COLLABORATION IN ACTION
CLAY COUNTY HRA 2002-2018

The mission of the Clay County HRA is to strengthen and revitalize communities by providing development opportunities, quality housing and services. Our Values are Leadership; Knowledge; Service; Collaboration and Making a Difference.

HOUGE ESTATES



- Built in 1981 by the Elderly Housing Corporation in conjunction with the Clay County HRA.
- Provides subsidized housing to low-income elderly and disabled individuals through a project-based Section 8 contract with HUD.
- Motivation to collaborate - Vacancy issues began to be a problem & tenants started needing more assistance to live independently.
- Collaborating partners: Clay County HRA, Elderly Housing Corporation, Department of Human Services and Care 2000
- Outcome: Added Assisted Living Services in 2002. Due to financial constraints of the Medical Assistance and Medicare programs, service provider withdrew in April 2015. The provider was losing $6000 per month at the time the services ended.

PRAIRIE HORIZONS TOWNHOMES (EASTEN TOWNHOMES)



- Built in 2006 by Easten Townhomes Limited Partnership, Inc. (Chuck Reisenberg, General Partner, equity investor and Clay County HRA)
- Provides subsidized housing and supportive services to four individuals and four families who were homeless at the time of admission and contain a disabled adult family member.
- Motivation to collaborate – In 2001, there was no permanent supportive housing for families or individuals who were homeless and in need of supportive services. HUD offered a $500,000 bonus to local Continuums of Care to develop permanent supportive housing. Continuum representatives approached the Clay County HRA to apply for the bonus funds. The application was successful and the agency was awarded $500,000. Problems ensued and the HRA was unable to develop the project on its own.
- Collaborating partners: Clay County HRA, Moorhead PHA, Chuck Riesenberg (private developer), private for-profit management company, equity investor, City of Moorhead, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, Corporation for Supportive Housing, West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, Churches United for the Homeless, Lakeland Mental Health Center, Creative Care for Reaching Independence.
- Outcome: Eight formerly homeless households with disabled family members are provided a very nice home subsidized by a project-based Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. All tenants have access to on-site case management services, computers, and free food deliveries.

GATEWAY GARDENS



- Built in 2010 by Clay County HRA.
- Provides subsidized housing and supportive services to twenty-four individuals who meet the Minnesota definition of long-term homeless and are very low-income at the time of admission.
- Motivation to collaborate – Still saw a great need for single individuals who were homeless and in need of supportive services. This need was identified in the HRA strategic plan. Also, the Clay County HRA was interested in once again doing development. Since no current staff had development experience, we decided to collaborate with a development partner, Beyond Shelter. Development land was located on a former bulk fuel storage site and contained significant petro contamination which HRA had no experience in addressing. Also, needed pre-development funds, permanent financing and an on-going source of rental and operating funds to proceed.
- Collaborating partners: Clay County HRA, Beyond Shelter, Inc., Minnesota Housing Partnership, Corporation for Supportive Housing, Northwestern Bank, City of Moorhead, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, Clay County Social Services, General Security Services Corporation, West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, Churches United for the Homeless, and Creative Care for Reaching Independence.
- Outcome: Twenty-four formerly long-term homeless individuals are provided a fully furnished, very nice one-bedroom apartment, subsidized by a project-based Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher or Housing Supports (formerly known as Group Residential Housing). The building is staffed 24/7. All tenants have access to on-site case management services, computers, and other supportive services.

PRAIRIE HORIZONS TOWNHOMES – PHASE II





- Completed in June 2012.
- Provides subsidized housing and supportive services to eight families who meet the Minnesota definition of long-term homeless and are very low-income at the time of admission.
- Motivation to collaborate – Still see a need for families who are homeless and in need of supportive services. This need was identified in the strategic plan. Looked to expand upon partnerships and relationships developed on prior projects to meet the mission and goals of the Clay County HRA.
- Collaborating partners: Clay County HRA, Beyond Shelter, Inc., Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Clay County Social Services, Churches United for the Homeless, Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership, Moorhead Public Schools- Homeless Youth Program, and Creative Care for Reaching Independence.
- Outcome: Eight long-term homeless families provided a fully furnished, very nice townhome, subsidized by a project-based Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. All tenants have access to case management services, computers, and food deliveries located at the adjacent existing Prairie Horizons Townhomes.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

1. **HRA CARES** - formerly Lakeland Mental Health Supportive Housing Program; Rural Housing Assistance and Support Program, Dream Catcher Homes Supportive Housing; Clay County Shelter Plus Care; Grant County Shelter Plus Care; and Supportive Services for Prairie Horizons Townhomes.

