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## Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority

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## Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority

### Abstract

To assist our residents in attaining and maintaining a high standard for their quality of life. The Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority will provide services and opportunities associated with affordable, desirable, and secure housing to individuals and families. We will provide customer service, programs and amenities which are the best possible. The BMHA also has a number of goals: to provide safe, clean, affordable housing to residents of the City of Buffalo that will be considered housing of choice; to encourage and participate in strategic redevelopment of city's neighborhoods; to offer all residents equal access to desirable housing and communities; to foster a sense of purpose and pride that will encourage family self-sufficiency; to encourage tenant participation and involvement in BMHA operations and services as well as providing access to entrepreneurial development and employment opportunities.

### Keywords

Buffalo, Housing/Neighborhoods, Public and Subsidized Housing, Government, Local Government Bodies, Fact Sheet, PPG, PDF

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**University at Buffalo Law Student**

**What is the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority's contact information?**

- The administrative/central office is located at 300 Perry, Buffalo, New York. The phone number is 855-6711.
- The BMHA's website is:  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority)
- The Phone Directory is available at:  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/PhoneDirectory](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/PhoneDirectory)
- A listing of the staff for the BMHA's departments is available at:  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/Departments](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Departments)



**What does the BMHA do?**

The BMHA provides housing assistance to low-income families with children, senior citizens and individuals with disabilities.

- The BMHA owns and manages 27 developments and 4,307 housing units in the city of Buffalo.<sup>1</sup> BMHA is also a partner in several privately managed developments.<sup>2</sup>
- *Section 8 Housing Assistance Program.* The BMHA also distributes 1,372 housing vouchers through the Section 8 Voucher

Program in Buffalo.<sup>3</sup> This federally funded program assists low-income families by subsidizing a portion of their monthly rent and providing a utility allowance. It provides direct payments to landlords and covers the difference between what can be reasonably afforded by the tenant and reasonable rental charges of the landlord. To qualify for the program, a family must meet the low-income guidelines set by HUD, and rental units must meet Housing Quality Standards and local codes and pass an inspection by the BMHA.<sup>4</sup>

- In BMHA and Section 8 housing, the resident's rent is never more than 30% of his or her gross income.<sup>5</sup>
- The BMHA also presents job training and educational opportunities for tenants, often on-site, in collaboration with social service agencies.<sup>6</sup>

### **What is the BMHA's mission?**

“To assist our residents in attaining and maintaining a high standard for their quality of life. The Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority will provide services and opportunities associated with affordable, desirable, and secure housing to individuals and families. We will provide customer service, programs and amenities which are the best possible.”<sup>7</sup>



The BMHA also has a number of goals:

- To provide safe, clean, affordable housing to residents of the City of Buffalo that will be considered housing of choice.
- To encourage and participate in strategic redevelopment of city's neighborhoods.
- To offer all residents equal access to desirable housing and communities.
- To foster a sense of purpose and pride that will encourage family self-sufficiency.
- To encourage tenant participation and involvement in BMHA operations and services as well as providing access to entrepreneurial development and employment opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

### **When was the BMHA established?**

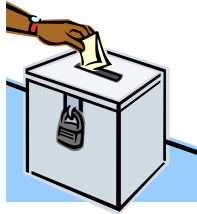
The BMHA was established on April 3, 1934, pursuant to a resolution of the Common Council of the City of Buffalo.<sup>9</sup> The New York Legislature then confirmed the BMHA's creation and establishment.<sup>10</sup>

### **Who runs the BMHA?**

The BMHA is run by a Board of Commissioners, which currently consists of seven members.<sup>11</sup> Past members have hailed from the ranks of

business, clergy, banking, labor, the professions and civic groups.<sup>12</sup> The Board elects a Board Chair and Vice Chair each year.<sup>13</sup>

### **How are the Board Members elected/appointed?**



Five Board members are appointed by the mayor. These members serve for five years, with one term expiring every year (so that there is one new Board member appointed every year). The other two members are elected at-large from the tenant population.<sup>14</sup> These members serve two-year terms; the two current Resident Commissioners were elected in June 2008.

### **What laws control the BMHA?**

The BMHA must operate in compliance with a broad range of federal, state, and city laws.

