All St. Paul PHA departments work together to achieve the Agency Goals that are recommended by staff and set by the PHA Board of Commissioners. Below is a summary of the many achievements of the PHA's dedicated, hardworking staff in Fiscal Year 2024. While these accomplishments are listed by department, they are the result of collaboration and teamwork from staff across departments and at all levels.

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Department

High Performer for 23rd Consecutive Year

- The Agency's SEMAP score for FY 2024 was 100%[1], which earns HUD's High Performer rating (90% is the threshold). The HCV Program ended the calendar year with 93.1% of units utilized (under lease) and 101.24% of budget authority utilized.

Continued Owner Outreach

- The HCV Department resumed their annual in person owner workshop that had been on hiatus since the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop included updates from our Finance and Legal teams, as well as program updates and recommendations for program improvements.
- The department also implemented the first ever PBV owner webinar to refresh owners on the PBV program requirements and practices.

Prepared for Future Regulatory Developments

- The HCV Department prepared for the multiple anticipated changes that will be implemented by HUD in the coming months. Staff attended trainings on HOTMA implementation and the Housing Information Portal system; and inspections staff were trained and certified on NSPIRE inspection standards.

Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs)

- **Additional Units Offered for Project Based Vouchers:** The PHA Board of Commissioners approved offering up to 150 vouchers for PBV use in Minnesota Housing's 2024 Consolidated Request for Proposals. That number included 50 vouchers exclusively to serve special populations.
- **Awarded Over 100 Vouchers to Affordable Housing Developers:** The Board approved the following PBV awards:
  - 45 vouchers to CommonBond Communities to be used for "housing for the elderly" located in the Highland Park neighborhood
  - 25 units to the Jeremiah Program to be used in their existing affordable housing development located in the Rondo neighborhood, and
  - 42 vouchers (17 of these vouchers are for housing for homeless veterans) to Aeon for their rehabilitation of Mary Hall located in Downtown Saint Paul.
- **Two New PBV Contracts, Total 80 PBV Units:** The HCV Department entered into a new PBV HAP contract with The Lumin (60 units; Supportive Housing; awarded in 2021) for a 20-year period; and with Stryker Senior Housing (20 units; 15 Mixed Income, 5 VASH; awarded in 2020) for a 20-year period.

[1] The HCV Department self-certified a score of 93%; HUD field office returned a certified score of 100%.

Resident Services Department

Intake and Occupancy

- Staff implemented an occupancy action plan that increased occupancy from a low of 91.6% in September 2023 to 98.9% at the fiscal year's end, resulting in an annual occupancy rate of 94% (PBRA and LIPH).
- PBRA residents are eligible to move into the community with ongoing subsidy by requesting a Choice Mobility Vouchers (CMV). CMVs are offered to all PBRA residents who have lived in the same project for at least two years. 135 households requested a CMV and were added to the waiting list in FY 2024.
- The waiting list for all PHA-owned properties had 8,296 active applications at the end of the fiscal year. A total of 5,409 applicant files were drawn from PBRA and LIPH waiting lists in FY 2024. 826 of those applicant households moved in during FY 2024.

Property Management and Operations

- The PHA earned a "Superior" rating on the first Management and Occupancy Review (MOR) conducted in the PBRA program. As a result, the PHA will not have another MOR for 36 months.
- Earned a "High Performer" designation in the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) for the LIPH program.
- Resident Services staff completed 921 lease signings for new applicants and current households transferring to other PHA units.
- The Multifamily (MF) Team completed a total of 10,358 household certifications during FY 2024, which included 3,197 Gross Rent Changes, 617 Initial Certifications, 2,279 Interim Reexaminations, 3,597 Annual Recertifications and 668 terminations of subsidy.
- The Scattered Sites Team completed 850 household certifications in the PHA's 418 Low-Income Public Housing units, including 392 annual and 458 interim certifications.
- The Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP) continues to serve PHA clients at Ravoux and Montreal Hi-Rises, providing up to two meals a day and limited housekeeping services to help participants remain in PHA housing. CHSP is supported by an annual HUD grant, in-kind contributions by community partners, and income-based fees.

Partnerships

- ACOP (A Community Outreach Program), the PHA partnership with St. Paul's Police Department (SPPD) began its 33rd year, funded in part by over $700,000 approved by the PHA's Board.
- The PHA contracts with private security agencies to supplement regular SPPD and ACOP services, to further ensure a safe living and working environment for residents and staff.
- An Officer in Residence (OIR) at each of the PHA's 16 hi-rises provided safety and security services to the PHA and the hi-rise residents, in addition to the officers' regular SPPD assignments. There is currently a waiting list for the OIR program.
- The four PHA community centers continue to provide space, utilities, receptionist services, maintenance and repair to non-profit agencies serving residents in PHA-owned housing.
- Free tax assistance provided at McDonough Community Center helped residents file refund requests totaling over $1.2 million for tax year 2023.

