts. After a tour across our portfolio, officials decided that Prattville (a Massachusetts State family development consisting of 128 families) was the best choice for the first pilot. In partnership with the Massachusetts Area Planning Council, The City of Chelsea and the Mass Broadband Institute, CHA has been working to install wi-fi access at the site. The program was officially launched in January of 2024. Our team worked extensively with multiple partners to bring this pilot to fruition with strong support from multiple departments.



The project brings a 1 Gbps pipeline into Prattville and provides 100 mbps service to residents in their homes, which is enough to connect multiple video calls and video uses in each household. A total package, the project provides 48 wireless access points, \$5,000 for computer training equipment for residents and access guides to teach residents in internet safety and security.

Chelsea Housing Authority and our partners first decided to push for this initiative during the Covid 19 pandemic. Due to restrictions, our office conducted all meetings and hearings remotely during this time. Multiple residents had a difficult time adjusting to the change. Our staff saw residents crowded around the outside of the local McDonalds and other fast-food restaurants in order to use their laptops for work and school. Other residents would cut out of hearings or meetings on important topics due to a lack of bandwidth. Ultimately, many student residents connected via digital hotspots provided by the library and school system.

The situation highlighted the need: high-speed internet is a necessity to be part of our greater community. Yet according to the ACS survey of communities, 17 percent of the City of Chelsea population lacks high-speed internet access. That is among one of the highest rates in the state.

The Prattville wi-fi project covers 128 families and has an initial investment of over 170,000 dollars provided by MBI, in addition to the numerous staff hours provided by the CHA and our partners. The City of Chelsea is funding the second and third year of service at \$30,688 per year, with the first year being covered by the grant via MAPC and MBI.

During the January 2024 launch, an outreach team went door to door talking to residents about the program. Many residents have already canceled their expensive internet subscriptions and others are accessing these services for the first time. As 2024 continues, our Supportive Services team will work to further bridge the digital divide at Prattville with outreach and education.

As one of the first housing authorities to move forward with this project, our team has been involved in multiple round table discussions, trainings and conferences on the topic. Our Director of Operations, Matt Frank, has been to conferences at MIT and at roundtables in the Boston office of the Massachusetts Area Competitive Partnership. He has also been interviewed by several other housing authorities on the best way to move forward with their own projects. CHA has also had the advantage of an engaged maintenance team. The Maintenance and Modernization team, lead by Director of Maintenance and Procurement Greg Beatrice and Maintenance and Modernization Supervisor James Krasco, provided support and seamless access to the sites. Moreover, the team lent tremendous knowledge before, during and after the multiple site visits and installation periods.

CHA will continue to look for more funding opportunities, grants and partnerships to bridge the digital gap at as many sites as possible over the next few years.

“The CHA is working on amazing projects across our sites. Our partnerships form an integral part of their success. We partner with so many quality groups and agencies to bring services, safe and affordable housing and new opportunities to residents. Some of our most valued partners, the City of Chelsea, MAPC and MBI proved their great value when the Prattville wi-fi opportunity called for an “all hands on deck” response. Together, we are bridging the digital equity divide as we look to the future with plans to expand digital access to more of our sites.”

