

Backgrounder

Community Housing Network, Inc.

Our Mission

Community Housing Network is dedicated to helping end homelessness by promoting inclusive communities through affordable housing.

Our History

In 2001, Community Housing Network embarked upon a local initiative to create and effectively manage housing resources for people with disabilities, many of whom were homeless, living in Oakland County.

CHN has created a variety of new choices in affordable housing since the organization contracted with the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority in 2001. The contract enabled CHN to address the housing needs of persons with disabilities in three key areas:

- To address the escalating cost of group home leases and to provide property management for nearly 200 homes.
- To create alternatives to group homes by generating and managing various assets.
- To create a central point where people can obtain information about affordable housing and available resources.

Our Goals

Going forward, Community Housing Network seeks to expand its' existing services and strives to work in partnership with other organizations and members of the community to develop even more creative solutions to ending homelessness.

- CHN, Inc. strives to create affordable housing opportunities for homeless individuals and families, and people with disabilities.
- CHN aims to ensure that the families and individuals we help can:
 - Choose the housing they want
 - Live with the people they want, and
 - Attain support services separate from where they choose to live.
- CHN endeavors to continually seek creative solutions with other organizations and individuals in the community, who are also dedicated to ending homelessness.
- CHN seeks to advocate on behalf of the many homeless families and persons with disabilities in our communities, in order to break down the societal barriers of apathy, ignorance and mistrust that impede their acceptance into our neighborhoods.
- CHN seeks to raise the level of public awareness about the problem of homelessness and about the challenges of people with disabilities.
- CHN is committed to attracting people and funding that can help us provide affordable housing to the homeless and people with disabilities.
- CHN strives to provide ever expanding community education and up-to-date referral services about affordable housing, disabilities, homelessness, and available community services.

Our Services

Property Management Services

Community Housing Network manages the transition of state leases for group homes and the conversion of group home lease funding to financial support for other consumer controlled housing arrangements. CHN also provides property management services to 200 group homes in Oakland County. The organization also works in cooperation with consumers and other local agencies to identify needs for current and future housing resources.

Oakland County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Support

In response to the Congressional directive and HUD mandate, Community Housing Network, in collaboration with the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH), the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and the Michigan Statewide Homeless Management Information System (MSHMIS), successfully implemented an internet-based technology within Oakland County that assists homeless service organizations and Continuums of Care (CoCs) with capturing information about the clients they serve.

Permanent Supported Housing Homeless Leasing Assistance Programs

Community Housing Network currently administers ten grants through the HUD, Supported Housing Program. The Leasing Assistance Programs provide rental assistance and program specific supportive services to persons and/or families having severe and persistent mental illness, developmental disabilities, and/or substance abuse problems, and who are currently homeless. CHN works in close collaboration with the Oakland and Macomb County Community Mental Health providers.

Home Buying Program

Community Housing Network offers a homeownership program to qualified buyers. Grant funds are utilized to help make the home purchase more affordable. Interested applicants must be first time homebuyers, reside in Oakland County, have an acceptable credit history and a steady source of income that does not exceed the program limits, and have a household member with a disability.

Certified Occupancy Specialist Services

CHN has four National Center for Housing Management Certified Occupancy Specialists that ensure compliance with regulations for HUD-subsidized multi-family housing programs. Occupancy Specialists offer a wealth of experiences in managing multi-family properties.

Housing Quality Standards Inspection Services (HQS)

CHN has five Michigan State Housing Development Authority Certified HQS Inspectors on staff, which conducts annual HQS inspections for a variety of housing developments and families. They ensure that units are decent, safe and sanitary.

Asset Management Services

People with disabilities and their families frequently want assistance in developing and implementing plans to provide secure and sustainable living arrangements. CHN provides information and referral, and offers long term management of housing and other resources. CHN also offers services such as, grant writing and project development consultation.

Housing Resource Center

The Housing Resource Center (HRC) provides information, education, and technical assistance to people who may be homeless, those with disabilities, their families, and other circles of support about various affordable housing options.

The Housing Resource Center also provides continually updated databases that offer information about available affordable housing, potential roommates, mortgage products, and resources about accessing community supports.

The HRC sponsored Independent Living Club is geared toward consumers who currently live independently or express an interest in doing so. Monthly meetings offer a variety of topics are held at the CHN office and at clubhouses/drop-in centers in Oakland County.

Some of Our Accomplishments

Today, Community Housing Network is exceeding its' initial goals and has expanded its' focus to work toward ending homelessness, as well as assisting people with disabilities find affordable housing.

With the help of volunteers, the organization is meeting the housing needs of the homeless and persons with disabilities through a number of programs and services:

- The Housing Resource Center provides immediate access to information and technical assistance required to maintain successful, supported housing arrangements that reflect an individual's desires.
- Homeless Leasing Assistance programs currently provide HUD subsidized living arrangements and supportive services to 370 formerly homeless persons with disabilities in 250 rental units in Oakland and Macomb counties.
- The Home Buyer program has helped 12 first time homebuyers with disabilities achieve their dreams of home ownership.
- The successful implementation of a Homeless Management Information System in Oakland County has allowed homeless service providers to improve services.
- In 2006, the CHN Holiday Adopt-a-Family Program provided 198 persons with much needed winter clothing, basic household items, non-perishable food items and children's toys.

CHN Management

Marc Crag, CHN President & CEO

Mr. Craig has been involved with housing development for the homeless and people with disabilities for over 25 years. He was the founder of Springhill Housing Corp., which is responsible for developing more than eight million dollars in rental housing for people with disabilities, many of them homeless. He is a Licensed Real Estate Broker, a residential builder, and a qualified HQS Inspector.

Dawn Pischel, JD, CHN Vice President of Operations

Ms. Dawn Pischel is an attorney who has more than nine years experience in assisting families of people with disabilities in planning to meet their housing and support needs. She is involved in the planning and managing of community resources for people with disabilities and those who are homeless. Ms. Pischel is also the Compliance Manager for CHN's current HUD programs.

Kirsten Elliott, Vice President of Development

Ms. Elliott is committed to helping the homeless and those with disabilities. She serves on the executive committee of the Oakland County Taskforce for Homelessness and assists with the annual submission of the Continuum of Care grant to HUD. She is also a member of the Macomb County Homeless Coalition and serves as Co-Chair for the Permanent Supportive Housing Committee. Ms. Elliott coordinates project and program development and oversees development and operation of the Housing Resource Center.

*CHN, Inc. utilizes local, state, federal, and private resources to promote sustainable, affordable housing opportunities in Oakland and Macomb counties. CHN is a non-profit 501 c (3) organization.