



## NEIGHBORHOODS

### Transform Public Housing

The City of Richmond has an exceptionally high geographic concentration of poverty, even compared to other central cities nationwide. Residents who live in the city's public housing communities are among the poorest with an average household income of less than \$9,400 annually. A top recommendation of the Mayor's Anti-Poverty Commission (subsequently the Maggie Walker Initiative) calls for the redesign of this model of public housing – which often creates pockets of distress with rippling negative effects. The Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB), in collaboration with RRHA, community partners, and other City agencies, is helping to develop a strategy for the redevelopment of these communities, using a public policy strategy that empowers and expands choices for residents while assuring no one is involuntarily displaced.

Having a safe, decent, and affordable place to live is among the first and most important steps in building and sustaining a healthy life. OCWB strategies for public housing transformation are multi-pronged, as successful redevelopment requires comprehensive holistic human services that enable residents to create the capabilities they need to thrive in new communities.



## **Good Neighbor Initiative**

In collaboration with the Richmond City Health District, OCWB has launched a Housing Advocates program known as the Good Neighbor Initiative, operating in each of the major public housing communities. These advocates are employed to serve as guides through leasing policies and procedures and federal support programs available to public housing residents. The program promotes the engagement and empowerment of public housing residents by providing regular outreach, facilitating education and support groups, and logging and referring residents to local organizations and resources.

## **Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

Increasing the availability of high-quality affordable housing in the City of Richmond is a top priority of the Maggie Walker Initiative. The Affordable Housing Trust Fund has received capitalization funds of nearly \$1 million in both the FY 2015 and 2016 budgets. Projects selected using FY 2015 funds are expected lead to the production or rehabilitation of 272 units.