– Paul Nowicki
Executive Director



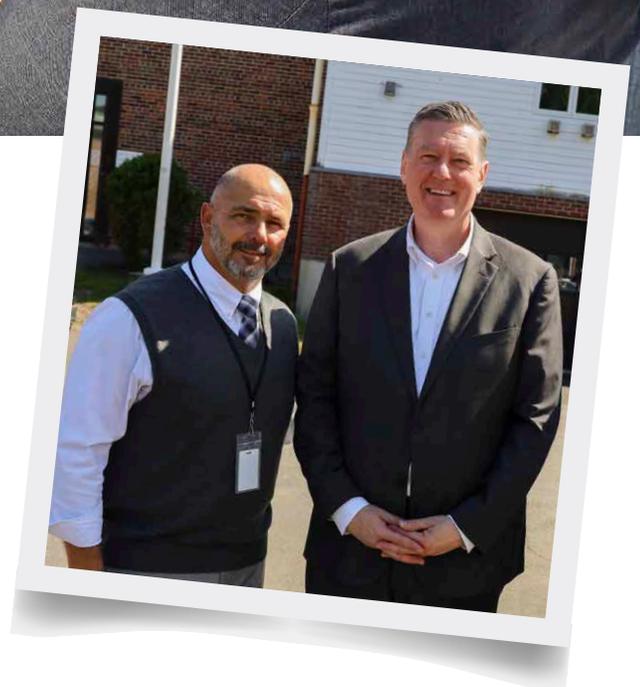


A visit from the Housing and Liveable Communities secretary

On September 21, 2023 the CHA hosted a visit by the Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Liveable Communities Ed Augustus. The Secretary visited our Prattville and Fitzpatrick sites, state family sites, and then made his way over to tour Innes and view the construction. Secretary Augustus was greeted by the full CHA staff, led by CHA Executive Director Paul Nowicki, at Prattville where he gave a few words and was presented an official CHA hat and t-shirt by our maintenance staff.

From there the Secretary toured the sites to see the need for investment in state public housing in Massachusetts. The first visit to Prattville showed the Secretary the challenges CHA faces with housing stock that is over 75 years old in both our wooden townhouses and our brick apartments. From there he was escorted to the Innes project site where he was able to hear about the partnership that made the project possible and the progress being made.

At the Innes site, Secretary Augustus was greeted by former Executive Director Al Ewing, representatives from the Joseph J Corcoran Company, John M Corcoran Company, CHA board members and city officials. The contingent discussed the 155-million-dollar public/private partnership and how the project is preserving public housing units while creating more affordable housing stock in the community. The public housing and affordable units will be situated on top of mixed-use commercial business space and adjoining market rate units. At the Innes site, all units will be blended together. There will not be any separation between the different types of units, leading to a cohesive and equitable community.



Innes development update

The Innes Redevelopment team, led by JJC-JMC in partnership with the CHA, Innes Resident Association, and its lender and investors, is preparing for the completion of the first residential building in Fall 2024. We are excited to have 24 CHA families moving back onsite, and are engaging with residents to craft a robust plan for programming and services in the new development.

The IRA and HOU have been keeping all relocated Innes residents informed of construction progress and will provide site tours this summer to get residents excited for their new homes. CHA and the development team have focused on ensuring that the development's construction jobs are provided for local residents. As of this date, over 15% of the construction hires have been City of Chelsea residents. We look to continue our outreach efforts for the remainder of the construction period, with the second building being ready for occupancy by summer of 2025. The road has been a long one but very rewarding for those involved to see their passion and hard work on this important public/private partnership yield fruit.



PROFILE

Spotlight on property managers

CHA property managers are our first-line staff who work with residents and are integral to the operation of our sites. They work across multiple departments to ensure residents are safe, secure and fulfilled in their homes at our properties located across the city. Their duties include setting up new residents in apartments, following up on maintenance and security concerns, inspecting units for safety, monitoring the physical structures, calculating and adjusting rent, responding to resident concerns and working with the Supportive Services Department to help direct residents to needed resources. Working under the supervision of Deputy Director Arnaldo Velazquez Alex, Jackie and Carmen have extensive experience in management both inside and outside of the Chelsea Housing Authority.



Jackie Matos
CHA tenure: 27 years
Properties: Mace and Scrivano

Jackie brings a vast knowledge of housing management and resolving complicated paperwork to the table while managing our federal family sites. When she isn't going to kick boxing classes, Jackie brings a high energy level to managing her properties and engaging with residents.

Property Management at a glance

8 total sites

2 state senior/disabled housing sites

914 units

2 federal family public housing sites

3 state family public housing sites

1 federal senior/disabled public housing site



Alex Jimenez
CHA tenure: 25 years
Properties: Union Park, Buckley and Margolis

Alex brings extensive experience to the table at the Chelsea Housing Authority. Starting in Leased housing, she moved over to Property Management where she has been ever since. She has worked at both family and elderly/disabled sites and now works exclusively with our senior/disabled populations and takes on the largest portfolio of any of our managers. Alex is committed to helping her residents in many ways, including recruiting her family to assist with resident events.

Carmen Ortega
CHA tenure: 3.5 years
Properties: Prattville, Fitzpatrick and Innes

Carmen uses her previous background in social work to help connect residents with services and ensure that no details fall through the cracks. She prides herself on being innovative and working to better the lives of her residents. She is an enthusiastic supporter of the State Self-Sufficiency Program. In addition to her work with our on-site residents Carmen also engages with our Innes residents who will be moving back into Innes when that project is completed.





