HOCP
Strategic Plan
2019 - 2022
Dear Friends,

In 2016 and 2018 Housing Opportunities Community Partners (HOCP) in cooperation with the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) conducted our first fundraising galas -- and the outpouring of support was truly inspiring.

We saw how HOCP and this community come together to create opportunities that help low-income families in Montgomery County realize their potential and reach their dreams for a better life. We saw inspiring examples of both generosity and perseverance.

Events like these and taking time to listen to the stories of others inspire those who work hard to create and deliver much needed programming. And they showcase the legions of supporters behind the youth and families who persevere as they push forward, toward increasing their self-sufficiency.

In a similar fashion, all of us on the Board of Directors are inspired. We stand ready to do all we can to help low-income families make a better life for themselves and their children. We are inspired to provide effective, well-designed programs that help families overcome their challenges, and that show our donors and partners impactful outcomes -- a great return on their investments.

The Board of Directors developed this strategic plan as a guide for how we will leverage the investments and support of this community in the coming years.

Working closely with HOC, the Strategic Plan sets us on an exciting course of creating new partnerships, leveraging support and implementing innovative programs that help the whole family. Our programming, both current and planned, reflects a two-generation model.

We intend to be laser focused on addressing the needs of both parents and children. The well-being of parents is crucial to children's success in school. Similarly, parents do better in their pursuit of stronger self-sufficiency when they know their children are doing well. The development of children and the well-being of parents are inextricably linked.

We set this Strategic Plan with the vision that low- and moderate-income families and individuals living in Montgomery County's affordable housing can and should be able to pursue opportunities that allow them and their children to realize their fullest potential. We are committed to implementing programs that do just that. So we will support each generation, every family member, to improve their economic status and ultimately break from poverty.

Sincerely,

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MISSION

The Mission of Housing Opportunities Community Partners (HOCP) is to provide services that strengthen the housing stability and increase the self-sufficiency of low- and moderate-income families and individuals living in Montgomery County’s affordable housing so that:

» No one has unmet needs that threaten their housing stability;
» Adults and children have the tools that help them reach their fullest potential; and
» Households can attain their vision for a more fulfilling quality of life.
It is our vision that low- and moderate-income families and individuals living in Montgomery County's affordable housing are able to pursue opportunities that allow them and their children to realize their fullest potential. We can assist them in their efforts by leveraging public and private resources to support programs that open doors of opportunity, and help residents achieve self-sufficiency to realize their dreams. We believe that strategically designed programs that support each generation in the household can help families increase their economic status and ultimately break from poverty.

As the non-profit affiliate of the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) – Montgomery County’s Public Housing Authority – HOCP plays a crucial role in helping bring a continuum of innovative services that meet the needs of the whole family.

Low- and moderate-income families living in Montgomery County need support if they are to move from vulnerability to sustainability. Providing affordable housing is crucial in strengthening stability and increasing self-sufficiency. However, a home is only one element of support needed to help vulnerable families improve their lives. HOCP recognizes that critical programming and resources are needed to help families move closer towards their vision of success. From its inception, HOCP has supported innovative programs for youth, job seekers, and families while also providing vital resources for families that help them exit homelessness, gain housing stability, and attain further education.

Our programs help everyone in the household – children, parents and other adults.

We use a two-generation model to help ensure that our programs improve outcomes for the whole family. The well-being of parents is crucial to their children’s social-emotional, physical and economic well-being. Simultaneously, parents’ ability to succeed in their educational pursuits and ultimately in the workplace is substantially affected by how well their children are doing. The development of children and the well-being of parents are inextricably linked.
YOUTH

Low and moderate-income students need access and exposure to programs and services that nurture their successful development into adulthood. These programs and services are key elements to ending the cycle of intergenerational poverty and promoting education, career development, and citizenship. HOCP will continue to provide resources for and support STEM and other enrichment programming. HOCP will also expand its efforts to foster positive youth development by supporting a youth employment initiative.

HOCP will prioritize its youth programming in two major areas: STEM Enrichment and Supporting College and Workforce Training.

STEM Enrichment

STEM is the future engine of employment for the next generation. According to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, STEM occupations are expected to grow 10.8% between 2016 and 2026, while other occupations are expected to grow by 7.4%. States and communities throughout the country are investing resources to give youth the education they need to advance in STEM fields.

Likewise, HOCP will provide resources to bring out-of-school STEM opportunities to low-income youth in Montgomery County, programs that will inspire them to pursue STEM careers. HOCP will increase the amount of resources and expand the scope of support for youth STEM and enrichment programs.

Access to “Out of School” learning experiences can play a prominent role in introducing low-income students to STEM projects and leading them down a pathway to a STEM career. Out of school programs, such as summer camps and afterschool activities, encourage alternative ways of learning complex material related to math and science.

