

WCHR NARRATIVE – CIP 2023-2025

Worcester Community Housing Resources' (WCHR) mission is to create and preserve affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate-income households and to initiate and support neighborhood revitalization throughout Worcester County. WCHR achieves this through the provision of community lending, through development and management of affordable housing, and through neighborhood revitalization initiatives.

WCHR's target population includes individuals and families who are historically underserved and face obstacles such as poverty, homelessness, history of substance use, mental illness, and domestic violence, among others.

WCHR has developed and financed a diverse range of housing projects to alleviate some of these affordable housing shortfalls. Family apartments, group homes with supportive services, single-room lodging homes and an elderly assisted-living facility are among the developments that the organization has completed to provide for the specific needs and barriers of vastly diverse populations. It also has reclaimed hundreds of vacant, distraught properties that now provide safe, sanitary, and affordable housing and neighborhood stability.

Through its revolving community loan fund, WCHR utilizes nearly four million dollars of community-invested funds to finance these activities, along with emergency home repairs and improvements for low-income homeowners. All of this leads to improved living conditions and more stable communities, fostering renewed vitality and increased property values.

Although it has achieved great success with its broad initiatives and unique array of tools and resources as both a Community Development Corporation and a Community Development Finance Institution, new challenges continue to arise. Through its collaborative efforts, WCHR regularly assesses housing and financial needs of the area and compares them to the properties and funds that it knows are available, in order to plan its course of action and future projects. As WCHR moves forward with its multi-faceted agenda to provide and maintain homes for the homeless, for people in recovery, the elderly, people suffering from mental disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, people living with AIDS and refugees of political persecution, it seeks to broaden partnerships that can add capacity, identify specific unmet needs, and shorten timeframes for project completions.

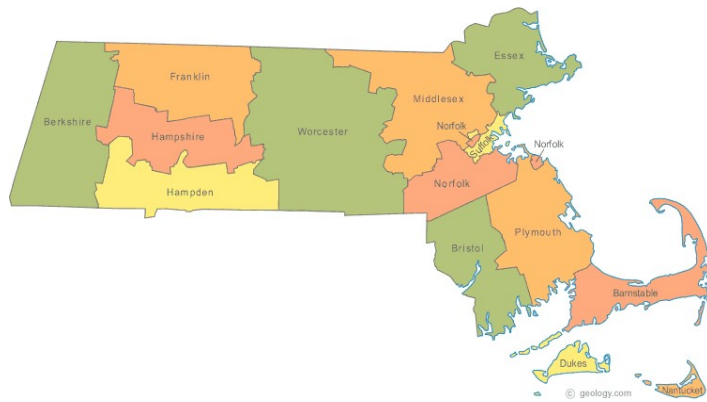
WCHR's Community Loan Fund continually seeks new investors and new sources for grants that will enable the organization to reach those households that it has not been able to assist. These are usually cases where the homeowners have serious emergency repair needs, but cannot qualify for the financing required to complete the work necessary work. Often it is for the replacement of a heating system, a new roof, a failed sewer line, cited health and code violations, or any number of other failures.

WCHR is optimistic that we are entering a time of great opportunity and the organization is well positioned to respond to community need and be a strong partner in improving Worcester County. The organization is adept both at the identification of the most significant areas of need and the provision of the most tangible and sustainable solutions to the problems. WCHR functions best as a collaborator with the support of many talented and experienced people. Its Board of Directors, standing Committees, and staff all work extremely hard to provide the knowledge and the tools for success. Their unyielding commitment, dedication to the public good, talent, ideas, and sound advice have led this organization in a direction that fosters compassion for the people it serves and stability in the advancements it establishes.

Section 1: Community or Constituency (ies) to be served by WCHR

WCHR provides services primarily to Worcester County. At times the towns of Bellingham, Marlborough, Ashby, Townsend, and Hudson are provided with community loan funds for receiverships. Worcester and its surrounding areas consist of diverse populations that each present a unique need for affordable housing and other resources. WCHR's mission is to service the people in need by providing affordable housing options to all types of individuals who reside in the area. WCHR's target population includes individuals and families who are historically underserved and face obstacles such as poverty, homelessness, history of substance use, mental illness, and domestic violence, among others.