Resident council now complete

For the first time in many years, every CHA property is represented by a duly elected resident council, including the Innes Resident Association, while the Innes project is taking place. Each of our sites is represented by a resident council that is elected by the residents of the site and those councils are integral parts of our community. They run events, arrange activities and advocate for their sites and neighbors while working with the CHA to foster a positive living environment. The councils act independently of each other and of the CHA administration and as such work with organizations like La Collaborativa and the Mass Union of Public Tenant Associations on trainings.

In 2023, our resident councils were involved in a focus group during the selection of our new executive director, participated in city panels and spoke at CHA ground breaking events. In addition, they hosted countless BBQs holiday parties, activities and participated in crime watches. The involvement of resident councils bring life into our properties and are invaluable to the sense of community that we hope to foster. To assist them with these objectives and activities each council is granted a stipend that is paid out on an annual basis and offered support from our administrative offices.



Resident council presidents

- Buckley and Union Park, Joe Pandolfo
- Margolis, Nicola Richardson
- Scrivano, Sandy DeJesus
- Mace, Maria Iraola
- Prattville and Fitzpatrick, Brenda Garcia
- Innes, Melissa Booth

Resident of the Year

The Chelsea Housing Authority is proud to name Yumeri Gonzalez as our Resident of the Year for 2023!



Yumeri is a Section 8 voucher holder who heard about the FSS program from a friend who was enrolled and joined the program in 2016. Yumeri worked very hard to increase her income during this time despite the fact the Covid-19 crisis took place in the middle of her time in the program.

As a single mother of two, her first challenge on her path was childcare for her youngest child, which was resolved with the assistance of her FSS coach who directed her to resources. After obtaining a childcare voucher she was able to pursue courses at Salem State and North Shore Community College, which she used to help advance her career and increase her pay during this time. In addition to these achievements, she pursued credit counseling from our partners at TND-Connect and learned about home ownership as she saved money towards a future goal of owning her own home.

When asked about why she joined the program, she cited that she wanted to be a good influence for her oldest daughter who is a full-time student herself and her youngest daughter who will see her mother pursuing her dreams. Yumeri is motivated to become more self-sufficient and has put the hard work in with the tools the FSS program has provided to her. She is very grateful for the opportunity.

The Chelsea Housing Authority has two self-sufficiency programs that our residents can participate in to learn new skills and move forward in a career. Our programs are overseen by our Director of Operations Matt Frank and administered by FSS Coordinator Carmen Torres. Through these programs in 2023, our residents have learned new languages, improved their credit scores, learned to save money, advanced their careers and learned how to start their own businesses. They receive coaching from our staff and partners and pursue these self-selected goals with the assistance of our team. The program is fully optional and is provided free of charge to our residents.

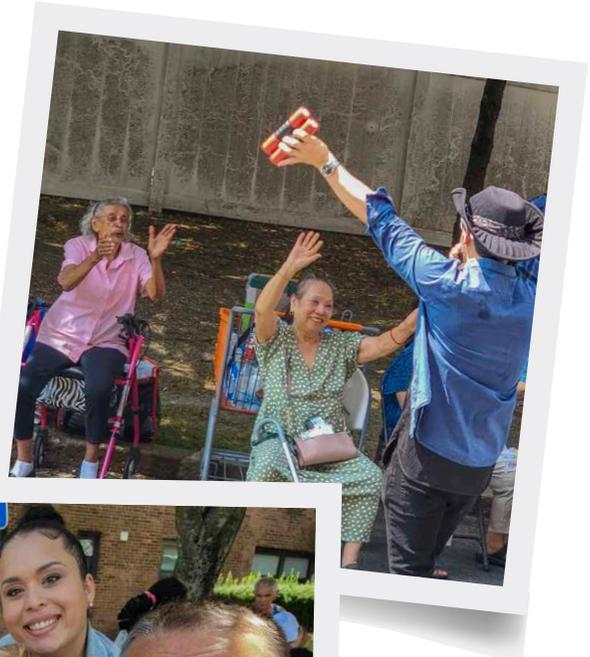
Self-Sufficiency Program in a snapshot in 2023

- 48** number of FSS participants
- 2** FSS graduations
- 25** number of SSP participants



A day in the life





In tribute

Donald Walter Kingsbury 1941 to 2024



The CHA remembers our former commissioner Donald W. Kingsbury. Donny joined our board at a moment of great transition as our resident representative and used his experience and calm demeanor to help navigate the Authority over the course of seven formative years until his retirement in 2020. He is fondly remembered by past and present CHA staff, and his life is celebrated by his family, neighbors at 260 Clark Avenue and the veterans of Chelsea.