Maintenance Department

Routine Maintenance

- Prepared 622 vacant PBRA hi-rise and family units for rental in an average of 8.9 days.
- Prepared 61 vacant LIPH scattered site homes in an average of 69.9 days. The extended time preparing the units is due to the use of increased CFP grant and Shortfall funding to perform more extensive renovations upon vacancy.
- Performed Preventative Maintenance (PM) inspections in 2,552 (out of 2,553) hi-rise units, 1,302 family units and 418 scattered site units. One Hi-rise unit inspection was delayed until the following fiscal year per resident request.
- Completed 27,876 work orders including 6,375 Priority 1 (Emergency) work orders completed in less than twenty-four hours.

Ratings

- Maintenance staff contributed to the PHA's "Superior" rating under HUD's Management and Occupancy Review (MOR) in the PBRA portfolio and the PHA's "High Performer" designation in the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) for the LIPH program by ensuring the proper upkeep and maintenance of PHA-owned units.
- Issued resident satisfaction surveys on a sample of 260 completed repairs. Based upon the respondents to the PHA's survey, 100% of the residents surveyed were satisfied with the service from Maintenance staff.

Capital Improvements

- Performed more than $6 million in capital improvements and other upgrades across all PHA-owned properties including site-wide townhome roof replacements at Mt. Airy Homes and Roosevelt Homes, electrical system modernization at Valley Hi-Rise, parking lot resurfacing at Hamline Hi-Rise, heating/ventilation/air-conditioning and energy management system upgrades; roofing, window kitchen, bathroom, siding and retaining wall improvements at multiple scattered site homes.
- Expanded the Resident Services staff offices at Valley Hi-Rise.

Competitive Funding Awards

- The PHA competed for and was awarded $1.2 million of Ramsey County HRA levy funds to replace the community center and community rooms roofs at Dunedin Hi-Rise, replace exterior joint sealant at Ravoux Hi-Rise, and upgrade lighting at Hamline and Iowa Hi-Rises to LED.
- The PHA competed for and was awarded $500,000 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to remove the dead or dying ash trees and replant new trees at PHA properties.
- Staff and PHA consultants developed detailed bid documents for the construction of one seven-unit townhome building at McDonough Homes and one four-unit townhome building at Dunedin Terrace. Ramsey County is providing $3.95 million of ARPA and HRA levy funding for the construction.

Resident Initiatives Department

Resident Councils

- Resident Initiatives staff worked with the Presidents Council to form a committee dedicated to gathering resources for the Presidents Council's Newsletter. Council Officers use the newsletter to offer words of encouragement to their neighbors and share resources to help residents cope with topics such as depression, stress, and forming resiliency during the cold weather months.
- Recruited, trained, and supported residents with computer skills to act as Computer Peers. Computer Peers, on assignment, work with individual Councils to update and fix computers that are owned and maintained by the Councils for residents' use.

Health Improvement Programs and Green Initiatives

- Collaborated with BikeMN to provide on-site bicycle repair and bicycle skill-building opportunities at four Hi-Rises and one Family Site. 52 residents received a fitted bicycle, helmet, lights and lock.
- Partnered with MN Waste Wise Foundation to host on-site recycling education sessions at all 16 Hi-Rises. In FY 2024, hi-rise residents recycled 187.78 tons of recyclable materials.
- Formed a new partnership with Friends & Co (formerly Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly) to promote social connection resources for residents. 151 residents participated in the discussion events.
- Collaborated with United Healthcare Community Relations to attend community events to educate residents about the Medicaid Redetermination process.
- Partnered with Frogtown Green to plant 32 shade trees at Mt Airy.

Job Skills Training, Employment, and Education Initiatives

- Continued to represent the PHA as a community partner at the Ramsey County Workforce Innovation Board meetings and as an active member in the One-Stop-Partner program.
- Offered a Small Business Development program through long-time partner African Economic Development Solutions. Six residents graduated from the program.
- Worked with the Science Museum of Minnesota to continue to provide Great Partner Discounts to the Museum for both in-person and virtual events.
- Initiated a long-term project in partnership with Comcast/Xfinity to install permanent modems in all PHA hi-rise units. The entire project is expected to be completed by the end of FY 2025.
- Contracted with Marfa Cleaning Company, a resident-owned cleaning company, to provide education and training to residents with housekeeping issues. Marfa Cleaning Company worked with three residents in FY 2024 and purchased supplies for those residents to use.
- Contracted with a Mt. Airy resident to provide youth arts and crafts sessions twice a week at the Mt. Airy Community Center during the summer months of FY 2024.

Finance Department

Audits and Reviews

- Successfully passed the annual agency-wide financial and compliance audit for FY 2023 with no findings, marking the 28th year in the past 30 years without an audit finding.
- Received the Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the FY 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. This marked the 17th time that the PHA received the award.
- Successfully passed the Voucher Management System (VMS) On-Site review with no findings.

Budgeting

- Oversaw the development of a $127.7 million annual budget, including a $57 million operating budget, a $56.3 million housing assistance payment (HAP) budget, and a $13.5 million capital budget for FY 2025.