- Area of Operation: Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, Wadena and Wilkin Counties.
- Operations began in 2006 (Clay County Shelter Plus Care); expanded in 2007 (Lakeland Program); expanded in 2008 (RHASP Program); expanded in 2010 (Dream Catcher Homes Program); and expanded in 2012 (Grant County Shelter Plus Care Programs). In 2013, the supportive services grant for the Prairie Horizons Townhomes was merged into the HRA Cares grant.
- Provides rental housing assistance and supportive services to 48 households who were homeless at the time of admission and contain a disabled household member. Supportive services are provided to an additional 16 households living at the two Prairie Horizons Townhomes projects. Current funding exceeds $545,000 per year.
- Motivation to collaborate – In 2002, there was a lack of permanent supportive housing for families and individuals who were homeless and in need of supportive services. HUD once again offered a bonus to local Continuums of Care to develop permanent supportive housing. Continuum representatives approached the Lakeland Mental Health Center to apply for the bonus funds. The application was successful and the agency was awarded a three-year $250,000 grant. In 2007, Lakeland Mental Health Center determined they did not have adequate staffing or funding to administer the program. Lakeland Mental Health Center approached the Clay County HRA to administer the program and agreed to enter into a contract with the HRA to continue to provide supportive services. The Clay County HRA agreed to begin operations of the program so that the funding would not be lost to the community. Operations by the HRA began in 2006.
- In 2004, there was still a lack of permanent supportive housing for families and individuals who were homeless and in need of supportive services. HUD once again offered a bonus to local Continuums of Care to develop permanent supportive housing. Continuum representatives approached the Moorhead PHA to apply for the bonus funds. The application was successful and the agency was awarded a five-year $155,040 grant. Moorhead PHA determined they did not have adequate staffing or funding to administer the program. Moorhead PHA approached the Clay County HRA to administer the program and secured funds from the Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, Wilkin (BCOW) Adult Mental Health Initiative to supplement the operating funds. The Clay County HRA agreed to begin operations of the program so that the funding would not be lost to the community.

- In 2008, Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership attempted to take over the RHASP program and convert it to permanent supportive housing so that these Continuum of Care funds would not be lost to the community. They then determined they did not have adequate staffing or funding to administer the program. Lakes & Prairies CAP approached the Clay County HRA to administer the program. The Clay County HRA agreed to begin operations of the program so that the funding would not be lost to the community.
- In 2010, Dream Catcher Homes Supportive Housing requested that the Clay County HRA take over their small Continuum of Care grant since it was not cost effective. Once again, the Clay County HRA agreed to do and consolidated the funding with the other Continuum of Care funded programs.
- In 2012, Grant County Social Services experienced a change in management and determined it could not adequately administer its two existing Shelter Plus Care Programs. The programs covered Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens and Traverse Counties. Area housing authorities and service providers agreed to work in partnership with the HRA in order to preserve this resource.

3. HOMELESS TO HOUSED RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- Area of Operation: Clay, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin Counties.
- Operations began in 2008 through a grant from Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.
- Provides rental housing assistance and supportive services to fifty-five households who meet the Minnesota definition of long-term homeless and are very low-income at the time of admission.
- Motivation to collaborate: After starting the Prairie Horizons Townhomes and HRA Cares programs, the Clay County HRA saw there was still an unmet need for homeless youth, families and individuals living in West Central Minnesota. It did not make financial sense for each county to individually apply for funding to meet this need.
- Collaborating partners: Clay County HRA, all other area HRAs, county social service agencies and community action agencies in the area of operation, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, Lakeland Mental Health Center, Creative Care for Reaching Independence, Solutions Behavioral Health Services, Moorhead Public School Homeless Youth Program, Youthworks, Minn-Kota AIDS Project, and Churches United for the Homeless.
- Outcome: Fifty-five formerly long-term homeless households are provided a rental assistance voucher and access (if eligible) to case management services provided by one of the partner agencies.

