PEOPLE FIRST: Building a community, together.

1. From the City Manager
   Thank you for helping to prevent the spread of Covid-19!

2. Tidewater Gardens CNI Grant Update
   See the latest news.

3. Have questions?
   We have answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.
From the City Manager

Hello Residents of the St. Paul’s Area:

I hope you and your family are safe and well as we all work together to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Thank you for practicing social distancing, washing your hands frequently for 20 seconds or more, wearing a mask when in public and when at all possible, staying home!

The safety of you and your family is most important to us so we are delaying mandatory relocation efforts in Tidewater Gardens until further notice. Let me be clear, no one will have to move while we are under Gov. Ralph Northam’s stay at home order. If you have received a 120-day relocation notice, it is delayed until further notice. But now is the best time to work with your People First coach on relocation issues. More on that inside.

We are all practicing social distancing - most of the City and NRHA staff are working from home, but the People First team members are on-site, supporting the residents with essential needs, and operating within the COVID-19 safety guidelines. We are continuing to do the work of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grant to transform Tidewater Gardens into a mixed-income, mixed-use, vibrant and inviting neighborhood for all.

We know that many of you still have questions about the project and how it impacts you personally. This newsletter will answer in detail some of the most frequently asked questions. Use this as a reference, and we are always available to help through our People First services.

You’ll also get an update on the CNI grant and read a first-hand account of how People First can help you be successful.

This is a tough time for our city, our region, our state and our nation. But it’s also a time to reconnect with family, learn a new skill, be creative, and look out for one another. Remember, we are all in this together. Enjoy this newsletter while you stay home!

Best,

Chip Filer
Norfolk City Manager
While we continue to implement the plans of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative grant to transform Tidewater Gardens, our most important focus is on you. NRHA, the City and People First are working daily to assist residents thru the COVID-19 pandemic.

**No one will have to move during the stay at home order from Governor Northam, so if you have received a 120 notice to relocate, it is delayed until further notice.** Now is the perfect time to work with your People First coach to begin or continue discussions about your needs to ensure a smooth relocation for you and your family when it is appropriate. Connecting early will result in a better experience for you and your family.

**New housing is on its way!**

The first new residential buildings, as pictured above, will be located on Wood Street (between St. Paul's Blvd. and Church Street). One building will have 120 apartment units for families and the other will have 70 apartment units for seniors. Each building will have on-site resident amenities, parking, first floor commercial/retail, and convenient access to the Hampton Roads Transit Center. The architect is currently working on the design of the interior and we look forward to sharing with you the unit layouts and features.

**We need your help!** We have hired additional architects who are working on the designs for more new buildings and we will need your feedback. We’re looking at creative ways to connect with you virtually so you can stay safe while staying involved. We will keep you posted.
Tiara and Dolsialeen Lassiter are mother and daughter who received their Housing Choice Vouchers in March 2020. It was important that they move closely together as they depend upon each other for childcare and transportation.

The two were able to find apartments in the same location. Tiara and Dolsialeen worked with their Lead Mobility Specialist (LMS) and People First Coach to complete the application and submit all documents to NRHA. Then they waited expectantly for the inspection of their units so they could move in.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order by Gov. Ralph Northam, the inspection was canceled. The residents were distraught and reached out to their People First team which immediately went into action. People First immediately contacted the property manager, who had planned to return the deposits received from Tiara and Dolsialeen because inspections were on hold, and she mistakenly believed that property owners would not receive the monthly rental assistance from the Housing Choice Voucher Program until the shelter in place order was lifted and NRHA could get back to processing payments.

People First explained to the property manager that NRHA was allowing Housing Quality Standard (HQS) self certification and would process payment contracts once the property manager completed the self-certification, and submitted a signed lease.

Within two days everything came together and Tiara and Dolsialeen were able to move! People First was able to call them in to review the welcome letter and move-in requirements, set up a lease signing date and assist in getting their utilities and renters insurance set up for lease signing.

To comply with social distancing efforts, Tiara and Dolsialeen completed their lease signing in their car and received their keys. Both have since moved out, turned in their keys to the Tidewater Gardens property management office, completed their relocation benefits packets, and are excited about their new place! Tiara says she is so glad she was able to move and her family is stable.
1. **Who is available to help the residents in this process?**

We heard you loud and clear during the community meetings about the transformation of the St. Paul’s area – people must come first if the transformation is to be successful! So we launched People First, Empowered by Urban Strategies. People First coaches will help each person living in the St. Paul’s area achieve their goals by providing assistance in the areas of job training, education, housing, health and wellness.

