

Housing Authority of the Town of Hamden



Annual Report 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OPENING REMARKS	3
MISSION STATEMENT	4
ADMINISTRATION & DEPARTMENTS	5
FINANCIAL REPORT	6
ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT	6
CONGREGATE/ASSISTED LIVING/ELDERLY/DISABLED HOUSING	7
GRANTS/CRITICAL NEEDS FUNDING	8
FACILITIES	9
SECTION 8 / RAP (RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM)	10
RESIDENT SERVICES	11
SAFETY COMMITTEE	12
EMPLOYEE TRAINING	12
WEBSITE	13
CLOSING REMARKS	14

Opening Remarks

As I reflect on last year, it is with great pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I present this annual report. Our journey in 2024 has been marked by both triumphs and challenges, and it is in these moments of reflection that I feel such a sense of pride over our significant achievements.

The pursuit of affordable housing is not just a mission but a responsibility to our communities and the individuals we serve. Despite numerous challenges, such as economic uncertainties and evolving community needs, we remained dedicated to ensuring that everyone has access to safe and dignified housing.

Last year's accomplishment wouldn't have been possible without the tireless perseverance and teamwork demonstrated by our staff. They are a true example of dedication and hard work. Their ability to stay focused, even in the face of challenges, is admirable. Their contributions play a pivotal role in our achievements, and I am thankful for their tireless commitment. Thank you for stepping up, supporting one another, and delivering excellence.

It gives me great pride to share with you last year's highlights and our many accomplishments.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hazelann B. Cook

Hazelann B. Cook
Executive Director

Mission Statement

The Hamden Housing Authority's (HHA) mission is to provide safe, decent, affordable, and sanitary housing for persons of low-and moderate-income. The Housing Authority believes that all persons have the right to quality affordable housing.

HHA is committed to helping people in need without regard to any protected class status including, without limitation, any such status based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, lawful source of income, disability, age, marital status, and/or familial status.

HHA shall endeavor at all times to protect its residents from discriminatory housing practices. In accordance with its Fair Housing Policy Statement, programs funded and administered by the Hamden Housing Authority shall comply with the provisions set forth in Section 46a-64c of the Connecticut General Statutes, as well as with all other applicable provisions both state and federal laws, and regulations that prohibit discriminatory housing practices.

Hamden Housing Authority

Developed in 1969, the Hamden Housing Authority is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners. The Hamden Housing Authority operates 190 units of Elderly/Disabled housing, 30 units of Congregate Living and 4 units of Affordable housing. The Hamden Housing Authority also administers a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program consisting of 407 vouchers of which 160 are portables from other cities and towns. HHA is a subcontractor of **J. D'Amelia & Associates** Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and Rental Assistance (RAP) rent subsidy programs managing an additional 1,600 vouchers and RAP Program Certificates for the Connecticut Department of Housing.



Administration & Departments

Governing Board of Commissioners:

Mary DeSarbo	Chairperson
John Cabral, Jr.	Vice-Chairperson
Robin LaFrance	Treasurer
Nichole Jefferson	Commissioner
Dr. Phillip Goldblatt	Commissioner

Executive Director:

Hazelann B. Cook

Departments:

Administrative Office	203-281-7774	hha@hamdenhousing.com
Finance Office	203-248-9036	finance@hamdenhousing.com
Section 8 Programs	203-281-7669x101	section8@hamdenhousing.com
Elderly/Disabled Housing	203-248-9036	hha@hamdenhousing.com
Congregate Housing	203-248-9376	congregate@hamdenhousing.com
Resident Services Coordinator	203-287-8977	hha@hamdenhousing.com
Maintenance	203-248-9036	maintenance@hamdenhousing.com

Finance Report

Housing Authority of the Town of Hamden Schedule of Major Expenditures 1/1/2024 – 12/31/2024

Apartment Rehabs	\$ 86,870
Landscaping and Pruning	10,332
Residents' Gifts and Events	8,537
Property Improvements	8,848
New Leaf Vacuum/Pressure Washer	6,850
Maintenance Garage Lights	3,940
Building Improvements-Smoke Detectors	3,360
Office Equipment - New Shredder	3,469
Community Laundry-New Washer & New Dryer	<u>5,970</u>
	\$138,176

Annual Financial Audit

Our annual audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, was completed by Maletta & Company, CPAs in January 2025. The auditors issued an unmodified opinion and did not disclose any findings or matters of concern. The audit was submitted and accepted by the US Department of HUD and the State of Connecticut Department of Housing and Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. A copy of the audited financial statements is available at the HHA office upon request.