4. HRA CARES FOR KIDS (now HOMEWORK STARTS WITH HOME)

- Area of Operation: initially Moorhead, Detroit Lakes and Breckenridge school districts. Now expanded to an additional 10 school districts including Alexandria, Osakis, Minnewaska, Fergus Falls, Frazee-Vergas, Wadena-Deer Creek, Freshwater, Barnesville, Hawley and Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton.
- Operations began in 2014 through a grant from Minnesota Housing Finance Agency for a pilot program to see if providing rental assistance to families impacted children's educational outcomes and/or school attendance. Funding was renewed for the pilot in 2016. New expanded Homework Starts with Home program begins October 1, 2018.
- Provides rental housing assistance and supportive services to 60 households with children in grades pre-k through 12 who have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness and are very low-income at the time of admission.
- Motivation to collaborate: Goal is to end child homelessness in West Central Minnesota. There were no programs available to families who did not contain a disabled family member or where not long-term homeless.
- Collaborating partners (40 partners): The above listed 13 school districts; Clay County, Grant County, Fergus Falls/Otter Tail County, Douglas County, Stevens County, Detroit Lakes, Alexandria, and Wadena HRAs and Moorhead PHA; Clay County Social Services; Minnesota State University Moorhead; Lakes and Prairies Community Action Partnership; MAHUBE-OTWA; West Central Minnesota Communities Action; West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care; Fargo-Moorhead Coalition for the Homeless; Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota; United Way of Cass-Clay; Churches United for the Homeless; Lakes Crisis & Resource Center; Presentation Partners in Housing; Youthworks; Lakeland Mental Health Center; First Congregational UCC-Moorhead; the Congregational Church – Detroit Lakes; First Lutheran Church-Detroit Lakes; the Church of St. Mary – Alexandria; Minnesota Housing; Minnesota Department of Education and Heading Home Minnesota Funders Collaborative.
- Outcome: To date, we have been awarded $1,152,785 for the new round of funding. We are excited to see what the outcome of the new collaboration will be. We have been awarded $920,512 in Housing Trust Fund rental assistance; $62,273 in Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance funds; $60,000 in philanthropic funds; and have levied $110,000 in Clay County to support Clay County families. 60 households with children are provided up to 24 months of rental assistance and access to case management services provided by one of the partner agencies. During the HRA Cares for Kids pilot, 98% of the households remained stably housed and children's overall school attendance increased. Families also report additional involvement in extracurricular activities and significant decreases in stress levels.

5. DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES COMMUNITY LIVING INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT AND HOUSING SUPPORTS (FORMERLY GRH) SCATTERED-SITES

- Area of Operation: Clay, Becker, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Otter Tail, Stevens, Traverse, Wadena and Wilkin Counties.
- Operations began in Clay County in August 2016. The Minnesota legislature changed the law regarding the use of Group Residential Housing (GRH) in July 2015. The HRA met with numerous partners over a year long period to plan the use of GRH funding in scattered-site settings in Clay County. Legislation was enacted that changed the GRH program name to Housing Supports in July 2017. Housing Supports is funded by the State of Minnesota through the Department of Human Services. It provides $904 per month for room and board, and $482.84 per month for supportive services. To be eligible to use Housing Supports in a scattered-site (i.e. private market rental unit) setting and receive support services funds, applicants must be eligible as determined through the local human service agency.
- In 2018, the Department of Human Services issued an RFP to develop Community Living Infrastructure for individuals with disabling conditions who were homeless or institutionalized. Clay County agreed to be the grant applicant on behalf of the 10-county region. The HRA wrote the grant and services as the project director. The project was funded in July 2018 to provide outreach services, housing resource specialists, and training resources. The three community action agencies were each able to hire an outreach worker, the HRA hired a housing resource specialist, and Clay County Social Services was awarded funding to assist the other 9 counties in implementing a Housing Supports community-based program. To date 6 of the 9 counties have agreed to implement this program.
- Provides rental housing assistance, basic furnishings and supplies, and supportive services to all eligible households.
- Motivation to collaborate: Providing this option helps to end long-term homelessness in our region. HRAs are experts at providing rental assistance and identifying available housing resources but not at providing support services. We sent an RFP to numerous agencies who provide support services to disabled and/or homeless households. Six agencies indicated they were willing to partner with the HRA in providing direct support services in Clay County. Clay County Social Services determines initial and on-going eligibility and makes payment to the HRA. The HRA inspects units, pays all rent & utilities, purchases furniture and supplies, enters HMIS data and administers the program. The service partners provide case management and deliver supplies to the participants. The Clay County HRA also will provide this service in Wilkin County (pending board/commission approval). In Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens and Traverse Counties the West Central Minnesota Communities Action will be providing all services.
- Collaborating partners: All 10 county agencies; 3 CAP agencies; Alexandria, Breckenridge, Detroit Lakes, Clay County, Douglas County, Fergus Falls/Otter

