

# TAUNTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

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EQUAL HOUSING  
OPPORTUNITY

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
COLLEEN M. DOHERTY

June 20, 2017

Florence S. Juillard  
Department of Housing & Community Development  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Ms. Juillard,

The Taunton Housing Authority is pleased to submit its A Better Life (ABL) Planning Grant proposal package to DHCD for your consideration and approval. The THA feels that we are a strong choice in implementing the ABL program based on the success we have demonstrated in the administration of diverse and complex resident services programs. THA has a substantial background in providing comprehensive social service delivery to our residents, including partnerships with key service providers and other community organizations.

The THA currently administers the HOPE VI Endowment Trust, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency program including Homeownership, the ROSS program, the Transitional Housing Program, and a Shannon Grant Youth Program. We have streamlined supportive services delivery into a single department that expands and improves the level of supports available to residents, maximizing outcomes for our families. We feel that we can provide a thoughtful, inclusive program that addresses resident need and builds family self-sufficiency.

Overall, THA anticipates 146 households will receive individualized case management services through ABL. They are broken down as follows:

- **Taunton Housing Authority State-Aided Public Housing Residents:** 102 public housing households (78 in Chapter 200 and 24 in Chapter 705 programs) live at THA sites in Taunton.
- **Stoughton Housing Authority State-Aided Public Housing Residents:** 44 public housing households (26 in Chapter 200 and 18 in Chapter 705 programs) live at SHA sites in Stoughton.

In addition to this cover letter, the THA ABL proposal package includes the following documents in compliance with DHCD's requirements: Board votes, a brief narrative, a draft budget, a timeline detailing the planning process, a description of capacity, and a list of staff assigned to this project.

We look forward to working closely with DHCD in implementing the ABL program and exploring the opportunities that the ABL concept can bring to our public housing residents. We are excited about being part of this innovative program and look forward to building a highly qualified ABL team that can exceed the expectations of this grant. We appreciate your consideration of our proposal to enable our state-aided public housing residents to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Please feel free to contact me at 508-824-5441 if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Colleen Doherty  
Executive Director

**TAUNTON HOUSING AUTHORITY  
EXTRACT OF THE  
MINUTES OF MAY 17, 2017**

The members of the Taunton Housing Authority met in Regular Session at 30 Olney Street in the City of Taunton, Massachusetts at 3:15 o'clock p.m. on May 17, 2017.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson and upon roll call those present and absent were as follows:

**PRESENT:** Alan Pelletier  
F. Roger Hoffmann  
Arthur Lopes  
Lillian Ricketts

**ABSENT:** Nancy Pina

The Executive Director recommended that the Board approve the application for A Better Life (ABL) planning grant to be submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and that the Chairman signs the Extract of the Board Vote as true and accurate.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Hoffmann, seconded by Mr. Lopes, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to approve the application for A Better Life (ABL) planning grant to be submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and that the Chairman signs the Extract of the Board Vote as true and accurate

I, the undersigned, the duly appointed qualified and acting Secretary of the Taunton Housing Authority, do hereby certify that on May 17, 2017, the above motion was made and approved.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Colleen M. Doherty, Secretary

**STOUGHTON HOUSING AUTHORITY  
EXTRACT OF THE  
MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2017**

The members of the Stoughton Housing Authority met in Regular Session at 4 Capen Street in the Town of Stoughton, Massachusetts at 11:00 o'clock a.m. on May 19, 2017.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson and upon roll call those present and absent were as follows:

**PRESENT:** Donald Brady  
Michael Horan  
William Larkin

**ABSENT:** Barry Crimmins  
William McNamara

The Acting Executive Director recommended that the Board approve the application for A Better Life (ABL) planning grant to be submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and that the Chairman signs the Extract of the Board Vote as true and accurate.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Horan, seconded by Mr. Larkin, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to approve the application for A Better Life (ABL) planning grant to be submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and that the Chairman signs the Extract of the Board Vote as true and accurate

I, the undersigned, the duly appointed qualified and acting Secretary of the Stoughton Housing Authority, do hereby certify that on May 19, 2017, the above motion was made and approved.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Colleen M. Doherty, Secretary

