

Brookline Housing Authority
RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM (RAD)
RESIDENT INFORMATION NOTICE

Dear BHA Resident,

October 2, 2017

You are invited to a meeting this week to learn about the Brookline Housing Authority's (BHA) *preliminary* plans to make major repairs to our buildings and to convert from Public Housing to Section 8 rental assistance, under the HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

The BHA is in the early stages of making plans. No final decisions have been made. Please attend a meeting to know your rights and learn the benefits of the RAD Program. We want to hear your questions and concerns.

Resident Meeting #1A

Wednesday October 4, 3:00 pm, 61 Park Street

Resident Meeting #1B – Russian and Mandarin Translation

Wednesday October 4, 5:00 pm, 61 Park Street

Resident Meeting #2

Friday October 6, 4:00 pm, 90 Longwood Avenue

PIZZA AND SOFT DRINKS SERVED AT ALL MEETINGS

Each meeting will cover the same information. You only need to attend one meeting. These are special meetings for BHA residents, they are not BHA Board Meetings. BHA Executive Director Patrick Dober will describe the RAD Program with help from other BHA staff and the BHA's consultants. There will be plenty of time for your questions.

This is an important notice. Please have it translated
Esta es una notificación importante. Por favor, mande a traducirla.

Sa a se yon avi enpòtan. Tanpri fè tradui l.

これは重要な通知です。これを翻訳してもらってください。

זוהי הודעה חשובה. אנא תדאגו לתרגומה.

Đây là một thông báo quan trọng. Vui lòng cho dịch ra.

這是個重要通告，請予翻譯。

Это важное уведомление. Просим перевести его.

Este é um aviso importante. Por favor traduza o mesmo.

WHY THE BHA NEEDS TO REPAIR ITS BUILDINGS

As you know, BHA apartments provide you and your neighbors with safe, well-maintained, affordable housing in a great location – the Town of Brookline. The BHA operates nine properties and a total of 922 apartments. This letter and the meetings are for residents of the BHA's "Federal" Public Housing properties. The Federal properties are funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The federal properties are:

- O'Shea House at 61 Park Street
- Sussman House at 50 Pleasant Street
- Morse Apartments at 90 Longwood Avenue
- Walnut Street Apartments at Walnut Street and 22 High Street
- Col. Floyd Apartments at Foster and Marion Streets
- Kickham Apartments at 190 Harvard Street

The properties were built in the 1950s through the 1970s. All properties are at least 40 years old. **All properties need major improvements to preserve them as quality housing for you and for future generations. The cost of making major repairs is much greater than HUD can provide to the BHA under the Public Housing program.**

HOW THE HUD RAD PROGRAM WORKS

It is good news that a new HUD program is available that the BHA can use to achieve repair of your apartment homes and common areas. The new program is called the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). The RAD program has many benefits for BHA residents. There are three main parts to the RAD process:

- Major repairs to the properties.
- The properties are converted from the Public Housing rental assistance program to the Section 8 rental assistance program.
- The change from Public Housing to Section 8 allows a Housing Authority to raise the millions of dollars needed to make the needed property repairs.

HUD is encouraging Housing Authorities across the country to sign-up for RAD. Hundreds of Housing Authorities already are successfully using the RAD Program.

In late October, the BHA plans to submit a "Multi-Phase" **Preliminary** RAD Application to HUD. The Preliminary Application will establish the option for BHA to convert and repair up to all six of the Federal buildings over time. It will take many years of planning and hard work if all the buildings are converted. The Application will propose the first building to be converted and repaired. The BHA's **preliminary** intention is to convert and repair 61 Park Street (O'Shea House) as the first RAD building. This is a preliminary decision and it may change. The earliest that the first building will convert and be repaired is about 18 to 24 months from now.

YOUR RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS – HOW RAD CONVERSION COULD AFFECT YOU

Your Right to Information

At the meetings this week, we will describe the RAD program and the preliminary plans. When the BHA is accepted into the RAD program by HUD, we will have at least one and probably several additional meetings with residents over the coming months and years. It is your right to hear about major changes in plans. We will invite you to additional meetings if and when key features of the plans change. You also have a right to organize a resident association to serve as your voice and to help you stay well-informed.

Attachment #1 to this letter outlines the *preliminary* plans for improvements to O’Shea House. BHA is in the earliest stages of RAD conversion and plans are likely to change. The BHA asks residents, to share suggestions on repairs that you think need to be made, since you know your property best. When the BHA hires architects and engineers to draft the technical plans for property repairs, your ideas will be shared with them.

