

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

VIRGINIA HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY | FALL 2014

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VHDA + Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority Good News in Newport News: Revitalization Continues



Celebrating the opening of The Lofts on Jefferson, a revitalized historic building that is now providing quality, affordable housing. Left to right: HUD CPD Field Office Director Ronnie J. Legette; VHDA Managing Director of Community Outreach Mike Hawkins; Virginia State Senator John Miller; Delegate Mamyé E. BaCote; NNRHA Chairman N. Douglas Burgoyne; Newport News City Councilwoman Tina Vick; NNRHA Executive Director Karen Wilds.

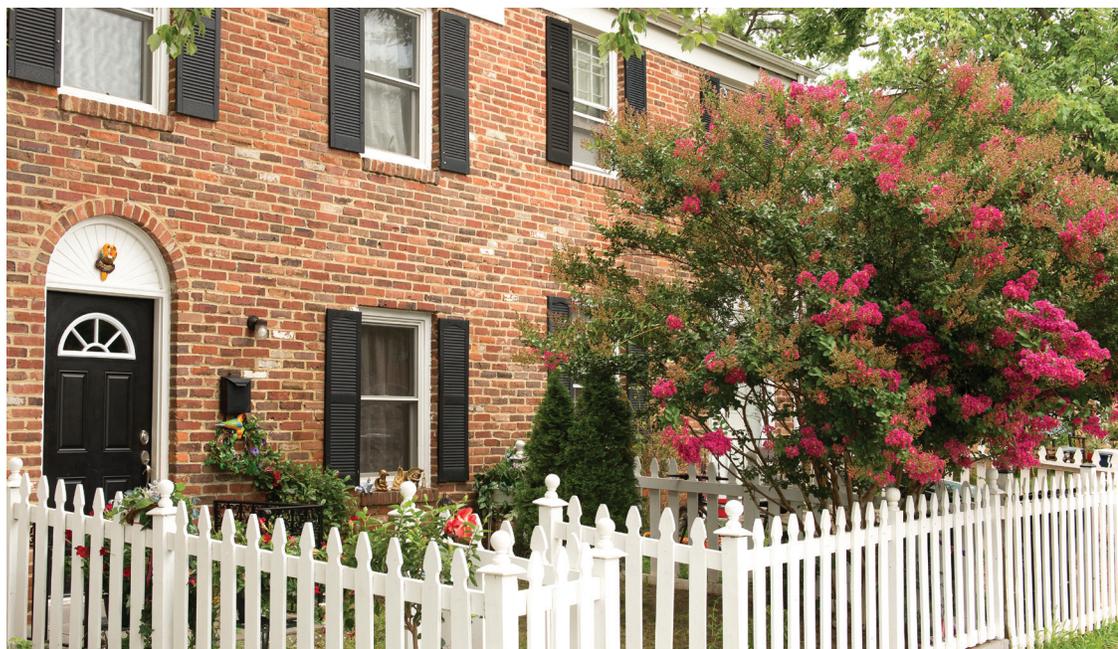
Just a few years ago, it was a vacant building in downtown Newport News. Today, the 100-year-old Roam building — one of the few remaining original structures along Jefferson Avenue — is a vibrant mixed-use/mixed-income (MUMI) community known as The Lofts on Jefferson.

The Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA) bought the three-story building with the goal of preserving and revitalizing it for reuses compatible with the revival of Jefferson Avenue. The project included completely re-framing the interior and installing new plumbing, electrical and roofing.

To make The Lofts on Jefferson a reality, NNRHA used all three of VHDA's planning

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NoVa News: A 50-year-old community makes a strong comeback. Story on page 3.



Three P's of Community Transformation

By Mike Hawkins, Managing Director of VHDA's Community Outreach Division



Typically, the development and availability of a variety of housing options is an important component in revitalizing and transforming communities. However,

the ultimate success of revitalization efforts often hinges on what I call the three P's of community transformation:

Planning. Consideration of a community's physical layout and the interaction of existing and proposed community assets.

Patience. Allocation of the time necessary to develop the plan, and identify and assemble the properties and resources essential to the transformation vision.