### ***Narrative Statement Outlining Interest***

The Taunton Housing Authority is interested in administering the ABL program, as we have developed a solid Resident Services Department that offers a variety of supportive services to our residents. We feel strongly that the families residing in state-owned developments we manage would thrive on the support that the ABL program could provide to assist them in achieving economic self-sufficiency. The THA feels that we are well-suited to develop and implement ABL based on our consistent track record of developing and implementing social service and economic prosperity programs. Current THA resident service programs include HOPE VI Endowment Trust Resident Service Case Management, Transitional Housing, Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS), Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) with Homeownership, and Shannon Grant Youth Services. Current THA program Case Managers provide comprehensive case management services on-site at each of the developments we manage. Case Managers meet with program participants to develop service plans based on each individual/family's needs and goals. Resident Services staff will provide an array of ABL services that are inclusive of all interested residents, including but not limited to persons with disabilities, persons with limited English proficiency, and families with children, regardless of whether such residents qualify for exemption from requirements. Case management is client-focused and strengths-based.

The THA has managed the Stoughton Housing Authority since 2015. Since then, the THA's Resident Services Department has been providing services to Stoughton residents. The THA anticipates implementing all four required elements of the ABL program at both authorities. The THA will be the lead HA under the ABL program and also serve as the program's fiscal agent. The THA will hire and train a FLC to service both the THA and SHA. All ABL staff will fall under the umbrella of the THA's Resident Services Department.

A key to the success of the THA's Resident Service Department has been the establishment of strong, effective partnerships between public and private entities that share THA's commitment to enhancing existing neighborhoods, encouraging economic development, and creating housing opportunities for households of all income levels. Long-standing partnerships include the following agencies/organizations: Taunton Career Center, the Taunton Public Schools/Bristol Community College Adult Education Program, Bristol Community College, Pro-Home, Inc., American Credit Counseling Service, Inc., Wheaton College, Head Start, Bristol Elder Services, Taunton Department of Human Services/Council on Aging, Taunton Eagles Soccer Club, Community Counseling of Bristol County, Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority, Manet Community Health Center, and Morton Hospital. The ABL FLC will benefit by being part of a social service team that has vast knowledge and existing partnerships with social service programs offered in the surrounding area. The Resident Services Department currently meets on a monthly basis with THA site management and the THA Assistant Director to ensure open lines of communication and to identify non-lease compliant and at-risk residents. Site managers will work collaboratively with FLC to ensure the success of the resident household.

The THA has an extensive track record of leveraging social services and resident benefits through relationships with local organizations. The THA will continue to leverage in-kind services from existing partners and will work toward establishing new partners to leverage additional services that support ABL participants to meet desired outcomes. As of the close of the HOPE VI Revitalization Grant in September 2016, 48 committed community partners had provided a total of \$1,889,379 in leveraged services to the HOPE VI program. These partnerships remain active and vital in the provision of ongoing resident services.

In addition to our leveraging success, the THA social service team serves on 16 social service networking boards. Serving on these boards allows us to maintain relationships with these providers while remaining up to date on new and existing programs. We anticipate that FLC will also participate on community boards.

The THA will implement the ABL program as a requirement for all our existing, and new incoming, state public housing Chapter 200 and 705 residents, as the THA's and the SHA's turnover is such that it would otherwise take years to achieve portfolio-wide involvement. The THA will work with all non-exempt adult residents to fulfill the requirements of the ABL program including work, school, training, and volunteerism. We look forward to working with all of our stakeholders to develop an implementation plan. THA has experience overseeing resident community service requirements as staff currently assists HUD residents in fulfilling their HUD obligations.

**Proposed Planning Year Budget Narrative**

The THA feels that the follow budget adequately funds the ABL program over the planning phase. This planning grant budget encompasses many non-reoccurring startup costs:

Consultants	\$10,000
Admin. Fee	\$5,000
Resident Needs Assessments	\$1,500
Staffing	\$41,500
Fringe Benefit Costs	\$13,350
Equipment	\$11,000
Travel	\$4,000
Website Development	\$5,000
Other Soft Costs Associated With Ramp Up	\$8,650
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

**STAFFING:** Salary amounts are based on estimated salaries. Fringe benefits are calculated as 32.17% of actual salaries. The THA Fiscal Year (FY) starts on January 1 and ends December 31 of the same calendar year. The THA anticipates that the ABL team will be fully operational by June 30, 2018.