Service Area



**** Demographics below are from the July 2022 US Census Bureau**

Municipality	Population	Median Gross Rent	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate	Homeownership Rate (2019)	Median House Sale Price (2022)
Worcester County	862,029	\$ 1,074	\$ 77,155	9.5%	64.8%	\$ 363,000
Ashland	18,832	\$ 1,851	\$ 118,348	4.5%		\$ 715,000

Bellingham	16,945	\$ 1,547	\$ 103,258	2.8%	69.7%	\$ 432,500
Hudson	20,092	\$ 1,296	\$ 96,038	4.6%	68.9%	\$ 548,500
Marlborough	41,793	\$ 1,498	\$ 83,469	7.2%	58.2%	\$ 482,500
Townsend	9,127	\$ 1,036	\$ 97,462	5.4%	71.2%	\$ 336,000

Diversity

Municipality	Total	White	Hispanic / Latino	Black	Asian
Worcester County	862,029	85.7%	12.2%	6.1%	5.4%
Ashland	18,832	78.1%	6.5%	5.1%	12.8%
Bellingham	16,945	88.5%	3.9%	2.7%	0.8%
Hudson	20,092	91.7%	6.7%	0.6%	3.5%
Marlborough	41,793	74.8%	14.2%	4.3%	5.3%
Townsend	9,127	93.9%	3.5%	1.3%	1.6%

Section 2: Involvement of community residents and stakeholders

Involvement of community residents and stakeholders is an ongoing effort and feedback helps to inform current and future projects. Some highlights of the ways in which WCHR engages the community in its efforts are as follows:

- Regular check-ins with residents of our housing programs, both individually and through group activities and events.
- Community meetings regarding upcoming projects with neighborhood members, businesses and other stakeholders to discuss issues, solutions and be a partner in the community.
- The organization regularly meets with local non-profit direct-service staff, community lenders, and municipal staff to remain abreast of the concerns and needs of the residents, and businesses throughout the service area. This helps WCHR to develop strategic initiatives that will provide the resources and tangible outcomes that will address the identified deficiencies in a meaningful manner with outcomes that will foster long-term positive effects.

- WCHR staff engages regularly with staff from major service providers to develop new programming and increase engagement from clients receiving services. WCHR's Executive Director and Director of Development participate in the Worcester City Manager's citywide task force to address the issue of chronic homelessness among the single-adult population, the Worcester Together Affordable Housing Coalition, and the Central Massachusetts Homeless Housing and Benefits group.
- WCHR's Loan Fund Director serves on the board of Adalante Worcester, an organization to promote and engage the Latino community in leadership roles, and the Central Massachusetts Conference for women.
- Twice monthly WCHR co-facilitates neighborhood meetings in the Green Island and Main South / Beacon Brightly neighborhoods. Here the organization is able to converse with residents, business owners, the Worcester Police Department's Quality of Life Division, the city's Health & Code Department, and the community's Impact Officer to identify important issues and concerns and to strategize the roles and actions needed from the various stakeholders to address problems in a tangible and expedient manner.
- On a monthly basis, WCHR meets with the Worcester Property Owners Association to remain abreast of the city's housing offerings and other landlord issues, needs and concerns, to inform the group of WCHR's available housing opportunities, landlord assistance programs, and targeted populations, and to identify other WCHR developments to provide specific types of housing throughout the city and county.
- WCHR regularly engages with mortgage lenders from the various banks and credit unions throughout the area to hear from them directly the issues that they face with potential borrowers that they cannot serve and to inform them of the initiatives that WCHR has to offer that might be able to assist those that are denied due to their underwriting guidelines. The organization receives useful input regarding where the needs of community lending lie. It also has received a significant number of referrals from these exchanges for people that might qualify for a loan under WCHR's slightly broader underwriting guidelines.

Section 3: Plan goals

All goals and activities are in support of the organization's mission.

1. Organizational Capacity:
 - a. Strengthen the organization through investments in branding, marketing, and public relations.
 - b. Undertake strategic planning in 2024 to chart the organization's future course.
 - c. Onboard new staff to increase capacity and address succession planning.
2. Community Lending:

- a. Disbursing \$1 million in lending capital annually to finance affordable housing and community development initiatives with an emphasis on women and minority owned businesses.
 - b. Increasing commercial lending by 25% to support economic development efforts.
 - c. Diversifying sources of lending capital and striving to reach a fund size of \$5 million.
- 3. Receivership/Abandoned Housing Initiative:
 - a. Supporting 9 units per year through lending and/or providing receivership services to address abandoned properties and revitalize neighborhoods.
- 4. Housing Development:
 - a. Continuously building a development pipeline with a healthy mix of projects in various stages to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- 5. Property and Asset Management:
 - a. Ensuring properties managed/owned by WCHR are well maintained and financially strong, with appropriate capital reserves to sustain their long-term viability.
- 6. Housing Stability:
 - a. Securing funding to continue projects aimed at increasing available rental units and matching people experiencing homelessness and other housing barriers to available units.