Persistence. Adoption of an implementation plan that allows for project phasing and sustained progress over time.

In May, I spoke at a ribbon cutting for a community in Newport News that exemplifies the power of the three P's combined with the positive impact of VHDA financing. This transformation began in the early 1990s with an engaged planning effort by the City and the Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA). The effort continued with the acquisition of key properties and the sustained development of new housing opportunities. Working block by block, the NNRHA combined local resources with VHDA's mortgage financing — including Low-Income Housing Tax Credits — and a homeownership education program to develop more than 198 residences serving new homebuyers and renters.

In this edition of our Community Outreach Report, we focus on what can happen when the three P's are combined with support from VHDA to create sustained transformation. We look forward to the opportunity to forge similar partnerships in your community. ■

Newport News Revitalization

Continued from page 1

tools — revitalization training, a planning grant and financing. Planning grants helped fund the design of a plan for preservation and reuse. This included creating 14 affordable one-bedroom apartments. The adaptive reuse of this stately building, which cost \$2.2 million including \$335,000 in city funds, was celebrated with a grand opening in May 2014.

The revitalization of the Roam building is an integral part of a larger redevelopment initiative focusing on a 12-block stretch of Jefferson Avenue and the surrounding area. This includes the adjacent Madison Heights neighborhood. The NNRHA has been working diligently for the past 20 years to acquire and demolish blighted properties and build new houses targeted to low- to moderate-income first-time homebuyers and public housing residents participating in



the Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Known as HOMEbuilder, the program has produced 126 new affordable homes in Madison Heights.

With The Lofts on Jefferson and Madison Heights serving as a catalyst, the goal of restoring the Jefferson Avenue corridor to a vibrant urban neighborhood is well underway.

For more information, contact Managing Director of Community Outreach Mike Hawkins at 804-343-5645 or Mike.Hawkins@vhda.com. ■

VHDA + Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation Reaching Out to Hispanic Homebuyers

Earlier this year, VHDA kicked off a marketing campaign to promote our free online Spanish language Homebuyer class. The campaign started in Richmond, using three media outlets: Telemundo (the area's only local Spanish language TV station) and radio stations WBTK 1380 AM and WVNZ 1320 AM.

To make this campaign happen, our Marketing department developed a mobile-optimized version of VHDA's Spanish language website. We recruited Spanish-speaking trainers in the Richmond area to teach those who prefer an in-person class. We also established a toll-free number (844-MI-CLASE) that enables us to track the community's response. In addition,

we're partnering with Richmond's Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation to connect potential homebuyers with Spanish-speaking housing counselors.

VHDA is continuing the Hispanic Homebuyers Education marketing campaign in Richmond. We also plan to implement a similar campaign in the Hampton Roads area in late winter/early spring 2015.

For more information, contact Community Housing Officer for Hispanic Outreach José Paíz at 804-343-5915 or Jose.Paiz@vhda.com or Housing Education Officer Frank Curbeira at 804-343-5818 or Frank.Curbeira@vhda.com. ■

VHDA + Prince William County Cooperative Extension + VOICE + Georgetown South Community NoVa Neighborhood Making a Comeback with Homebuyers

A community of 860 townhomes, Georgetown South in the City of Manassas celebrated its 50th anniversary in September. Originally built to accommodate the housing demand of IBM employees working nearby, over time most of the original owners moved on as their housing needs changed. Georgetown South became less competitive in the local housing market, but remained a source of affordable housing as the area grew more expensive.

Many Hispanics who moved to Northern Virginia during the jobs boom of the early 2000s, saw Georgetown South as a way to achieve homeownership. By the height of the recent housing bubble its homeownership rate had reached 67 percent. However, after the 2007 - 2009 recession and foreclosure crisis, the community's homeownership rate declined to around 37 percent.



Sidewalks and white picket fences line the streets of Georgetown South. In an area that is known for high housing costs, this 50-year-old community has been gaining renewed interest among homebuyers seeking convenience and affordability.