Tail, Grant County, Stevens County, Wadena County HRAs and Moorhead PHA; Minnesota Department of Human Services; Churches United for the Homeless; West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care; Fargo-Moorhead Coalition for the Homeless; Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota; Youthworks; the VA; local property owners; and our service partners (Lakes & Prairies CAP; Lakeland Mental Health Center; Summit Guidance Center; CCRI, Inc.; Dorothy Day House of Hospitality and Presentation Partners in Housing).

- Outcome: In the two years, over 50 households have received assistance. 46 households currently receive assistance. The goal is to serve up to 90 households per month through this program.

6. HUD MAINSTREAM VOUCHER PROGRAM

- Area of Operation: Clay, Becker, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Otter Tail, Stevens, Traverse, Wadena and Wilkin Counties.
- Operations will begin in Clay County in November 2018. HUD has just awarded the HRA 28 Mainstream Vouchers which are part of the Housing Choice Voucher program. The vouchers will provide rental assistance to households containing a member aged 18-61 with a disabling condition. The target population are those who are or are at risk of being homeless or institutionalized.
- Motivation to collaborate: This program pairs precisely with the above Community Living Infrastructure grant. The Clay County HRA will put a preference in place for individuals meeting the target population who reside in the 10-county region. Local HRAs will determine whether to absorb the voucher holders into their own programs or bill the Clay County HRA to administer the voucher in their service area.
- Collaborating partners: Clay County, Detroit Lakes, Douglas County, Fergus Falls/Otter Tail, Grant County, Stevens County, and Wadena County HRAs.
- Outcome: Provide 28 additional households with rental assistance.

REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

- Started program in 2008.
- Rehabilitates approximately 10-12 homes per year for low-income homeowners residing in Clay County. In 2012, the HRA began rehabilitating rental and commercial properties as well.
- Motivation to collaborate – From the mid-1970's through the early 1990's the Clay County HRA operated this program. After that time, the only homes that were rehabilitated in rural Clay County were in individual cities who applied for rehabilitation grants. During the Clay County HRA strategic planning process, owner-occupied rehabilitation was found to be an unmet need in the county. At the same time, the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund was encouraging HRA's to use their levy authorities to expand housing programming in the state. We worked in partnership with private consultants until we were able to build staff expertise in the field.
- Collaborating partners: Clay County HRA; Greater Minnesota Housing Fund; Minnesota Housing Partnership; Minnesota Housing Finance Agency; Clay County; Cities of Dilworth, Glyndon, Hawley, Moorhead and Barnesville; Rural Development; Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership; Thurlow Consulting and Wynne Consulting.
- Outcome: Over 85 homes have been rehabilitated since 2008 improving the functionality of the homes, the tax base and the general appearance of the community. Approximately 25 businesses have been improved or have rehab underway; and over 100 rental units have been improved. Since 2008, the Clay County HRA has levied approximately $475,000 for this program; Greater Minnesota Housing Fund provided $100,000 in deferred loans, USDA Rural Development has provided over $50,000 in grants and loans; Minnesota Housing has provided over $1,600,000; and DEED has awarded over $2,950,000 in Small Cities Community Development Block Grant funds. Owners, Clay County Social Services, and Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership have provided additional funding and services for the project.









OTHER

Partnership with Moorhead Public Housing Agency (MPHA) that resulted in transfer of 95 Housing Choice Vouchers from the MPHA to the HRA on July 1, 2017. We continue to explore other avenues of working together more effectively in order to better meet our missions. We received a $10,000 grant from the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund in November 2015 to explore these types of options. We are considering cooperation on maintenance operations. We just secured a joint HRA tax levy in the City of Moorhead of $169,000 which will be evenly divided.

Continued work on Coordinated Access, Referral and Evaluation System (CARES). CARES is the coordinated entry system for households who are homeless in West Central Minnesota and the State of North Dakota. All admissions to our programs exclusively serving households experiencing homelessness are through the CARES system.

For more information contact:

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