

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT of 2009

The HUD approved Housing Counseling Services, Inc. (HCS) a sub-grantee of the Government of the District of Columbia's Department of Housing and Community Development, received funds to assist in the prevention of homelessness.

A husband/father became unemployed in June 2009 after being laid off. At the time of his job separation, he was earning \$60,000 a year and providing for his family of three. He was able to receive unemployment and *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families* (TANF) benefits to cover his financial obligations, but due to delays in the client receiving his initial unemployment benefits as well as the costs related to supporting a disabled child, he incurred a serious financial strain which resulted in a rental delinquency and the repossession of his car.

For months the client had been actively seeking employment similar to his previous position, with no luck. Nearly hopeless and just days from eviction, the client applied for the *Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)* financial assistance. Upon receipt of his application, HCS contacted his management company to explain that the client had recently applied for rental assistance under the new HPRP program and requested that the eviction be cancelled to allow for the full processing of his application. As a result of that communication the eviction was cancelled.

HCS was able to assist the client with his 6- month rental arrearage of \$5,072.90 and was giving consideration to short term HPRP rental assistance for future rent as the client had demonstrated his activeness in seeking stable employment. Shortly thereafter, however, the client successfully secured a new position and his child was approved for disability benefits which would enable him to sufficiently cover his future rental and other financial obligations.

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Loudoun County, VA received \$244,615 in Community Development Block Grant ARRA funding. The funds were used on a solar system for Loudoun County's emergency homeless shelter and an energy efficient rehab for the Windy Hill community. These two major projects benefited the citizens of Loudoun County by providing investments and improvements in energy efficiency while stimulating local jobs.

Loudoun County's emergency homeless shelter houses families as well as single men and women. This shelter contains 20% more beds than the preexisting facilities and is postured to serve an expanding population. In addition to the shelter being built to award-winning green standards, the solar panels will generate more than 13.5% of the total KWH energy needed to operate the 8,500 square feet shelter. Over the life of the building, more than \$195,000 in renewable energy is expected to be saved.



The Windy Hill Cottages is a community consisting of 11 low-income single family housing units. The energy efficient rehab project was necessary in order to bring this community up to code as well as improve energy efficiency, accessibility and quality of life. Renovations were made to HVAC, windows, plumbing, roofs, and drainage. The ARRA funds have significantly increased the useful life of the homes while improving the quality of life of the residents. Both projects were completed on time and provide long-term energy efficiencies and a source of pride for our community.



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On December 16, 2009, Saroj and Radhika Chherti became the first family in the City of Alexandria to acquire a home through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development *Neighborhood Stabilization Program*.

The Chhertis, a young Nepalese couple with a four-year old son, became first time homeowners as a result of the collaborative efforts of *HUD*, the *City of Alexandria's Housing Office*, *The Alexandria Housing Development Corp.* (a non-profit developer), and *Rebuilding Together Alexandria* which is a non-profit group that repairs and revitalizes houses for low income homeowners.

The Chherti's new home was a foreclosure that sat on the market for 18 months before being bought by Alexandria Housing Development Corporation. Once the Alexandria Housing Development Corp. acquired the home, Rebuilding Together Alexandria organized approximately 50 volunteers who made repairs to the house that increased its market value by \$40,000 to \$50,000. The home is now valued at more than \$200,000.

The Chhertis responded to a call for low-income buyers who may be interested in buying the house and fortunately for them, were the first family to qualify. Saroj Chherti, who grew up living in apartments said, "*This is like a dream come true.*"

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A young couple was referred to the *Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)* because they lost their housing when the wife/mother was laid off from her job. At the time of referral, they were living in a motel. The husband/father continued to work to support them, but his hours were unstable and insufficient to secure new housing. She was receiving unemployment, but this additional income was still not enough to support them in housing. In addition to their limited income, they faced other barriers to housing, which included a rental debt and his criminal history. These additional challenges made it even more difficult to secure housing. He had two children who had been in foster care for over a year. He had separated from the children's mother, but then she lost custody of the children. He hoped to be able to reunify with his children, but without stable housing, he was unable to do so. In fact, he was scheduled to go to court the following month, and if he did not have housing, he would be forced to relinquish his parental rights.

At this time, Doorways, a non-profit organization located in Arlington, VA, became involved with the family to provide case management and assistance through HPRP. The mother was working as a day laborer and NW was enrolled in the county's culinary training program. Their HPRP case manager helped connect them to employment services through the county's employment center for the wife, and Offender Aid and Restoration for the husband to assist them in securing better-paying, stable employment. The Housing Locator was able to assist them in securing stable housing for the family, negotiating with the landlord to be more flexible in regards to their housing barriers. The father was able to take the apartment approval letter to court to verify their housing, so that he was able to preserve his parental rights.

HPRP provided a security deposit and rental subsidy so that the couple was able to move into the new apartment a couple weeks later. The case manager assisted them with securing donated furniture and household supplies for their apartment, including beds for the two small children. A few weeks after they moved in, their children were able to join them in the apartment to begin the process of becoming a family again. They are receiving services through Child and Family Services to assist with this process. Their youngest child was able to enroll in Early Head Start, while the older continues to attend preschool. Currently, both parents continue to search for stable employment, which has been a challenge due to the current economic climate. They continue to access services to assist them in this area. The family has made great strides in the past few months, but there is still more progress to be made. We anticipate more change to come as they continue to receive services and assistance through HPRP.

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HUD approved housing counseling agency, Housing Counseling Services, Inc. (HCS) assisted a homeless veteran who recently received a voucher through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program.

At the time of application, the client was intermittently sleeping at Washington/Reagan National Airport. During the application clinic, it was confirmed that he recently was approved for a rental unit, however due to having no income (only receiving food stamps) he was unable to pay the \$881.00 security deposit for the unit as the VASH voucher would only cover the rental cost for the unit.

Based on assessment, this client was ineligible under the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) as he did not meet the basic qualifying criteria for the program. Upon completion of his application and verification of the proposed rental circumstances, HCS approved this client's application. Recognizing the urgency of the client's circumstance, HCS contacted his landlord to provide verbal confirmation of his approval for *Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Program* (HPRP) security deposit assistance to allow him to take possession of the unit prior to the disbursement of the actual check.