Congregate Housing, Assisted Living & Elderly/Disabled Housing

The rehabilitation of the Congregate Facility began on January 19, 2024. Eight residents were relocated to other apartments during the renovations. The rehab progressed smoothly with minimal disruption to residents' routines. Weekly meetings were held to ensure the work proceeded as it should. This renovation is extensive and is scheduled to be completed in Spring of 2025.

Throughout 2024 our Congregate Residents continued to be engaged as they participated in a variety of activities implemented by our Congregate staff. We know their wellbeing relies on socializing with other residents and staff members therefore keeping them engaged in activities is the goal. Activities included movie nights, pizza parties, coffee and ice cream socials, bingo, gentle exercise, and arts and crafts. The Congregate staff is dedicated to maintaining resident engagement and morale. When the residents were sick, they followed the safety procedures in place and stayed in their apartments, away from others. While in public areas of the facility, unwell residents wore masks and had their meals in their apartments delivered by staff members wearing masks and gloves. To ensure the wellbeing of our Congregate population HHA provided a blood pressure clinic every month and a yearly flu clinic in the fall of 2024. Utopia, our assisted living component, ensures the presence of a nurse at our Congregate facility once a week, along with an aide from 8am to 8pm weekly. These services not only enhance the health of our Congregate residents but also provide their families with a sense of peace knowing their loved ones are receiving quality care.

On June 12th, 2024, HHA held our annual summer picnic for all residents of the Hamden Housing Authority. The residents were provided a delicious lunch which included hamburgers, hotdogs, chicken, salads, and a variety of desserts. The picnic took place outdoors under a gigantic tent. The picnic ended with a visit from the Ice Cream truck offering free treats! During the summer of 2024, HHA had an ice cream truck visit each one of our properties a few times to deliver free ice cream. During the Christmas holiday, HHA presented Shop Rite Gift cards to each one of our residents to help offset the rising cost of groceries. Throughout 2024, Investigative Consultants patrolled our communities including Hamden Village, Centerville Village, Mount Carmel, Congregate and Affordable housing. Residents have reported feeling safe and protected, an invaluable benefit to our community.

Grants and Critical Needs Funding

Congregate Living:

On January 19th, 2024, our Congregate facility began renovations funded by a \$3.7 million SSHP grant. HHA hired Secondino & Sons, for this extensive project. The grant covers exterior siding, insulation, new windows, a generator, heating and air-conditioning systems, repaving the parking area, 3 ADA-compliant apartments, and walk-in showers. Some residents were temporarily relocated while the rehab work was being done. The rehab is progressing well and is expected to be completed by spring of 2025.



Affordable Housing:

In January 2024, HHA installed solar panels on our 2 Duplex family housing units on Morse Street in Hamden. The solar panels were inspected by the Town of Hamden in February 2024 and by March 15th the meters were installed, and system was up and running. In 2023, HHA invested \$39,300 in solar panels with the objective of assisting residents in reducing their utility expenses. This initiative is particularly important as electricity costs continue to escalate. Solar energy has the potential to benefit all our communities therefore, in February 2024, HHA and Connecticut Green Bank held discussions regarding the future implementation of solar panels on all our housing properties. This venture would lower residents' energy bills and provide them with a monthly percentage of the savings.



Centerville Village:

In November of 2024, HHA submitted a priority needs grant to CHFA to have the roofs replaced and add gutter systems to the Centerville Village in the amount of \$300,000. The new roofs and gutter systems will support the solar panels installation by Connecticut Green Bank and continue to help our communities off set high energy cost. The Mount Carmel Village, Congregate Facility, and Hamden Village will be the next communities to receive solar panels in 2025.