People First is spearheaded by Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI) a national nonprofit with extensive experience in implementing place-based human capital development strategies in communities that are undergoing comprehensive physical revitalization.

People First services are voluntary but we strongly encourage you to participate. Tidewater Gardens residents may enroll in services by going directly to the People First office located at 447 Walke St, Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm or by calling (757) 390-4365.

2. **What are my housing options?**

You have plenty of choices! To get started, we request that every Head of Household (HOH) in Tidewater Gardens complete a survey about their housing choices. Then, a People First coach will be assigned to work with you on the next steps and help you prepare for your move.

We are committed to ensuring that each household in Tidewater Gardens can locate suitable, decent, safe and sanitary housing that is the right size for your family - whether it’s a...
Please understand that NRHA wants to make sure that you have access to all the information available for you to make the right housing decision for you and your family. It is our duty to provide you housing choices that meet your needs. These choices include:

- A voucher to move to housing on the private market.
- Another NRHA public housing community such as Young Terrace, Calvert Square, Oakleaf Forest Partrea Midrise, Huntersquare Midrise, Bobbitt Midrise, or Sykes Midrise.
- Another NRHA Project Based Voucher community such as Grandy Village, Diggs Town, Franklin Arms, North Wellington or Cottage Bridge.
- Temporarily move to the above options and return to the redeveloped St. Paul’s area once built.

### 3. How will I find the right place?

Your People First coach will provide information to help you make your housing decision. You will not have to move until you have received the 120-day notice for relocation and are provided reasonable choices for replacement housing—a decent, safe, and sanitary home that is at least equal or better than your present home. Your coach will assist you through every step of the process – before, during and after your move. Get started now with your People First coach so you will be prepared when the time comes.

### 4. What if I need a ride to go house hunting?

Your People First coach will help you with transportation! Contact your assigned coach directly for details. If you have not been assigned a coach, please visit the People First office located at 447 Walke St or call (757) 390-4365.
5. What is the next step if I’m interested in renting a house or apartment?

If you choose a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) issued by NRHA, your People First coach will work with you through this process. Your People First coach will assist you with completing and submitting an HCV application to NRHA's Occupancy Department.

Once NRHA receives your application, you will receive a letter from the Occupancy Department with the date of your first interview and a checklist of the documents needed for the interview. After your documents have been received and verified, you will be scheduled for your briefing appointment. At your briefing appointment you will receive information about:

- Rent payment standards
- How housing inspections are completed
- Using your voucher to move within or out of Norfolk and other important information

Following this briefing you will be given your HCV which lets you begin searching for your new home. You will have 60 days to find new housing. It is important to stay in touch with your People First coach during this period, so be sure to connect with your coach as soon as you receive your voucher. They will help you with your search! If you are unable to find a new home that suits your needs, an additional 30-day extension can be granted to you to keep looking. You will need to keep a record of the places where you have searched for housing. If you need an extension to continue searching, you must contact the NRHA Occupancy Department before your voucher expires.

Once you find a house you like you will be required to provide the NRHA Occupancy Department with a copy of an unsigned lease and a Request for Tenant Approval (RFTA), signed and completed by the potential HCV landlord. We ask that the lease is unsigned to allow People First and NRHA...
staff the opportunity to review the lease to make sure it complies with state fair housing laws. The NRHA Occupancy staff will then determine if the property’s rent is reasonable and affordable for you and your family based on your family’s reported income.

Voucher holders are not required to have a job, but you may be responsible for additional expenses such as utility bills and other fees. Your voucher will never expire as long as you follow the rules and regulations of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and you remain eligible.

6. **What happens if the landlord requires an application fee?**

You will have to pay any rental application fees upfront and out-of-pocket. After you have relocated out of Tidewater Gardens, your People First coach will help you complete a relocation benefits packet. Once the packet is completed, it will be sent to NRHA for processing. NRHA will reimburse you for up to three (3) application fees.

7. **Who is responsible for paying the security deposit?**

You are. However, if needed, NRHA will provide zero-interest loans to pay the security deposit for Tidewater Gardens residents.

Before a security deposit is paid, the following must happen:

- The HCV process must be completed
- The new home must pass the required Housing Quality Standards inspection
- The Tidewater Gardens resident must sign and provide a copy of the new lease to their People First coach

If you choose to use the NRHA loan, a deposit payment will be paid directly to the new landlord within seven (7) business days after the above steps are completed. It is important to note, any security deposit or credit being held by NRHA on your current apartment will not be refunded to you; instead the funds will be applied to the amount loaned to you for your move. A repayment
agreement will be established to pay back any amount owed on the balance one year after you move to your new home.