**ABL Planning Coordinator/Family Life Coach:** One (1) full-time ABL Planning Coordinator will be hired within three months of planning grant award. Consequently, we are estimating nine months of salary during the planning phase of this grant. This position will assist with the initial planning period and then transition into the position of Family Life Coach when the Implementation stage begins.

**Fringe Benefits:** Benefit rates for staff are calculated at the rate of 32.17%.

**CONSULTING:** The THA plans to utilize the Worcester Housing Authority on a Consultant basis within the program’s planning year. It is anticipated that the THA will continue to work with WHA beyond the first year of the ABL program to continue to share ideas and best practices.

**DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES:**

**Admin Fee:** Expenses calculated at 5% of total \$100,000 planning budget.

**Travel:** Support is requested for ABL-related travel by staff between the Taunton and Stoughton Housing Authorities, to resident visits, training, and other events. ABL personnel will be expected to use their personal vehicles for travel. Reimbursement for use of a personal vehicle will be at the standard and current Massachusetts State mileage rate, which is currently \$.45 per mile.

**Office Equipment:** THA anticipates purchasing a copier with a yearly service agreement, office furniture for staff use (Family Life Coach and Resident Trainee) consisting of 2 desks, 1 conference table, 4 chairs, 3 vertical filing cabinets, and an office security alarm system with yearly monitoring. The THA anticipates purchasing 2 laptops, 2 desktop printers, and 2 portable scanners for ABL employee use. The computers and software used by the ABL team will be rolled into the umbrella of the THA’s current contract for IT Services at an additional cost.

**OTHER PROGRAM EXPENSES:**

**Internet Connectivity/Phone Service/Computer Software:**

Phones will be purchased for ABL staff to connect to THA’s existing Vonage phone system and monthly phone service will be needed. Internet connectivity will be needed in the office and also in the field using wireless hotspots such as Verizon MiFi’s. Mobile phones used by ABL staff will be reimbursed to the employee at a rate of \$40 per month. Two licenses each of Microsoft Office 365, SpectorSoft employee monitoring software, LoJack anti-theft software, ESET anti-virus software, and cloud-based file backup software will be purchased.

**Website:** A website will also be developed to facilitate communication between ABL staff and participants.

**Materials and Office Supplies:** Including paper, pens, toner, calendars, postage and mailing supplies, publication and printing/copying supplies etc.

### ***THA ABL Planning Process Timeline***

THA has a Resident Services Department in place and ready to begin implementation of ABL.

The following chart demonstrates the THA's timeline for the initial series of implementation activities through the end of the ABL Planning Grant period.



### ***Capacity to Measure Metrics***

THA will continue to use Tracking-at-a-Glance software procured for implementation of the HOPE VI Revitalization Grant's Resident Services component to track ABL case management activities and outcomes over time. THA currently utilizes TAAG to manage all Resident Services Department activities.

TAAG is used as a case management and performance measuring tool to track individual caseloads throughout the term of each Resident Services grant. This allows consistency in tracking residents enrolled in individual programs, a team approach in working with families that require varied services from multiple Resident Services programs, and allows staff and THA management the opportunity to standardize the gathering of important program data. Beyond documenting case management activities, TAAG provides multiple reporting tools to analyze results, evaluate program effectiveness, determine best practices, and improve delivery of services. This data, as well as all program referrals, enrollments, and follow-up information, will be recorded in the TAAG database to enable Resident Services staff to monitor program activity and performance, assess resident needs, and evaluate partnerships. TAAG has the ability to identify the risk level of each individual client and will allow Family Life Coaches to plan the appropriate level of services.

All program metrics required for the ABL Planning Grant can be tracked utilizing the TAAG system. Services and programs offered to residents and tracked in TAAG include, but are not limited to, employment search and vocational training, asset-building opportunities (such as credit and debt management consulting, financial coaching,), health care and dental services (including health fairs and provision of health information), educational enrichment and GED classes, emergency services, transportation assistance, child care, youth programs, and community building activities (such as field trips, voter registration seminars and drives, and safety programs).