Facilities Report

The Hamden Housing Authority's maintenance department is crucial for daily operations, ensuring everything runs smoothly from the parking lot to executive offices. They also contribute significantly to the safety and well-being of our staff and residents.

As a Smoke Free Community, HHA contracted Wynd Technologies for three years to install, monitor, and maintain 40 specialized smoke detectors in the Mount Carmel Village. These smoke detectors, installed in September 2024, not only detect cigarette smoke but also recreational smoke including vapor from e-cigarettes, and marijuana. These smoke detectors will be installed through all the Villages in 2025 with the goal of deterring undesirable behavior. To improve safety, additional LED lights were installed on buildings and in the parking lots at Congregate, and Mount Carmel Village. Also, brighter exterior lights were installed when replacing burnt out bulbs at Hamden Village and Centerville Village.

Throughout 2024, the maintenance department rehabbed 15 bathrooms at the Congregate facility, which included new walk-in showers. Some of these apartments also received new toilets, bathroom sinks, floors and lighting. Maintenance also installed new kitchen cabinets, countertops, and kitchen sinks in 9 apartments within Congregate and approximately 20 apartments across all the villages.

In 2024 the maintenance staff kept all the properties well-maintained, particularly during the spring, fall and winter cleanups. To aid in these efforts a new leaf loader was purchased. During the Summer, a community vegetable garden was planted at all the villages by the maintenance staff which included eggplant, string beans, tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, and squash. These gardens were maintained by the maintenance staff, and residents were permitted to pick vegetables once they were ready to be harvested. These gardens were enjoyed by many of our residents.

In essence, our facilities department plays a crucial part of our organization because they ensure that the environment where we work and live are secure, and efficient.

Section 8 and RAP Rental Assistance Programs

HHA's Section 8 department manages 407 vouchers in Hamden, and, through John D'Amelia & Associates, oversees an additional 1,600 vouchers and RAP Program Certificates for the Connecticut Department of Housing. Our mission to develop healthy communities starts with our deep understanding of the significant responsibility we bear in assisting families to enhance their lives through affordable housing solutions.

Our Section 8 and RAP team diligently handles recertifications, interim reexaminations, and tenant moves accurately and promptly. HHA mandates full annual Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections to ensure proper maintenance of subsidized properties

The Hamden Section 8 Program continues to strive for High Performer status with regard to the Section 8 Management Assessment Protocol, which measures the performance of the Housing Authority in managing and maintaining the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program through a series of performance measuring indicators. Section 8 staff members take part in in-house rent calculation training, Administrative Plan review and updates, and customer service training on a regular basis.

The Housing Authority continues to provide training to staff members to strengthen the integrity of the Authority and the programs it manages. In April 2024, all staff attended the annual Fair Housing Training program and received their participation certifications. In June 2024, several of the Section 8 staff members attended and participated in a seminar focusing on dealing with challenging clients and situations in the workplace. In August 2024, Management attended the Conn-NAHARO Annual Meeting and attended training seminars relative to upcoming changes to and HUD's NSPIRE Inspection Module and Housing Opportunity through Training & Modernization Act (HOTMA).

Resident Services Coordinator & Resident Care

In 2024, HHA focused on helping residents live independently, said the Resident Services Coordinator. Weekly staff meetings ensure awareness and unity in addressing resident issues and maintaining safety.

Since March 2020, we have contacted each resident weekly to check in. These phone calls keep the staff aware of any potential problems that can arise before they become dangerous. Residents continue to look forward to our calls and appreciate our efforts. It has helped build strong relationships with our communities.

Hazelann Cook, the Executive Director, emphasized the importance of ensuring that residents do not feel neglected. The organization strives to ensure their wellbeing is our focus and remain our top priority. The families and friends of our residents appreciated all we do for their loved ones.

Under Hazelann Cook's leadership, the Hamden Housing Authority continues to thrive.

