

No One Can Do This Alone: The Role of Partnerships in Addressing Housing Needs

In our previous report, we highlighted how RBHA is responding to the housing crisis - through direct services, financial supports, and real-time crisis intervention.

But one reality remains clear:

No single organization can address housing instability alone.

Meeting the needs of our community requires a coordinated system - one built on strong partnerships, shared data, and aligned resources.

A System Built on Collaboration

Addressing homelessness and housing instability requires more than individual programs - it requires a coordinated system working across agencies, sectors, and funding streams.

RBHA is an active partner within the **Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC)** - a regional network of organizations working together to prevent and end homelessness.

Housing outcomes improve when systems - not just services - are aligned.

Understanding the Continuum of Care

The Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC) brings together nonprofit organizations, local governments, housing providers, and behavioral health agencies to coordinate services for individuals experiencing homelessness.

This structure ensures that individuals are not navigating the system alone - but are instead connected to the appropriate services through a shared, coordinated approach.

Key Partners in the System

System Coordination & Data Homeward

Homeward serves as the region's data and coordination hub - tracking homelessness, managing HUD-required data, and helping align resources across the system.

By centralizing data and funding coordination, Homeward enables service providers, including RBHA, to focus on direct care while ensuring the system operates effectively.

Emergency Shelter & Housing Providers

RBHA partners with a network of nonprofit organizations that provide emergency shelter and housing support, including:

- Housing Families First
- CARITAS
- St. Joseph's Villa
- HomeAgain
- Salvation Army

These organizations provide critical entry points into the housing system - offering emergency shelter, transitional housing, and supportive services for individuals and families in crisis.

Shelter providers are often the first step toward stability - while long-term outcomes depend on coordinated system support.

How the System Works Together

Each partner within the GRCoC plays a distinct role, but outcomes depend on how those roles connect.

RBHA's Role

- Behavioral health services
- Crisis response (988, Mobile Crisis, CRT)
- Case management and stabilization

Partner Roles

- Shelter and immediate housing (nonprofits & local government)
- Data coordination and funding alignment (Homeward)
- Housing development and long-term placement (housing providers)

Why Partnerships Matter

For individuals experiencing homelessness, the system can be complex and difficult to navigate.

Partnerships help reduce these barriers by:

- Coordinating access to services
- Reducing duplication across providers
- Improving communication and referrals
- Expanding access to limited housing resources

Without this coordination, individuals are more likely to experience delays, repeated crises, and gaps in care.

Where Gaps Still Exist

While partnerships strengthen the system, significant challenges remain:

- Limited availability of affordable and deeply affordable housing
- Capacity constraints across shelters and housing programs
- Barriers related to documentation, eligibility, and access
- Limited options for individuals with complex behavioral health or medical needs

These challenges highlight the need for continued investment and deeper coordination across systems.

Partnerships are not an enhancement to the system - they are essential to its success.

Through collaboration with community partners, RBHA is helping to build a more coordinated, effective response to homelessness in our region.

Partner Story: Expanding What's Possible Through Collaboration

A Regional Investment in Deeply Affordable Housing

Addressing housing instability - especially for individuals with the lowest incomes - requires more than any one organization can provide. It requires alignment across government, nonprofit partners, and community funders.

A recent project in Richmond demonstrates what is possible when that alignment occurs.

Plans are moving forward for Greenview at Rady Street, a 60-unit deeply affordable housing development in Highland Park that will serve individuals who have experienced homelessness or have very low incomes.

This type of housing - serving individuals earning 30% or less of the area median income - is among the most difficult to develop. Rising construction costs, increasing housing demand, and limited subsidy resources make these projects especially challenging to bring to completion.

And yet, this project is moving forward.

A Collaborative Effort Across Sectors

The Greenview development represents an unprecedented level of regional collaboration:

- City of Richmond: nearly \$5 million in funding, plus \$1 million through its Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Henrico County: \$2 million
- Chesterfield County: \$1.8 million
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development: \$2.5 million
- Federal funding and private philanthropy

Together, these investments represent **nearly \$10 million in local and regional funding**, part of a broader \$18.3 million development effort.

RBHA's Role

RBHA contributed to this effort by donating the land for the project - demonstrating a commitment not only to service delivery, but to long-term housing solutions for the individuals we serve.

By leveraging existing assets in partnership with community stakeholders, RBHA is helping expand access to deeply affordable housing in the region.

Why This Matters

“We often hear statistics about homelessness, but they are more than just numbers... They are veterans, grandparents, seniors, and people with disabilities.”

Projects like Greenview are designed to serve individuals who are often the most difficult to house - those with extremely low incomes, complex needs, or histories of homelessness.

For these individuals, housing is not just shelter:

- It is stability
- It is access to care
- It is the foundation for recovery

A System-Level Solution

The Greenview project highlights a critical truth:

Deeply affordable housing does not happen without coordinated investment.

No single entity could bring this project to life alone. It requires:

- Public funding
- Nonprofit leadership
- Private philanthropy
- Land contributions
- Long-term service partnerships

Looking Ahead

While projects like Greenview represent meaningful progress, they also highlight the scale and urgency of the challenge before us.

The demand for deeply affordable housing continues to grow, and the resources required to meet that demand remain significant. Efforts like these demonstrate what is possible - but they must become the standard, not the exception.

Even with strong partnerships in place, critical gaps persist across the system.

In our final report, we will examine the gaps we are seeing - and what we believe it will take, collectively, to more fully meet the housing needs of our community.