In early 2013, leaders of Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE), a housing advocacy group primarily comprised of Northern Virginia area churches, met with VHDA. The group asked for assistance in leveraging financial commitments and low-cost private capital it had received from several financial institutions. In response to their request, VHDA identified several resources that could support their efforts. Today, we're working with the Georgetown South community to:

- Facilitate a focused Homeownership Education program by working closely with the Prince William County Cooperative Extension, an agency already providing VHDA's Homeownership Education in the area. The class and materials are provided at no cost to the potential homebuyer.
- Promote the Community Housing Revitalization Program (CHRP) funds allocated to Prince William County. Funds are used in conjunction with the County's down payment assistance program, which is also available to residents of Georgetown South.

- Provide low-interest, permanent mortgage financing for affordable rental housing through VHDA's Sponsoring Partnerships and Revitalizing Communities (SPARC) initiative. The financing will support the revitalization of identified communities in the City of Manassas and Prince William County.
- Help enhance communications by rebuilding the community's website and launching a marketing and public relations campaign about buying homes in the community. These activities are a result of a VHDA Marketing Capacity grant provided to the Georgetown South Community Council.

This initiative is being conducted on a demonstration basis. VHDA's strategy going forward is to use the Community Outreach elements put in place for Georgetown South as a replicable model for other communities impacted by a significant decline in homeownership.

For details, contact Community Housing Officer for Hispanic Outreach José Paíz at 804-343-5915 or Jose.Paiz@vhda.com. ■

VHDA + Alexandria Housing Development Corporation Affordable Housing Communities are Reborn

One goal of Alexandria's Master 2013 Housing plan is to preserve the affordable units which have been rapidly disappearing as many parts of the city undergo intensive redevelopment. The Alexandria Housing Development Corporation (AHDC) headed by Carol Jackson, Executive Director, is working aggressively to meet that goal.

Their most recent undertaking was the acquisition and redevelopment of Arbelo and Longview Terrace Apartments. These two dilapidated properties were at risk of being lost forever as affordable housing resources. AHDC put together a partnership to ensure these communities would be valuable assets for years to come. Today, this redevelopment effort is providing 75 attractive and much needed workforce / affordable housing units.

VHDA's Resources Enabling Affordable Community Housing in Virginia (REACH Virginia) team began working with the city and AHDC early in 2011, when these multifamily developments were acquired. First, we provided a three-year capacity grant so the non-profit could realistically undertake the redevelopment. Next, REACH Virginia provided a predevelopment loan to pay for preliminary studies related to repositioning these properties. Then, VHDA's Rental Housing division worked with AHDC on a financing program that took advantage of tax-exempt bond financing and federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. Through its Office of Housing, the City of Alexandria also provided a substantial financial investment to make this \$19 million effort a success.



AHDC began leasing for Arbelo in September, and reached 95 percent occupancy soon after. Longview Terrace will follow in 2015.

For information, contact Community Housing Officer for Northern Virginia Michael J. Scheurer at 804-840-5957 or Michael.Scheurer@vhda.com. ■



One family's story: *The Bost family didn't have bad credit. They had no credit history and no savings. Using VHDA's housing counseling training, PHA's Jo Olson helped them develop a plan to save and create a positive credit history. When they were ready to buy a home, the Bosts had both savings and good credit, and just needed help with the down payment.*

For each success story, VHDA has been a critical partner with PHA, through our various products and resources. For instance, our Capacity Building grant has enabled PHA to concentrate resources on further strengthening its effectiveness. With a focus on best practices and continual program improvement, PHA has used this grant for:

- NeighborWorks Financial Capability training for each housing counselor.
- Certificates in Non-profit Management for PHA's Executive Director and Deputy Director, resulting in an Impact Mapping Evaluation Plan and a High Impact Board Plan.
- Urban Land Institute training for housing development staff.
- Strategic planning initiatives.
- Management and Board training.
- A new website.

For more information, contact Housing Education Director Kelly Gill-Gordon at 804-343-5534 or Kelly.Gill-Gordon@vhda.com. ■

REACH Virginia Funding Resources

REACH Virginia (Resources Enabling Affordable Community Housing in Virginia) is VHDA's initiative to serve the housing needs of Virginia's diverse communities through a variety of programs.

Capacity Building Grant helps expand the capacity of organizations that serve the housing needs of low-income households.