The CNI team is working to find alternative sources of funding for deposits so they can be given as grants instead of a loan.

8. **Will NRHA help me with the cost of my move?**

You have a choice. You can either have a full-move with a NRHA-approved moving company where they will pack your belongings and move them to your new place OR you may select to self-move, where you are responsible for packing and moving your own belongings and you will be paid based on the number of bedrooms you have.

Self-move payments based on Tidewater Gardens, Young Terrace & Calvert Square bedroom size:

- One bedroom: $900
- Two bedrooms: $1,100
- Three bedrooms: $1,300
- Four bedrooms: $1,500

These amounts may be reduced if a household splits to form more than one household when you leave your current home. Your People First coach can offer more information. Full-move and self-move funding is offered as a grant, not a loan, so you do not have to pay it back.

9. **What documents do I need to provide to NRHA to be reimbursed for my moving expenses?**

For application fee reimbursements, you must provide a legible, written, or printed receipt to show the amount that was paid to the prospective landlord(s). If you don’t have a receipt, you may show proof of an electronic funds transfer (PayPal, CashApp, etc.) or a money
order detachment with the name of the landlord to whom the funds were paid. The money order detachment must be filled in with the name of the company or person that received payment, along with the reason for payment (i.e. application fee).

For deposit payments (landlord and utility), you must provide a legible, written, or printed copy of the lease agreement and/or utility bill which shows the amount being requested. And remember, deposit payments are loans (zero-interest) that you must pack back.

For self-move reimbursement, you must remove all belongings and trash from your unit and turn in your keys to the Property Management staff.

10. **Are the utility deposits and connection fees covered?**

Utility deposits are processed and handled the same as rental security deposits; a zero-interest loan. It is important to note, any deposit or credit being held by NRHA on your current apartment will not be refunded to you; instead the funds will be applied to the amount loaned to you for relocation. A repayment agreement will be established for repayment of any amount owed one year after you move.

Connection fees for utilities will be reimbursed after you provide a legible, written, or printed copy of the utility bill which shows the amount due. Connection fees for utilities are given as a grant that you do not have to pay back.

11. **What out of pocket fees should I expect to pay with no reimbursement?**

You will not be reimbursed for the following:

- More than three application fees
- Holding fees for housing
- Any portion for a deposit and/or holding fee that is paid for a home that you decide not to occupy
12. What happens if I move out and things do not work out? Will I be allowed to return to public housing, will I be placed on a waiting list?

You still have options even if things don’t work out! After being on the HCV program for one year, you can request that your name be placed back on the public housing waiting list with a priority status compared to other general applicants. To be eligible for this opportunity, you must remain in good standing with your landlord as well as NRHA. You will have 90 days at the end of your first year on the HCV program to submit your request in writing to the attention of NRHA Relocation Specialist, P.O. Box 968, Norfolk, VA 23501. Remember this opportunity expires 90 days after your first year in the HCV program.

Remember, your People First coach will stay with you after you move from your current home. People First services are offered for up to five (5) years after your move, no matter where you live. So make sure you stay in touch with your coach and give him/her your current contact information.

For City resources and FAQ’s visit www.norfolk.gov/stpaulsCOVIDguide


A very special message for you from News 3 Anchor Barbara Ciara - youtu.be/9X3LKEjo-X0

Stay Safe!
youtu.be/2yu4jSPNtic

facebook.com/St.PaulsNFK
stpaulsdistrict.org
757-314-2000
Live in Calvert Square or Young Terrace communities?

Now is the time to “get your house in order”! Take advantage of services available now to help you get ready for your transformative move.

NRHA offers programs like:

- **Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)** – teaching you to become fully self-sufficient and provide for your family without assistance. As your income rises, a portion of the increase is placed in escrow so you have a nice nest egg once you complete the program. **Gwen Williams, Family Self-sufficiency Manager, (757) 314-1486 or gwilliams@nrha.us**

- **Workforce Development Program (WFD)** – focusing on conflict resolution, development of goals, dressing for success, public speaking, interview techniques and more. **Lucy Major, Workforce Development Manager, (757) 314-1623 or lmajor@nrha.us**

- **HomeNet Homeownership Center** - a “one-stop shop” that includes development of individualized plans for overcoming homeownership obstacles; comprehensive credit counseling; first time homebuyer classes; qualified lenders, realtors and attorneys; and $40,000 toward first-time home purchase. **LaShawn Fortes, 757-624-8649 or lfortes@nrha.us**

For other services please reach out to **Yilla Smith, Client Services Director (757) 314-2068 or ysmith@nrha.us**