Accounting, Financial Management and Investing

- Transitioned payments for over half of the Agency's vendors from paper checks to direct deposits, reducing voided, lost, and fraudulent checks.
- Successfully implemented the Reliacard Program with the Housing Choice Voucher Department, which provided reloadable debit cards to voucher participants who receive utility reimbursement payments.
- Actively managed the Agency's fixed income investment portfolio, generating over $1 million in additional interest income for the Agency in FY 2024.

IT Department

Security

- Implemented KnowBe4 security awareness training and test emails. Through this training the agency's Phish-Prone security score has decreased to 14.9%, well below the industry average of 27.8%.
- Contracted with Arctic Wolf Networks (AWN) partnership with PHA IT to employ a Managed Detection and Response (MDR) platform. This solution will utilize specialized software and tools to scan our network looking for various security red-flags.

Process Improvements

- Coordinated with the Resident Services and Maintenance departments to set up digital signage displays in the lobbies of our Edgerton and Montreal hi-rises to help with communication between our staff and residents. IT will continue to coordinate with other PHA departments to provide this solution at all feasible resident and staff locations.
- Upgraded from an on-premise email server to the cloud-based Microsoft Office 365 system. This upgrade included several additions that contribute to a more efficient and collaborative workflow, including Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, and SharePoint.
- Implemented an email retention procedure that automatically deletes most PHA emails after one year.

Legal Department

Transactional Work

- Prepared, edited, or reviewed 49 contracts, amendments, or related documents for the provision of goods and services across nearly all PHA departments. Advised on 15 different maintenance and real estate projects, including related grants and funding awards. Advised Human Resources on numerous personnel issues. Provided general legal and policy advice to all departments on at least 40 matters.

Litigation and Program Enforcement

- PHA Owned Housing (Multifamily & LIPH):
  - Reviewed 66 termination and reinstatement notices and attended 34 informal conferences with residents and managers. Assisted with more than 265 eviction actions for nonpayment of rent and other serious lease violations.
  - Prepared more than 60 settlement and vacate agreements to resolve pending terminations. Prepared 14 Affidavits of Noncompliance for violations of court settlement agreements. Responded to 17 motions for expungement. Reviewed more than 30 trespass notices.
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8):
  - Assisted with 59 Informal Review Hearings for terminations and balance disputes. Reviewed and advised on 402 requests for reasonable accommodations, including unit transfers, emotional support animals, and modifications. Reviewed 70 requests for emergency transfer and other accommodations under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).
- Prepared responses to 6 discrimination complaints filed with HUD, MDHR, or HREEO.
- Successfully defended the PHA in multiple state and federal court actions brought by unrepresented tenants and former participants.

Housing Policy Department

Special Initiatives

- Compiled and submitted over $550,000 in special claims for vacancy loss in the PBRA program, resulting in nearly $300,000 in additional funding during the fiscal year.
- Assisted the Finance and Maintenance departments in completing the PHA's submissions for various external funding sources, including drafting narrative responses, compiling demographic information and reviewing financial data.
- Assisted the Finance, Maintenance and Legal Departments in navigating the Mixed-Finance Development Proposal process to construct the 11 remaining Faircloth units.

Policy Changes and Advocacy

- Assisted the Resident Services and Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher Departments with major policy changes related to process improvements and the implementation of the Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act (HOTMA).
- With the assistance of Finance staff, successfully appealed the PHA's score and designation under PHAS (Public Housing Assessment System) for FY 2022 resulting in an increased score and High Performer designation.

Human Resources Department

Recruitment and Retention

- Worked with all departments to hire 44 new employees and promote 29 current employees. Of the 44 staff hired for regular positions, 64% were employees of color and 66% were women. Of the 29 staff members promoted, transferred, and voluntarily demoted, 58% were people of color and 63% were women.
- Of the 247 regular full and part-time staff members employed by the PHA at the end of FY 2024, 46% were women and 53% were people of color.

Employee Performance and Productivity

- Coordinated and conducted three half-day orientation training sessions and three full day orientation training sessions, for a total of 44 new employees.
- Conducted four New Supervisor Orientations for 15 employees.

Employee Training

- Provided mandatory Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and harassment prevention training to all employees. Coordinated with Sorensen Consulting and the PHA's Legal Team to offer training for all employees in the areas of Business Etiquette, Fair Housing Compliance, and PHA and the Courts System.
- Coordinated training for all supervisors in the areas of Emotional Intelligence, 5 Dysfunctions of Teams and How to Avoid Them, Performance Appraisals, and Performance Management.
- Coordinated mandatory Active Shooter preparedness training for all PHA employees.
- All new HR staff received training in conducting ergonomic reviews for staff.

Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) and Payroll

- As a result of a formal RFP process, contracted with Paylocity for all HR and Payroll solutions effective July 1, 2025.

Pay Equity Reporting (Comparable Worth)

- Submitted the PHA's pay equity report to Minnesota Management & Budget, which is required every three years. The PHA's underpayment ratio was 119%, which is the highest it has been in years. 80% or more is considered "passing".