Safety Committee

The safety Committee for Hamden Housing Authority remains committed to creating and maintaining a safe living and working environment for residents, staff and visitors. Quarterly safety meetings are held to discuss security precautions for our communities. In 2024 the committee focused on being more proactive with risk management, safety education and ongoing improvements to facilities and services. The committee aimed to address potential hazards and implement safety protocols to ensure compliance. This includes the following:

- Regular safety inspections.
- Training and awareness.
- Incident reporting and response.
- Emergency preparedness.
- Upgrades and Maintenance.

Through these initiatives, the safety committee will continue to work diligently to ensure a safe environment, minimizing risks and addressing safety concerns proactively throughout the years to come.

Employee Training

In April of 2024, the entire staff attended our Fair housing training workshop which is designed to educate all housing providers and their employees on how to comply with fair housing requirements and best practices to avoid violations and their costly consequences.

HHA's Website

By 2024, the website became an essential tool for virtual visitors. Launched in October 2020, it evolved into an interactive resource for tenants, program participants, and online guests, seeking information right at their fingertips. Residents can find important facts about community events such as health fairs, summer concert dates, restaurant week and safety alerts including scams that target our communities.

The Hamden Housing Authority posts a monthly newsletter on the website which is also passed out to each resident. It contains important information as well as easy recipes, a word search puzzle, and at times a coupon for discounts at local Hamden restaurants.

The newsletter was established during the pandemic when lockdowns and isolation measures were in place. It aimed to support the elderly population by providing news and fostering a sense of community. In retrospect, the newsletter served as a means to keep people informed and connected.



The website, hamdenhousing.com, is comprised of ten distinct pages covering various topics. Visitors can select the page that interests them. For example, the [Home page](#) gives an overview of the Hamden Housing Authority, from its development in 1969 to the current programs it manages. The [Properties](#) page features images and brief descriptions of the Elderly and Disabled Villages. The [Links & Information](#) page offers phone numbers of various organizations that can be contacted for available resources.

Home Page

Administration &
Departments

Properties

Congregate Assisted
Living

Elderly/Disabled

Section 8

Links & Information

Resident News

Contact Us

Board Meeting
Minutes and Annual
Report

Closing Remarks

Our progress in 2024 was significant. We received a \$3.7 million SSHP Grant to upgrade the Congregate Facility, with completion expected by spring 2025. HHA installed solar panels at our Affordable duplex property, aiming to reduce residents' energy bills. Residents have reported seeing a monthly savings on their utilities. Additionally, we are in discussions with Connecticut Green Bank to implement the installation of solar panels at all our properties, starting with Congregate and Mount Carmel Village in 2025. Installing 40 specialized smoke detectors in the Mount Carmel Village which has helped prevent smoking in these units. Investigative Consultants continue to patrol our communities, including Hamden Village, Centerville Village, Mount Carmel, Congregate facility and the Affordable property on Morse Street. We have accomplished a lot!

I extend my gratitude to our Governing Board of Commissioners for their guidance, expertise, and support, which empower us to effectively address the housing needs of our community with real solutions. Their dedication to HHA facilitates our ability to serve our communities and drive our commitment to continuous improvement. Thank you for all that you do for the Hamden Housing Authority and for the people we serve.

To my staff, your dedication in serving the people in our programs is noteworthy. Your efforts contribute to shaping communities, strengthening families, and building futures. Every aspect of your work for our Residents and program participants matters, and it positively impacts their quality of life. I appreciate the contributions of each member of the team and value working with you all.

As we navigate the challenges ahead, let us be guided by our shared vision and the belief that through innovation, determination and collaboration we can overcome any obstacle. Our vision moving forward is clear. Housing matters and everyone deserves quality affordable housing.

I am pleased to report that the Hamden Housing Authority, once again, succeeded in achieving our Mission Statement in 2024, of providing safe, decent, and affordable housing to low-and moderate-income families.

Respectfully submitted,

Hazelann B. Cook

Hazelann B. Cook
Executive Director