Section 4: Activities to be undertaken

Organizational Capacity:

During the past two years, the organization has invested in organizational capacity by adding development, lending and property management positions. In addition, efficiency and program effectiveness has been enhanced by implementing new and modern affordable housing property management software. WCHR's reputation has been enhanced through a renewed focus on branding, marketing and public relations. In the years that this plan covers WCHR will continue this investment trend by undertaking strategic planning. Also, the organization will focus on the onboarding of new positions to ensure increased capacity and succession planning with an eye towards organizational stability and growth. WCHR will also build on the marketing momentum by continuing with its new E-News program, increased social media presence and the development of an annual report for the first time in many years.

Community Lending:

WCHR's Community Loan Fund (CLF) has disbursed over \$16 million throughout Worcester County and beyond to assist low- to-moderate income homeowners with emergency repairs and

home improvements; to make energy-efficiency upgrades; to rehabilitate vacant and abandoned properties; to create and preserve other affordable housing; and to foster neighborhood stabilization. All of the community loan fund's efforts benefit low-to-moderate income households and improve low-to-moderate income neighborhoods. This lending preserves existing affordable housing; creates new affordable home ownership and rental housing opportunities; returns vacant, troubled properties to safe, habitable condition; and creates numerous jobs in the trades through the construction and renovation activities that it finances.

The organization has pooled \$4 million in lending capital by obtaining investments from financial, educational and religious institutions, private foundations, community development corporations, social investors, federal and state grants and individuals. The organization has signed Promissory Notes to each entity for repayment.

The goal is to disburse a million dollars to finance affordable housing and community development initiatives throughout Central Massachusetts each year (as funding allows); increase commercial lending by 25%; and further diversify sources of lending capital.

Receivership/Abandoned Housing Initiative:

This partnership with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, Central Massachusetts municipalities and Regional Housing Courts enables receivers to take control of vacant or abandoned properties under receivership to return them to safe, habitable condition. Since 2009, WCHR has collaborated on this initiative, financing the rehabilitation of over 300 units and returning them to the rental market. In this effort, WCHR assesses all identified problem properties, reviews the scope of work for each, finances the renovations and oversees the construction for the renovation work of eligible receivers. WCHR is also an approved receiver itself. Receiverships and the Housing Court process have been severely affected by the pandemic, only returning to full, in-person hearings in early 2021.

WCHR's goal is to continue to be a leader in the receivership/abandoned housing initiative and provide financing for approximately 27 vacant or distressed units (estimated at 9/year) that will be targeted as affordable housing opportunities.

Housing Development:

WCHR has been developing residential properties since 1994, producing or rehabilitating nearly 250 units of affordable housing for low-income homeownership or rental with project budgets totaling approximately \$35 million. The largest single project produced 78 housing units in adaptive reuse of an old factory building.

WCHR's reputation in the community is that of a responsive, quality developer and manager of affordable housing, including programs for those with multiple barriers to housing stability. WCHR intends to continue to build a development pipeline with a healthy mix of projects in various stages. Properties managed/owned by WCHR will be well maintained and financially strong with appropriate capital reserves.

Permanent Supportive Housing (50 Oriol Drive): WCHR has participated in a number of task forces and advocacy groups seeking to find permanent solutions for unhoused individuals who may be experiencing homelessness, often for multiple times. Client advocates have stressed their needs for independence, privacy, and safety, not just the availability of counselling, mental health, and recovery services. In keeping with that model, WCHR is working to develop a permanent supportive housing project with a partner agency providing the services needed by residents, but with a Housing First priority. The former Quality Inn at 50 Oriol Drive was acquired in August 2023 and design development is underway. Funds for acquisition and pre-development have been secured and permanent financing applications are underway. The goal is for permanent financing to be secured Q1 2023 with a 6-9 month construction period with lease up happening late 2024.