Predevelopment Loan/Grant provides below-market financing for typical predevelopment expenses.

Mixed-use / Mixed-income Planning Grant supports the planning process of local governments and redevelopment and housing authorities with an identified area for revitalization and mixed-use/mixed-income development as a major revitalization component.

The Harvest Project provides planning grants and technical assistance to faith-based organizations that have developable land, to help them create affordable housing opportunities.

Rental Unit Accessibility Modification Grant serves lower-income renters with disabilities by funding modifications to create a more accessible rental unit.

Community Homeownership Revitalization Program (CHRP) provides funding for affordable first mortgages that support a local jurisdiction's efforts to overcome challenges facing communities due to the foreclosure crisis.

For details, contact REACH Director Elizabeth Seward at 804-343-5615 or Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com.

VHDA REACH Housing Counseling Grant provides direct housing counseling and education, as well as flexible funding for capacity in the areas of marketing, outreach, referrals / information, staff training, partnerships / collaborations, quality assurance / program oversight and technology upgrades.

VIDA Plus offers low-income families with children the opportunity to establish a special savings account to buy a home. In partnership with Virginia Department

of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Social Services.

For details, contact Housing Education Director Kelly Gill-Gordon at 804-343-5534 or Kelly.Gill-Gordon@vhda.com.

Other Funding Resources

HUD Housing Counseling Assistance Program supplies funds for providing counseling and advice to renters and homeowners about property maintenance, financial management/literacy and handling the responsibilities of renting or homeownership. VHDA was awarded \$834,333, which will be allocated to 32 agencies.

NeighborWorks National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling Program distributes funds to competitively selected grantee organizations that provide counseling services to families at risk of foreclosure. VHDA was awarded \$181,165, which will be allocated to 11 agencies.

For details, see contact information for Kelly Gill-Gordon above. ■

VHDA + Piedmont Housing Alliance Partnering for Affordable Homeownership

The Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) has partnered for years with VHDA in the greater Charlottesville area. This local housing organization uses VHDA grants and financing to support housing counseling and financial education, to connect homebuyers with low-interest mortgages and to build capacity for creating more affordable housing.

Last year, with support from VHDA, PHA worked with 293 new housing counseling clients, provided monthly VHDA Homebuyer classes and financial education, helped 29 homebuyers with down payment assistance loans (totaling more than \$660,000), and connected three homebuyers with low-interest VHDA CHRP mortgage loans.

VHDA + Virginia Supportive Housing Grant Program Helps Make Rental Homes More Accessible

Since 2003, VHDA has provided financial assistance to people with disabilities through our Rental Unit Accessibility Modification (RUAM) grant. The program began as an outreach effort between VHDA and the Christopher Reeve Foundation and has helped over 720 households throughout the Commonwealth.

Financial assistance to make housing more accessible is provided through the REACH Virginia program (Resources Enabling Affordable Community Housing in Virginia). VHDA's RUAM grant helps pay for modifications to rental units occupied by the elderly, adults with disabilities and families of children

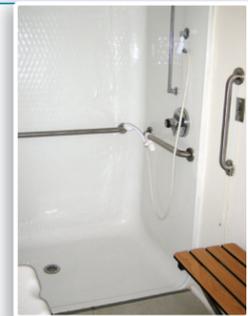
with disabilities who earn 80 percent or less of the area median income (AMI). Grant funds up to \$2,800 per unit may be used to widen doorways, lower countertops, install wheelchair ramps and make other modifications that improve accessibility and safety.

An example of services provided through the program was when Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH), a not-for-profit that provides permanent housing with support services, requested help to make modifications to the eight-room Brain Injury Center (Bliley Manor) in Southside Richmond. As a result, each room was equipped with an ADA toilet seat, vanity with

new faucets and handles, medicine cabinet, shelving fixture, towel and grab bars, and a 3.6 CF refrigerator.

Working together with a variety of interested stakeholders is part of what makes this strategic initiative successful. The grant program is promoted on VirginiaHousingSearch.com, AccessVa.org and vhda.com/AccessibleRentalHousing.