*National Research Council, Learning Science in Informal Environments, 2009*
Youth Summer Employment

HOCP and HOC consider a workplace experience a crucial part of a broader strategy for poverty alleviation, with the potential to benefit disadvantaged youth in multiple ways that give them the skills needed to successfully navigate the workplace and pursue a rewarding career. In addition to providing work experience and income to low-income youth, summer youth employment programs (SYEPs) help improve educational outcomes and social and emotional development, as well as decrease negative behaviors. Young adults gain experience during summer internships giving them the skills they need to become more engaged in school; improve their grades in math, science and reading, and decrease, if not eliminate, disciplinary interventions at school. In short, youth will be significantly better prepared for college and adulthood by having access to HOCP's Youth Summer Employment programs.

HOCP and HOC will enhance our youth summer employment program to help HOC youth gain invaluable work experience before college.

*Early exposure to a range of career and higher education information and opportunities is associated with better post-secondary education outcomes.*

*Work experience for youth still in school, including paid summer jobs, shows important results in terms of educational outcomes, particularly if job skills and education are combined.*

*What Works In Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence (2014)*
ADULTS

Parent/Adult economic stability is also a critical factor that significantly impacts on housing stability and youth development. As such, HOCP will foster adult economic stability through increased support and enhanced resources for adult education, job training and employment. HOCP will also expand these efforts by supporting the development of a small business incubation initiative.

Workforce Development

HOCP will increase its support of workforce development programs that provide targeted services HOC adults need to progress along a career path that will lead them to livable wages. This includes comprehensive assessments, soft skills training, case management and vocational training in the fields that are in most demand.

In 2014, the U.S. Secretaries of Labor, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services, with input from several other Federal agencies and staff, conducted an exhaustive review of Federal programs in the workforce and training system to ensure they are designed to equip the nation’s workers with skills matching the needs of employers looking to hire.

They found that “lower-skilled individuals and those with multiple barriers to employment benefit from coordinated strategies across support systems, and flexible, innovative training strategies that integrate the education, training, and support services they need to prepare for and succeed in the workplace.”

What Works In Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence (2014)
Small Business Incubation

Promoting small business development can provide a pathway for low-income households to become economically self-reliant.

HOCP and HOC will increase the number of low-income future entrepreneurs by helping HOC customers overcome the obstacles that prevent many from starting, growing and sustaining small businesses. We will launch programs that provide training and mentoring support in financial literacy, business plan creation, legal requirements, marketing and contracting.

*Today’s economy is producing fewer and fewer middle-income jobs that are accessible to those without post-secondary career training. Promoting small business development can provide a pathway to low-income households to be economically self-reliant.*

*Any new entrepreneurial initiative that targets low-income individuals should go beyond simply supporting existing business owners or assisting those who are already inclined to start a business. While those things make sense, a significant focus should be on promoting and expanding entrepreneurship to more low-income individuals, future small business owners.*

*Center for an Urban Future*
STRATEGIC GOALS

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Goals through 2022:

» 1,500 HOC youth will complete a STEM enrichment activity.
» 30 middle school youth will transition to high school with a STEM track of coursework.
» 30 graduating high school youth will matriculate into college with a STEM major.
» 300 HOC youth (ages 14 - 18) will complete summer internships at local for-profit and not-for profit organizations.

Strategies through 2022 - HOC Academy will:

» Create a continuum of STEM enrichment opportunities for HOC youth from kindergarten through high school.
» Increase the number of “out of school” STEM enrichment activities for each age group for HOC youth.
» Form new partnerships with HOC, local schools, businesses, and community groups to empower HOC youth to excel in STEM.
» Link summer jobs with community service projects.
» Provide soft skills training to support summer job experiences.
» Work with HOC partners to create new summer employment/internship opportunities for HOC youth.
» Create academic scholarships for HOC youth and explore combining resources with other non-profit organizations for more and larger financial assistance to HOC youth.
ADULT
ECONOMIC STABILITY

Goals through 2022:
» 300 HOC customers will obtain new employment.
» 150 HOC customers will increase their household income by at least 10%.
» HOC and its partners will provide 45 internships to HOC college students.
» By 2022, 15 HOC customers will complete the Small Business Incubation program.
» HOC customers will create five new small businesses by 2022.