Family Shelter Project, Whitmarsh Center (Zion Lutheran Church): WCHR has worked with Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Friendly House, and the Interfaith Hospitality network to add to the number of family emergency shelter beds in the city, to meet a growing and urgent need. WCHR acquired the Zion Lutheran Church campus in September 2023 WCHR has been working with an architect, engineers, and the prospective shelter operator, Friendly House, to modify the building for this use, including full wheelchair accessibility, adequate year-round heating/cooling, and developing a non-institutional space for the guests. Funding is underway and occupancy is expected by the end of Q2 2024.

Tiny Home Village: WCHR is working on developing an innovative site of "Tiny Homes" to provide a Housing First setting for individuals experiencing homelessness. The design provides options for those seeking interaction with other residents, as well as those seeking a more solitary lifestyle. This project is targeted for 2024/2025 completion and lease up.

Receiverships: WCHR currently has one active receivership project on Congress Street in Worcester. Upon completion of the receivership WCHR hopes to acquire the property for further development of 2 homeownership projects.

Homeownership: With prices for entry-level homeownership skyrocketing beyond the ability of many low- and moderate-income families, WCHR has been awarded a project in Fitchburg, MA to develop 15-20 townhouses for low to moderate income people.

Pipeline: WCHR's pipeline includes additional projects early in the feasibility and pre-development stages and includes additional housing for special populations as well as additional homeownership.

Property and Asset Management:

WCHR currently manages its own projects, plus low-income housing properties developed and owned by other entities that need management services from an organization experienced in affordable housing management. Capital expenditures will focus on building envelope improvements, possible solar conversions, and further energy upgrades at selected sites, as well as upgrading older drainage infrastructure at two properties.

Single Room Occupancy Upgrades: WCHR owns and operates three properties with 53 bedrooms and common living areas. All of these subsidized units are targeted to very low-income individuals that are either chronically homeless, recovering from substance abuse, fleeing domestic violence, suffering with mental disabilities, living with other special needs, or are simply unable to afford any other living situation. The homes are safe, clean and well managed. Rents for these rooms can be as low as \$50 per month, depending upon the tenant's financial need. WCHR is utilizing approximately \$400,000 of its property reserve equity for capital improvements and upgrades to these properties, which were originally renovated more than 25 years ago. Additional capital investments for all properties are scheduled for the next three-year period. The goal is to provide our tenants with a safe living environment, which means regular upgrades to the buildings and units themselves.

Housing Stability:

Increasing rental units: WCHR and several partners from the City, social service organizations and private philanthropy have come together to assist homeless individuals and families to access emergency housing vouchers and secure affordable housing. Recognizing the difficult rental market, due to low vacancy and high costs, a comprehensive approach was developed that includes outreach, engagement and incentivizing landlords to rent to voucher holders. Through outreach and engagement, WCHR provides information, support and resources to landlords to overcome barriers and misconceptions to renting. In addition WCHR and partners are able to provide a host of other incentives including security deposit payments, assistance with utility arrears, sign on bonuses and a pool of flexible mitigation funds for things such as minor repairs to get units to pass inspections, minor repairs while tenant is in the unit, brief legal consultation etc. This model has been successful in other communities and states including Rhode Island and Boston. In the period of this plan WCHR plans to secure ongoing funding and to assist 70-90 households per year to secure housing through this program.

Section 5: How success will be measured and/or evaluated

Success is measured for the organization's housing development projects, as the initiative progresses from concept through the various stages of development from site selection, to feasibility, acquisition, financing, construction, and occupancy. WCHR tracks the movement of

projects and intends to have a healthy pipeline with projects at various stages. Direct results include the number of housing units created or preserved and the dollar amount of investment as well as the level of affordability (i.e. AMI).

With respect to WCHR's Revolving Community Loan Fund, the organization directly tracks the dollar value of funds disbursed throughout the county, the number of units that are rehabilitated through these initiatives, demographics of the clientele served each year, the number of vacant properties returned to safe, habitable use through WCHR financing, and the number of jobs retained or created by WCHR's lending.