For details, contact Community Outreach Grant Coordinator Debbie Griner at 804-343-5579 or Debbie.Griner@vhda.com. ■



REACH Capacity Building Grant –

Strengthening the Housing Delivery Network

The funding and policy landscape for affordable housing is constantly evolving. Housing non-profits across Virginia must constantly adjust to new changes, and find resources to support their programs, policies and operations.

To support and strengthen the current network, VHDA created the Capacity Building grant program. Funded through our REACH *Virginia* initiative, the grant provides up to \$60,000 in funding for capacity building projects that:

- Increase an organization's ability to create, preserve and/or manage affordable housing units.
- Expand or bring new housing-related services to an underserved area.
- Improve an organization's ability to implement community revitalization projects.
- Establish or strengthen a regional collaboration.
- Align with specific state policies (such as ending veteran homelessness).

Grants are available to agencies with a demonstrated vision and strategic plan to extend their mission and/or geographic coverage in a way that results in significant enhancement of their capacity. These funds aren't a subsidy for ongoing operations. Instead, they're used to enable our strategic partners to better ensure the long-term viability of their affordable housing efforts.

We are currently working with 32 organizations across the state on various capacity building initiatives.

To learn more, contact Community Housing Team Lead Monica Jefferson at 804-343-5736 or send an email to ReachGrants@vhda.com. ■

For Stakeholders and Potential Partners VHDA Training Opportunities

Homebuyer Education Train-the-Trainer. VHDA's Housing Education department provides those who are interested in teaching our First-time Homebuyer class with a "Train-the-Trainer" course. This half-day training covers the curriculum for our First-time Homebuyer class, and explains the specific responsibilities of a facilitator. The course is held monthly in various locations across the state. To sign up, visit vhda.com/trainthetrainer.

Housing Counseling Program. Our Housing Education department also offers training and technical assistance throughout the year to non-profit agencies participating with VHDA through various housing counseling grants. Training opportunities are available to all housing counseling entities in Virginia. To learn more, email vhdagrant@vhda.com.

Marketing 101. VHDA's Marketing department offers an introductory presentation covering How to Reach Your Audience, Websites, Social Media, Event Management and Creative Strategy Development. The Marketing department also provides consulting to partners, ranging from a quick marketing review and emailed recommendations to a site visit and development and implementation of specific strategies. For more information, contact Marketing Director Robert Halloran at Robert.Halloran@vhda.com.

Revitalization Training. VHDA's REACH *Virginia* department provides "Revitalizing Neighborhoods through

Housing and Economic Development" training. This two-day, interactive session focuses on the importance of housing opportunities for neighborhood revitalization. Training is typically conducted in partnership with the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-VA) and the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). To learn more, contact REACH Team Director Elizabeth Seward at Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com.

Challenges of Community Design. Our REACH *Virginia* department also offers a two-hour workshop focusing on the challenges of community design. Participants engage in a series of quick group exercises during which they identify their



individual design preferences from a series of pictures, develop a group consensus concerning the design of key community assets with a focus on housing, and place the assets on a community visioning map. Each group then presents their community vision to the other groups for discussion. For more information, contact REACH Team Director Elizabeth Seward at Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com. ■

VHDA Housing Choice Voucher Program –

Preference for People with Intellectual or Development Disabilities

People with disabilities have historically faced limited housing options, often requiring them to live in institutions or other segregated settings where they are denied many of the basic freedoms that people without disabilities take for granted.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead* acknowledged that segregating people with disabilities in institutional settings deprives them of the opportunity to participate in their communities, interact with people who do not have disabilities, and make their own day-to-day choices.

In 2012, the state of Virginia reached an agreement with the Department of Justice that calls for Virginia to partner with other agencies to move more rapidly toward a community-based system of support that provides more integrated living environments.

VHDA is just one agency working to improve housing for clients leaving training centers, nursing homes or intermediate care facilities or who meet the criteria for the Intellectual Disability (ID) waiver or Developmental Disability (DD) waiver wait lists.