Strategies through 2022 – HOCP will:
» Create three (3) new partnerships with HOC and workforce development agencies in the community in order to provide new opportunities for HOC customers.
» Using board designated funds, provide a 1:1 match of private and public grants awarded for workforce development programming.
» Create an internship program for adults pursuing post-secondary education.
» Create a small business incubation program.
» Establish a pool of mentors who will offer coaching and mentoring support to the small business incubation program.
» Coordinate a collaborative panel of public agencies and local businesses to create ways for HOC customers to access small business loans coupled with technical assistance.
NEW PROGRAMS/SERVICES

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Scholarship Match Fund

In order to increase the impact of the FSS program on the well-being of the entire family, the FSS Scholarship Match Fund will provide financial assistance to the FSS families whose children pursue a post-secondary degree program at an accredited college or university.

This new program will provide funds to FSS graduates who use their FSS Escrow Account monies toward the education costs of their children, matching their education expenditures 1:1 up to $7,500 per FSS graduate.

Match funds may be utilized all at once or may be spread out over the two-year enrollment period. Also, match funds may be utilized to assist more than one child in college.
PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

Small Business Incubation

The pilot HOC Business Incubator Program (HBIP) will target HOC residents who want to create or expand their own small businesses. By offering a full spectrum of training and mentoring, the HBIP will guide HOC residents from the initial business concept through contracting. Curricula will be customized for each participant, while teaching critical business skills, business plan development, legal requirements, marketing and contracting. Upon completion, participants will be able to bid for contracted work at HOC sites and take advantage of Section 3 opportunities and other methods that prioritize resident employment.
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

Girls Got IT!

Thanks to funding from the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) K-12 Alliance, HOC brings authentic, inclusive activities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for school aged girls. Following the near-peer model, this program brings women college students to conduct ongoing STEM educational activities for school-aged girls, picquing their curiosity and encouraging them to pursue careers in STEM.

West Point / Army Research Lab

The West Point Academy and Army Research Lab (ARL) offer outreach programs that immerse middle and high school students in multi-disciplinary, age appropriate hands-on activities, led by Army scientists, engineers and soldiers. Each year HOC youth participate in these very popular events.
**Afterschool STEM clubs**

Kids’ STEM Afterschool Clubs host robotics sessions twice weekly at several HOC locations. Trained robotics instructors teach HOC youth the basics of coding, engineering, and computer programming, using evidence-based curricula such as the Lego® Education Program and others. Participants create their own robots and compete for robotics bragging rights with their peers.

**Media Production Programs**

Each summer HOC hosts a two-week Media Production camp for middle school youth – one of our most popular opportunities. Participants learn all the elements of producing short video documentaries/service announcements. They write the script, plan and record a video, and edit their recordings into a final product with music and narration.

**STEM Summer Day Camps**

The Kids’ STEM Summer Day Camp offers robotics to elementary school-aged students. For two weeks, HOC youth learn the basics of building robots using the critically acclaimed LEGO® curriculum. STEM teachers instruct participants about the science of robotics – computing, mathematics and physics. Participants create their own robots and compete with fellow camp-goers in friendly competition.
**Back-to-School Fest**

The Back-To-School Supply Drive is a collaborative effort with HOC, county businesses, local organizations and congregations. Annually, this program provides essential school supplies for nearly 1,000 low-income youth served by HOC affordable housing programs. Participating students also enjoy hands-on STEM activities while their parents gather helpful information from a variety of local partners that provide resources for families and children.

**Summer Employment/Internships**

HOC youth are offered a variety of employment/internship opportunities at HOC offices and partnering businesses throughout the county. HOC high school and college students work at internships in various fields, receiving intensive learning experiences, as well as résumé-building and networking opportunities!
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

HOC’s FSS Program

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program is an employment and savings program for low-income families that receive housing subsidies through the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Adults pursue vocational education, soft skills training, financial literacy training, and mentoring support to help increase their earned income. As their income increases, each participant builds an escrow account that can be used for things like purchasing a home, starting a business or paying their kids’ college expenses which would be eligible for the HOCP scholarship match.

HOC’s Fatherhood Initiative Program

HOC was the first public housing authority in the country to receive this federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Through intensive case management, counseling and mentoring, educational workshops and vocational training, the HOC Fatherhood Initiative Program reinforces parenting skills and advances child well-being while empowering fathers to improve their economic self-sufficiency.
HOC Academy

HOC Academy offers Adult Education and Workforce Development opportunities (AE&WD) in order to promote self-empowerment, achievement and upward mobility among residents by connecting them to career training and educational services.

Financial Literacy / IDA Programs

Monthly workshops on topics such as family budgeting, informed banking, asset building and improving credit scores help participants take control of their financial health. Also, HOCP funds an innovative three-tier Individual Development Account (IDA) program that encourages participants to make monthly savings deposits over the long term that are then matched up to a 3:1 ratio. Financial coaching is also offered to those struggling to overcome negative credit histories, supporting them on their path to greater financial self-sufficiency.

HOC Academy

Financial Literacy / IDA Programs