WCHR's property management services, both for its own properties and those that it manages for others are monitored for housing quality and tenant satisfaction. Budget management and standard indicators such as turnover time and make-ready time are used to measure efficiency. The organization schedules and performs capital improvements on a regular basis and revises its capital expenditure plan annually. A fund to cover replacement reserves is maintained for all WCHR properties with annual contributions adjusted as needed. The Property Manager also makes recommendations for capital improvements to the owners of the other properties in WCHR's management portfolio. The level of success with WCHR's housing portfolio is evident in the appearance of the properties, the low-level of tenant turnover and the ongoing financial viability of the homes.

Housing Stability Program outcomes include number of units leased up and number of units preserved through mitigation and mediation. The overall result being securing and maintaining housing.

Section 6: Collaborative efforts to support implementation

WCHR currently collaborates and works in unison with multiple service agency providers to increase the positive impact they have on the people in need who reside in the service areas. The organization continually seeks to collaborate on every possible level in order to maximize its impact and service, while minimizing redundancy and unnecessary expenses. The list of service agency providers below are most actively engaged in current projects, however there are new collaborations formed regularly as WCHR moves forward with various initiatives.

- Eliot Community Human Services, Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (and their subsidiary MASH), United Way of Central Massachusetts and Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance are the partners planning and implementing the 50 Oriol Drive hotel conversion to permanent supportive housing project. This group uses their expertise to help with design and implementation of the project. While WCHR will own and manage

the project, Eliot Community Human Services, an experienced and respected provider, will be robust supportive services, all onsite.

- WCHR actively engages with the Opportunity Finance Network to stay abreast of the field of community lending, participate in trainings, utilize trainings and tools and to reach out for specific questions and challenges in community lending. This membership organization is an active and engaged partner.
- City of Worcester-WCHR actively engages in all of the City's related forums, funder meetings and is a collaborative lender with the newly established Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- Worcester Together Affordable Housing Work Group-WCHR is an active member, lending expertise and voice to initiatives brought forth by the group. Most recently this included the passing of inclusionary zoning and City Council candidate questionnaire around affordable housing issues.

Section 7: Integration of activities/consistency with community strategy & vision

WCHR's goals have been to provide a broad range of affordable housing opportunities to diverse and underserved populations, to foster renewed vitality in low-income neighborhoods, to reverse the negative impacts of vacant, abandoned buildings, to preserve current housing stock, to provide financing to low-income homeowners in need of home improvements and emergency repairs, and to ensure that families and individuals have well-managed and maintained homes with the ongoing housing support they need. These are all born out of years of direct input from municipal government and service organization via their requests to provide for needs that they see, but are not able to fill. This has been augmented by commissioned research from agencies, private companies and individuals into the state of the area's housing stock, condition and availability, all of which continually indicate the need for the types of programming that WCHR offers throughout Worcester County.

This feedback from the community and institutional stakeholders has played a major role in the development of new programs during the past three years, focusing on housing stability and financial well-being. The distribution of emergency housing assistance during the pandemic, development of the Landlord Liaison program to bring affordable units back onto the market, and the development of our financial counseling program were all the direct result of requests from residents, borrowers, community members, and other stakeholders in an effort to meet the changing needs of the past three years.

The organization utilizes a strategic, holistic and comprehensive approach to affordable housing and community development. Its unique position as both a Community Development Corporation and a Community Development Finance Institution enables it to address multiple tiers of housing and financial needs simultaneously in some of the poorest neighborhoods in Central Massachusetts. WCHR integrates affordable housing development, community lending,

abandoned property reclamation, property management, education and social investment to improve people's lives and strengthen their communities. These efforts have brought economic stability, safety, increased property values, more attractive residential landscapes, and an improved quality of life.

All of this is part of a well-developed strategy that has been refined over many years of community input, first-hand experience and the ongoing critical monitoring of outcomes to ensure that the goals meet the community needs and that the results are tangible and meaningful.

Section 8: Financing Strategy

WCHR is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) and operates under the governance of a 15-member Board of Directors, supported by several active standing committees, and a dedicated staff of sixteen individuals.

At the helm of WCHR is an experienced Executive Director with extensive knowledge and expertise in administering grants and contracts. The Executive Director ensures that all activities align with the organization's mission and goals, while also overseeing the financial management aspects of WCHR's operations.

WCHR places great emphasis on financial controls and accounting procedures to maintain strong fiscal management. The agency's fiscal controls and accounting procedures are regularly reviewed in consultation with an accountant consultant to ensure compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). This careful oversight ensures that financial practices are in line with industry standards and best practices.