Your Right to Continued Rental Assistance

The RAD program does not affect your eligibility for rental assistance in BHA affordable housing. **You will remain eligible for housing assistance under Section 8 just as you are now under Public Housing**, as long as you comply with lease requirements. You will not have to go through a new eligibility screening. Note: RAD Section 8 assistance will be attached to your apartment. In other words, the RAD program does not substitute Public Housing apartments for Section 8 “mobile vouchers”.

About 99% of BHA residents’ rent payments will be the same under Section 8 as under Public Housing. Only those households who pay Public Housing “Ceiling Rents” could see a rent increase. Any increase would be phased-in over at least three years and never would be more than 30% percent of household income.

All of the BHA’s apartments will remain as affordable housing for future generations.

Your Right to Remain at or Return to BHA Housing

The building improvements planned for at least the next two to three years, particularly at O’Shea House, will not require anyone to move to a different apartment during or after construction. O’Shea House residents will not have to move to another apartment while construction is in progress. On days when the inside of your apartment is being improved, you will have to leave your apartment during the work day. The BHA plans to provide comfortable accommodations and refreshments during these periods in the first floor community rooms.

It is possible that several years from now, the improvements at one or two of the BHA properties will require major reconstruction and that some people will have to move out of their apartments or “relocate” during the construction period. **If this happens, you will have a right to return to an affordable apartment after construction work is complete, either at your**

former property or a different BHA property. Returning to a different property is called a “Transfer of Assistance”.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Brookline Housing Authority

If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please contact your Property Manager.

O’Shea House and Morse Apartments – Carol Porcari
cporcari@brooklinehousing.org, 617-277-2022 x-321 or 617-566-4666

Sussman House - Kelley Chambliss
kchambliss@brooklinehousing.org, 617-734-6349 or 617-713-0486

Kickham Apartments and Col. Floyd – Sheila O’Flaherty
solaherty@brooklinehousing.org, 617-277-1382 or 617-232-2265

Walnut Street Apartments – Nery Otero-Torres
notero@brooklinehousing.org, 617-734-6348 or 617-232-2238

Please note: All aspects of RAD conversions and building improvements must be consistent with Fair Housing and Civil Rights requirements. If you need a Reasonable Accommodation due to a disability or have similar questions, please contact your Property Manager for assistance.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

If you need to appeal a decision made by the BHA, if you think your rights are not being protected, or if you have questions for HUD, contact the BHA’s HUD Representative:

Benjamin Palmer
Portfolio Management Specialist
Office of Public Housing, Department of HUD
10 Causeway Street, Boston, MA 02222
617-994-8424 or Benjamin.R.Palmer@hud.gov

HUD’s RAD website has extensive materials on the RAD program: www.hud.gov/rad.

Please attend the resident meetings to learn more about RAD conversions.

Sincerely,



Patrick Dober, Executive Director

Attachment #1

Preliminary Plans for O'Shea House Improvements

This preliminary outline may change. As we develop the plans in greater detail, we will consider: Your opinions, independent architect/engineer studies of what needs to be repaired, the cost to maintain the property for the long-term, and the amount of funds the BHA can raise for property improvements.

The preliminary plan for conversion of O'Shea Apartments as the first phase of a Multi-Phase RAD conversion, involves no new construction, no significant change in the size or layout of apartments, no permanent relocation, and no Transfer of Rental Assistance to other properties.

Repairs are likely to include some or all of the following, subject to the availability of funding. It may not be possible to complete all these items.

A high priority is to update the utility systems, including heating, hot-water, plumbing, and indoor air circulation. Utility system improvements will result in more comfortable apartments, fewer work orders, and reduced costs to operate the properties.

- Replace the electric heating system with a new hydronic (water-based) system
- Replace the existing hot water tanks
- Improve indoor air circulation and quality with improved sealing of apartments and new rooftop fans
- Install new water-efficient toilets and showerheads
- Replace lighting fixtures with energy efficient fixtures
- Replace outdated kitchen and bathroom finishes and fixtures
- Redecorate and reconfigure community spaces
- Improved heating/cooling/air-circulation for the first floor and community room
- Refresh and repair landscaping, sidewalks, parking, etc.
- Repair or replace life-safety systems such as fire alarms as needed

The BHA will be in charge of these improvements and will continue to serve as the property manager after completion.