Voucher Preference: To address the Department of Justice *Olmstead* Settlement Agreement, VHDA has elected to establish a tenant selection preference for people with intellectual or development disabilities (ID/DD) who are in the target population and

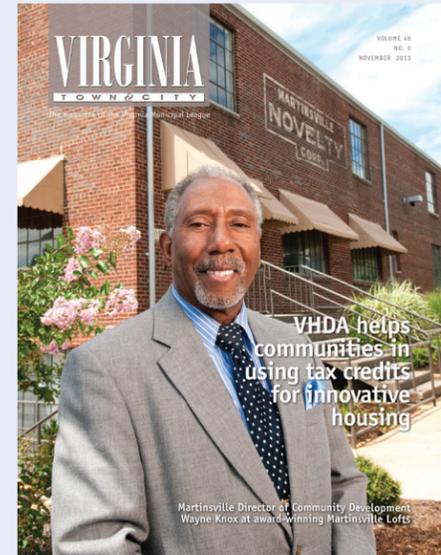
receiving community-based services. The Housing Choice Voucher program has set aside 32 vouchers specifically for those who meet the ID/DD preference — one voucher from each of its 32 agencies for the period October 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015. Future set-asides will be determined if funding permits and the original 32 vouchers are used/leased.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Office of Fair Housing, granted VHDA approval to establish this tenant selection

preference. In the approval letter, Fair Housing stated, "This letter is specific to VHDA and cannot be extended to other jurisdictions. However, HUD is open to receiving requests from other jurisdictions in Virginia that are seeking to implement remedial actions pursuant to the DOJ *Olmstead* Settlement Agreement. Applying such preferences more broadly to other localities in Virginia will increase housing availability and choice for persons in the target population in need of affordable, integrated housing options."

VHDA is pleased to offer this as a housing option and hopes that other housing agencies administering the voucher program will also consider providing vouchers to meet this important housing need.

For more information, contact Housing Choice Voucher Program Director Sharon Fairburn at 804-343-5920 or Sharon.Fairburn@vhda.com. ■



How do you go from concerns about NIMBY (not in my backyard) to "what a great addition to our community?" In cities and towns across Virginia, the answer is by taking an innovative approach to affordable housing, as discussed in this edition of Virginia Town & City, the magazine of the Virginia Municipal League. Read it at vhda.com/LIHTC.



VirginiaHousingSearch.com, a free housing search service launched by VHDA in 2009, recently reached its 100,000th registered unit. Above, interested consumers check out the site during the 2014 NOVA Expo. The website provides details about rental properties to help people find housing that best fits their needs. An increasing number of property managers are now using the site to list their properties for rent. To learn more, contact Program Support Analyst Mario Wells at 804-343-5541 or Mario.Wells@vhda.com.

VHDA Achieves High Performance Rating

VHDA's Housing Choice Voucher Program continues to maintain a High Performance rating by HUD's Richmond Field Office for the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) for FYE June 2013. SEMAP is used to measure Public Housing Agency (PHA) performance and administration of the Housing Choice Voucher program in 14 different program indicators. SEMAP uses HUD's national database of tenant information and information from audits conducted by independent auditors. HUD annually assigns each PHA a rating on each of the 14 indicators and an overall performance rating of high, standard or troubled. ■

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Community Outreach Welcomes Erika Jones-Haskins

Erika Jones-Haskins is our new Community Housing Officer for Non-Profit and Homeless Outreach. In her role at VHDA, she provides outreach to non-profits and furthers VHDA's mission to support the creation of affordable housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Erika has worked in human services throughout her career, and prior to joining VHDA she was with Homeward, the Richmond-area planning and coordinating agency for homelessness. Erika's dedication and expertise were recently recognized when she was chosen as a "Top 40 Network" professional. The Virginia Housing Coalition and VHDA co-sponsored the event honoring 40 of the top professionals under 40 years old in Virginia's affordable housing industry. ■



VHDA is a self-supporting, not-for-profit organization created by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1972, to help

Virginians attain quality, affordable housing. VHDA provides mortgages, primarily for first-time homebuyers and developers of quality rental housing. We use no state taxpayer dollars, but raise money in the capital markets to fund our loans. We also teach free homeownership classes, and help people with disabilities and the elderly make their homes more livable. VHDA works with lenders, developers, local governments, community service organizations and others to help put quality housing within the reach of every Virginian.

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