In addition, referrals to community service partners are tracked in TAAG by the numbers made, enrolled, and completed. Referrals most frequently focus on resident assistance programs (e.g., benefits assistance, utility assistance, holiday donations), employment related services, and child care and early learning program enrollment. THA continuously updates the partner network to respond to any unmet needs that emerge over time.

It should be noted that 62 units have not been included in what will become our baseline for program tracking. The THA has not counted the 22 Program 200-1A units at Riverside Apartments that are HUD funded as households designated to receive ABL case management services, but hope to be able to service families on a volunteer basis as they request assistance. The 40 Program 200 units at Oak and Highland Courts also have not been included in the potential number of units to be serviced as that site is currently in the process of becoming a Federally-funded development.

It is the intention of the THA to work with a third-party evaluator, along with THA staff, to measure the successes of the ABL program. We utilized this approach with our HOPE VI Revitalization Grant and feel that it gave transparency to the process. It is important for the public and funding agencies to feel confident in the evaluation results of any public funded grant program such as ABL. The THA has a longstanding working relationship with Wheaton College. We anticipate partnering with their Sociology Department as we feel that having students provide third-party evaluation of the ABL program would provide them with diverse in-depth real life experience such as conducting applied research, working as a team, and preparing multi-phase reports. We anticipate that measuring outcomes will at the very least include reviewing data and surveying residents, staff, and community partners.

### ***Program Staffing Structure***

The THA Director of Resident Services will oversee the ABL program for both THA and SHA, including all Family Life Coaches (FLC) and any additional ABL staff. The Director of Resident Services reports directly to the THA Executive Director. The THA Finance Director will oversee all finances related to the ABL program for both THA and SHA.

The THA's current Resident Services staff will lend their expertise in the planning process of the ABL program and take the initial steps toward program implementation.

During the planning process, the THA Director of Resident Services will recruit new and existing community partners to support the economic advancement of our ABL program participants. The Director of Resident Services will also develop all ABL applications and program forms for program implementation, oversee the creation of an ABL website, and establish an office for ABL staff use. The Director of Resident Services will also spearhead the release of the initial needs assessment to collect ABL baseline data, provide input into establishing ABL eligibility criteria and expected outcomes, and be involved in the hiring and supervising of program staff.

The THA's existing Lead Case Manager and Resident Services Case Manager will assist the Director of Resident Services in organizing and scheduling services and activities for the ABL program. They will provide overall program assistance including, but not limited to, program support, outreach, partner development, and activity support. All three existing staff members to be utilized in the development of the ABL program are highly qualified for these tasks due to prior similar involvement with THA's HOPE VI Revitalization grant.

The THA anticipates hiring and training one ABL Planning Coordinator and one Resident Trainee during the planning phase of the grant. Upon initiation of the ABL Implementation phase, the ABL Planning Coordinator will transition into the role of a FLC.

An ABL Resident Trainee will be hired to provide clerical support to the ABL team. The Resident Trainee will be responsible for scheduling ABL meetings in coordination with LHAs, partners, residents, and ABL staff; maintaining the ABL online calendar; and updating resident information in databases, spreadsheets, and other software. The salary for the Resident Trainee will be provided by the THA as an in-kind service.

The ABL program in Taunton will be primarily based at the Riverside Apartments development in a unit that is already off-line and being used as the base for our Shannon Grant Youth Services Program. Riverside Apartments houses the majority of the households to be provided with ABL services.

It is anticipated that the FLC will keep regular office hours at the SHA one or two days a week, as determined by need, to assist the residents there. The SHA has office space available for use by ABL staff when they are working in Stoughton.

FLC will provide comprehensive case management services to those families that are eligible for assistance through the ABL program. The FLC will meet with each family to establish a "family development plan" that includes short and long-term goals in the areas of education, employment, and financial literacy. The FLC will assess each participant's educational background, work experience, skills, and qualifications. As a result, the FLC will identify participant strengths, evaluate educational needs, identify client support systems, determine client interests, determine job marketability and identify possible obstacles to education and employment. As a result, the FLC will refer participants to appropriate educational services, job readiness programs, skills training opportunities and relevant employment services and/or opportunities. The FLC will meet with participants on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis depending on the level of need, to connect participants to services, ensure service delivery and monitor progress toward goals. The FLC will assist in connecting participants to relevant individual money management services, tenant education opportunities and advocacy.