The fifth of 15 siblings, he continued that legacy of a large loving family with one of his own. Even with the attendant demands, Donny had room in his heart for countless others.

Donny was an eloquent speaker and a gifted calligraphist who used his talents to better the lives of others. Prior to moving back to Massachusetts, he spent time as a local elected official in Maine. In his later years in Chelsea, he led the Chelsea Veterans Council. In his daily life, he ensured others knew how much they were valued with touching words and actions.

Our entire staff was saddened by the news and our sentiments are summed up by our Executive Director Paul Nowicki:

“He will surely be missed and we are forever grateful he chose to live his final years as a valued member of the CHA family and as one of our commissioners when his talents were needed the most. He brought professionalism, personality and honesty into everything he did and the Chelsea community was lucky to have had him as a friend.”

Board Chairperson Juan Vega added, “Donald Kingsbury was a champion for the residents of Chelsea Housing Authority he represented as a member of the CHA Board and the city as a whole.”

Staff by department

Executive Department

Paul Nowicki, *Executive Director*
Arnaldo Velazquez, *Deputy Director*
Matt Frank, *Director of Operations*
Yahilin Rivera-Miranda, *Office Coordinator*

Property Management Department

Alexandra Jimenez, *Property Manager Margolis,
Buckley and Union Park*
Carmen Ortega, *Pratville and Fitzpatrick*
Jackie Matos, *Scrivano and Mace*
Chantal Cueves, *Recertification Specialist*

Occupancy Department

Ineudira Barbosa, *Director of Occupancy,
Admissions and Compliance*
Krystina Sunsinn, *Occupancy Coordinator*

Leased Housing Department

Iris Perez-Feliciano, *Director of Leased Housing*
Chyneatha Perry, *Program Representative*
Celina Hernandez, *Program Representative*
Lillian Serrano, *Program Representative*
Chimia Shepard, *Program Representative*

Finance Department

Leslie Esturban, *Accounting Manager*
Raja Khallaayoun, *AP/AR Clerk*
Eda Cadenas, *AP/AR Clerk*

Supportive Services Department

Carmen Torres, *FSS Coordinator*

Maintenance and Modernization Department

Gregory Beatrice, *Director of Maintenance and Procurement*
James Krasco, *Maintenance and Modernization Supervisor*
Diane Goodrich, *Maintenance Coordinator*
Eric Montefusco, *Working Foreman/Mechanic*
Wayne Brooks, *Procurement Purchaser*
Dennis Bankus, *Mechanic/Painter*
Keithan Mckoy, *Mechanic/Painter*
Soung Song, *Maintenance Mechanic*
George Travis, *Maintenance Mechanic*
Francis Jankowski, *Mechanic/Plumber*
Jim Granara, *Mechanic/Electrician*

Sean Landry, *Carpenter/Mechanic*
Ibro Omeragic, *Carpenter/Mechanic*
Anthony Dichiaro, *Maintenance Mechanic*
Ana Chirinos, *Grounds Keeper/Custodian/Mechanic*
Guillermo Romero, *Grounds Keeper/Custodian/Mechanic*
Roberto Figueroa, *Grounds Keeper/Custodian/Mechanic*
Mark Thompson, *Grounds Keeper/Custodian/Mechanic*
David Fitzpatrick, *Grounds Keeper/Custodian*
John Martin, *Grounds Keeper/Custodian*
Jason Rosario, *Grounds Keeper/Custodian*



Capital projects

Completed in 2023

- Buckley cameras
- Prattville cameras
- Buckley carport sprinkler system replacement
- Buckley mailbox replacement
- Prattville wi-fi project

In progress

- Margolis carport plumbing replacement
- Union Park/MassArt outdoor seating area

In planning/bidding process

- Federal window replacement
- Buckley fire alarm system replacement
- Prattville fire alarm replacement
- Prattville floodproofing
- Buckley heating replacement

Anticipated block grant projects

- Buckley electric panel upgrade
- New heating/AC at Buckley and/or Margolis community rooms
- Handicap shower conversions for Buckley and Margolis



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Special thanks to Matt Frank for his stellar photography.