The day-to-day financial management responsibilities are handled by the Manager of Finance and Administration and the Office Manager. They are responsible for managing accounts payable and receivable, grant accounting, and reporting using the QuickBooks system. Additionally, an accountant consultant works closely with the team to create and analyze monthly financial reports for the board of directors. The consultant also provides guidance on complex accounting rules and procedures, ensuring accuracy and adherence to regulatory requirements.

WCHR's commitment to financial transparency and accountability is demonstrated through annual audits. These audits consistently highlight the organization's financial health, appropriate accounting systems, and absence of negative findings. By upholding robust financial practices and undergoing regular audits, WCHR ensures that its resources are managed efficiently and responsibly.

WCHR has diverse revenue sources including developer's fees, rents, fees and interest, fundraising (grants and donations). The organization also has reserves for capital and operating. Between its housing development, community lending, housing portfolio, property

management and operation of its assisted-living facility, WCHR has various lines of business that help to ensure its long-term financial viability and stability. In addition to this, it has many partners that provide it with funding to help see the organization and its mission succeed from year to year.

Current development activities include the following funding sources:

- CEDAC feasibility funds, acquisition funds and pre-development funds
- MASH-acquisition funds
- Home and Health for Good-acquisition and development funds
- City of Worcester-ARPA-construction funds (committed)
- Applications are in with EOHLC for various state and federal sources, including LIHTC, for construction and permanent financing.
- The Whitmarsh Center will secure funds from private bank financing and State (pending) and City (anticipated) funds as well as WCHR's own equity.

The community loan fund has the following funding sources:

- Fees and interest on loans
- Lending capital through investors
- Operating and lending capital through the CDFI Fund
- Expansion funds/investments will be sought through local foundations, additional CDFI Fund grant applications (RFP expected in fall 2023).

Housing Stability:

- Year 2 of the project was able to secure funds from the City of Worcester-ARPA, CMHA, and the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts. Subsequent year funding will need to be secured. WCHR is most interested in securing funds that are more stable. Interest in the program continues to grow but consistent funding may be a challenge.

The CITC has allowed WCHR to leverage additional revenue since first awarded. The chart below breaks down the plan based on a \$100K award. Additional funds could be utilized and increases seen accordingly. Funding over the past couple of years has been inconsistent due to the pandemic-some items such as rents were lower and pandemic specific funds were received that we do not anticipate in the future. We anticipate a leveling out in the coming years and the anticipated increases due to CITC would be in areas we can count on going forward. While WCHR has struggled a bit with utilizing all credits awarded there will be efforts made to more widely market the availability of the credits to ensure robust usage.

Type	2023 Goal (based on award amount)
UWMB	50,000
Foundations-current	37,000
Foundations-5 new	10,000
Donors-3 new @ \$1K each	3,000
Total CITC	100,000

Section 9: History, Track Record and Sustainable Development

Worcester Community Housing Resources has been developing affordable housing and operating a revolving community loan fund for 25 years. Its development projects have created 249 housing units for low-income households that include family apartments, group homes with supportive services, single-room lodging homes and an elderly assisted-living facility. Within that mix, there are 36 homeownership properties, 124 residential rental units, three commercial rental units and 78 assisted-living apartments. Of those, WCHR owns and operates 124 of the residential rental units (group homes, SROs, 2-, 3-, & 4-BR units), the commercial rental units and the 78-unit assisted living facility. In total, these developments brought \$34.4 million of investment into the Massachusetts economy and bring over \$250,000 of additional annual real estate tax revenues to area communities.

In the city of Worcester, WCHR owns and operates 112 rental units, which are comprised of 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom apartments, a group home, and single room lodging houses. All of this housing serves very low-income families and individuals. Much of it includes rental assistance subsidies that enable extremely low-income households to afford the rent for a safe, clean and well-managed home. Rents range from \$50 per month for a rooming house with rent subsidy, to \$950 for a three-bedroom apartment, depending upon financial need.

WCHR 's revolving community loan fund has disbursed over \$15 million to assist low-income homeowners with emergency repairs and home improvements; to make energy-efficiency upgrades; to rehabilitate vacant and abandoned properties; to create and preserve other affordable housing; and to foster neighborhood stabilization. The organization has amassed \$4 million in lending capital through investments from financial, educational and religious institutions, private foundations, community development corporations, social investors, federal and state grants, WCHR's own equity, and individuals. Most recently, WCHR received an award from the CDFI Fund for \$750,000 allowing for increased lending capital and investment in an additional position to staff the fund. Additional awards such as this will be sought to continue to grow and diversify the fund. In the coming year we expect to disburse a million to a million and a half dollars to finance affordable housing and community development initiatives throughout Central Massachusetts.