Attachment #2

Frequently Asked Questions about RAD Conversions

What is the timeline for RAD conversions? How long until my building is rehabilitated?

At this point, the BHA does not know when each building will be finished. A rough guess is two to eight years to complete repairs on all buildings and convert all to Section 8 assistance.

Will the square footage or layout of my apartment change?

For the first projects, particularly O'Shea House, there is no plan to change the configuration or size of any apartment.

Will a RAD conversion affect my housing assistance?

You will not lose your housing assistance and you will not be subject to eligibility re-screening as a result of the RAD conversion. The BHA will continue to follow the annual and interim income recertification process and make any resulting adjustments to your rent. These requirements will be in your lease.

In a RAD conversion, your housing assistance will change from Public Housing assistance to Section 8 assistance under either the Project Based Voucher (PBV) program or the Project Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) program. The PHA chooses whether to convert the unit to PBV or PBRA and these two programs are the same in most ways.

Will a RAD conversion affect my rent?

Approximately 99% of BHA residents will not have a rent increase as a result of a RAD conversion. However, if you are paying a Public Housing, "Ceiling Rent" you will most likely have to pay more in rent over time. If your rent changes by more than 10% and requires you to pay more than \$25 per month in additional rent, your new rent will be phased in. If the increase in your rent is less than 10% or \$25 per month, the change in rent will be effective immediately.

How can I participate in the RAD planning process?

Prior to participating in RAD, HUD requires all Housing Authorities to:

- Notify all residents at the property about their RAD plans, and
- Conduct at least two meetings with residents.

These meetings are an opportunity for you to discuss the proposed conversion plans with your Housing Authority, ask questions, express concerns and provide comments. These meetings are also an opportunity to tell your Housing Authority what you think needs to be repaired at the property. The Housing Authority should consider that information when developing plans for the property. The Housing Authority must have **at least** one more meeting with all residents of the property before HUD approves a final RAD conversion.

In addition to these resident meetings, your Resident Advisory Board (RAB) will also be consulted and have an opportunity to make recommendations on your PHA's RAD conversion plans during the Housing Authority's Annual Plan public hearing process.

What if I need Reasonable Accommodations to participate?

Your Housing Authority must make materials available in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and must make meetings accessible for persons with disabilities. Your Housing Authority must also provide language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency so that they can understand materials, participate in meetings, and make comments. This may include written translation of important documents and oral interpreters at meetings.

What changes will I see in my lease renewal process?

At the time of the RAD conversion, you will sign a new Section 8 lease. Unless there is good cause for eviction, your new lease will continue to renew. The Housing Authority must give you notice and grievance rights similar to the rights you have under Public Housing and must follow state and local tenant law.

Will RAD affect my rights and participation as a resident in the development?

RAD keeps many of the resident rights available under Public Housing such as the ability to request an informal hearing and the timeliness of termination notification. You also have a right to organize, and certified resident organizations will continue to receive up to \$25 per occupied unit each year from the Housing Authority.

Will I have to move if my apartment or building is rehabbed?

In most cases, you will be able to remain living at your apartment during renovation. If the repairs planned at your property are more extensive, you may need to be relocated. If you are required to move during construction, you have a right to return to an assisted apartment after construction is complete. If relocation will last longer than 12 months, you benefit from additional protections as a "displaced person" under the Uniform Relocation Act (URA). In this situation, you will be able to choose between the permanent relocation assistance that you are eligible for under the URA and the temporary relocation assistance (including the right to return) under RAD. This is your choice, and the PHA must provide you the information you need to make the choice.

Will RAD increase my ability to choose where I live?

In most cases, you will have an option in where to live through the RAD "Choice Mobility Option." This option is available after living in a RAD property for one to two years. Following the required one to two years after conversion, you may request a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) (a "mobile" voucher) and will have priority on the Housing Authority's HCV waiting list, if and when mobile vouchers become available.

Will I still be able to participate in the ROSS Service Coordination program?

The BHA currently has a three-year grant from HUD to provide service coordination and self-sufficiency programming for the households in the family apartments at the Walnut-High property (22 Walnut Street). If you are currently eligible for or participating in the BHA's ROSS program, you can continue during the three-year grant period. Once the grant period ends, the BHA cannot apply for a new ROSS grant, but the BHA intends to continue similar programming.