In 1994, the Worcester Community Loan Fund merged with the Worcester Housing Partnership, creating Worcester Community Housing Resources (WCHR). WCHR's mission is to create and preserve affordable housing opportunities for low to moderate income households and initiate and support neighborhood revitalization throughout Worcester County. It serves as a community development lender, focusing on affordable rental and homeownership projects in underserved areas. WCHR operates a nearly \$3 million revolving loan fund for home repairs, energy efficiency upgrades, lead abatement, affordable housing development and court ordered receiverships. It has successfully financed more than 150 vacant properties with nearly 300 units through its receivership lending program. With over 246 units of affordable housing and 3 commercial units developed, WCHR addresses the needs of diverse populations, fostering stability and revitalization. WCHR owns and manages 112 of its own units and 24 for other agencies. The organization's comprehensive approach, partnerships, and initiatives have positively impacted Worcester County and Central Massachusetts, promoting thriving communities.

Below are examples demonstrating WCHR's track record in completing development projects:

5 King St. WCHR's first project was developed in response to neighborhood demand for large family housing with project-based rental assistance. This 8-unit, 4BR family project houses larger families.

28-30 King St. This project provides 12 2BR units with project-based rental assistance, serving very low income families and single parent households.

2 Oread St. / 866 Main St. WCHR's first SRO project still provides 38 SRO units of "sober housing" with Section 8 project-based assistance for single individuals in one of the most challenged neighborhoods in Worcester. In addition to the SRO units, the 2 Oread Street property includes 3 commercial storefronts at 799-803 Main Street. These units are all occupied by local enterprises generating jobs and meeting community needs.

6-8 King St. This 4-family brick townhouse was rehabilitated and sold to a very low-income buyer in 1999 using City and State HOME funds. When the original owner decided to sell, WCHR acquired and rehabilitated the property in 2016, providing 3BR units of affordable rental housing.

19 Sigel St. This HOME-assisted project, using City HOME funds, was added to WCHR's rental portfolio in 2008. Originally operated as a long term and short stay facility for very low income DMH clients, it was redeveloped in 2020 to provide 6 affordable 2BR units.

47 Grosvenor St. This 6-unit gut rehab rental project, originally completed by the former Canal District CDC, using City and State HOME funds, was purchased and redeveloped by WCHR in 2006. It provides 6 2BR rental units for low and very-low income families.

32 Irving St. This 15 room SRO / Lodging House project was purchased by WCHR from Spectrum Housing, a substance abuse treatment agency, and rehabilitated in 2004 using the City HOME program. Occupancy is targeted toward the most difficult to house individuals.

12-14 Lagrange St. This 8-unit 2BR building was acquired by WCHR following a receivership in 2010. It was rehabilitated using city and state NSP funds. Priority placement of families living with AIDS/HIV is given.

104 Fairfield St. This 10BR group home was developed in 2019 to house 10 pregnant or parenting teens. WCHR partnered with Ascentria Care Alliance, a service provider assisting the residents.

6 Hiscox St. This 2 unit, 2BR building is operated as Section 8 eligible rental housing but is being held for future development as it adjoins 104 Fairfield St.

WCHR Projects with outside specialized management

Heywood Wakefield Commons – 50 Pine Street, Gardner This 78-unit Assisted Living Facility, a decade in the making, converted a deteriorated former mill building into a modern ALF, providing top quality meals, housing, and community activities to a population of 100 percent low-income seniors.

In regards to Sustainable Development, WCHR works on development projects with experts in the field of construction, architecture, tax credit financing etc. All are aware of the City and State's sustainable development principles and designs meet the environmental standards of each funding program sought. When designing projects, sustainability principles are incorporated into plans from concept to operation. Minimum impact site design, reuse of inefficient structures, use of recycled building components, and incorporation of sustainable and passive energy sources where possible are taken into consideration. The agency's commitment to sustainable design also extends into considering transportation impact, site and neighborhood impact, and waste stream implications in conceptualizing all of its development projects.