- Federal Fair Housing Laws:<sup>15</sup>
  - Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of Civil Rights Act of 1968)
  - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
  - Section 109 of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974
  - Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
  - Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
  - Age Discrimination Act of 1975
  - Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972
- Housing-related Presidential Executive Orders.<sup>16</sup>
- Regulations and policies of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which funds and administers public housing and Section 8 programs.<sup>17</sup>
- New York State laws, including
  - Public Housing Law<sup>18</sup> which authorizes the BMHA<sup>19</sup>
  - Real Property Law<sup>20</sup>
  - General Obligations Law<sup>21</sup>
  - General Municipal Law<sup>22</sup>
  - Public Services Law<sup>23</sup>
- City of Buffalo housing code.<sup>24</sup>



### **What is the Resident Self Sufficiency Program?**

This program's main goal is to move tenants into mainstream, family-sustaining employment and income.<sup>25</sup> Self-sufficiency programs include:



- Section 3 Program
- Family Self-Sufficiency Program
- Computer Literacy
- GED
- Financing Your Independence.<sup>26</sup>

### **How is the BMHA funded?**

- Federal funding through HUD
- Rent from tenants
- City of Buffalo BMHA operations subsidy of \$550,000 per year<sup>27</sup>
  - Over the next four years the BMHA anticipates a relatively consistent operating budget with an overall increase by 2012, accompanied by steady increases in total revenue.<sup>28</sup>
- Grants from the public and private sectors.<sup>29</sup>
  - The Authority is now entering the private sector grant arena through its not-for-profit entity led by tenant councils.<sup>30</sup>
  - The Rental Assistance Corporation of Buffalo (RACB), is a not-for profit organization that was established in 1989.<sup>31</sup>
    - The City of Buffalo entered into a contract with RACB for the purpose of administering the Section 8 Existing Housing programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.<sup>32</sup>
    - RACB administers the Housing Voucher and Moderate Rehabilitation Programs, also participates in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program.<sup>33</sup>

### **What community groups work with the BMHA?**

A number of agencies partner with BMHA to provide on-site services to residents:<sup>34</sup>

- A.D. Price Human Services
- Bethel Head Start
- Bob Lanier Center
- Boys and Girls Club of Erie County
- Catholic Charities
- Child and Family Services
- Erie County Health Department (MIC)
- Families Helping Families
- Kenfield-Langfield Association
- Northwest Buffalo Community Center

### **How can a resident apply for housing through the BMHA?**

To apply for any of the federally supported public housing apartments, call 855-6774 or visit the central occupancy office located at 245 Elmwood Avenue. Office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 AM until noon, and from 1:30 PM until 3:30 PM.<sup>35</sup>

The process will include the following steps<sup>36</sup> :

- Residents must fill out an application that will be placed on file.
- The BMHA will send an offer letter informing the applicant about the development options available and the estimated waiting periods for each development.
- Applicants may choose which wait list they want to be placed on. An applicant can change which wait list they want to be on, but their name will be entered onto the new wait list on the day the applicant decides to change.
- BMHA is not an emergency housing program.<sup>37</sup> There is no guarantee of placement within any time period and all placements are made from waiting lists as openings occur.<sup>38</sup> “Extended waiting periods are the norm.”<sup>39</sup>
- If your application is rejected, Neighborhood Legal Services can give you information on how to appeal your case or may agree to represent you in your appeal.<sup>40</sup> You can contact NLS at 847-0650 Mondays – Fridays between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.<sup>41</sup>



### How do I learn more about this agency?

- There are questions and answers available at: [http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/FrequentlyAskedQuestions](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/FrequentlyAskedQuestions)
- The National Housing Law Project also offers resources and assistance: <http://www.nhlp.org/html/pubhsg/genauth.htm>
- HUD’s Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook can be accessed at: <http://www.nhlp.org/html/pubhsg/phguidebook.pdf>




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<sup>1</sup>City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/Leadership](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Leadership) © 2001-2008

<sup>2</sup> City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/ApplicationInformation](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/ApplicationInformation)  
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<sup>3</sup>Id.

<sup>4</sup>City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/Programs](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Programs) © 2001-2008

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- <sup>5</sup>City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/Leadership](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Leadership) © 2001-2008
- <sup>6</sup>Id.
- <sup>7</sup>City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/MissionandVisionStatement](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/MissionandVisionStatement) © 2001-2008
- <sup>8</sup> Id.
- <sup>9</sup>City of Buffalo,  
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- <sup>10</sup>Id.
- <sup>11</sup>City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/Leadership](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Leadership) © 2001-2008
- <sup>12</sup>City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/History](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/History) © 2001-2008
- <sup>13</sup>City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/Leadership](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Leadership) © 2001-2008
- <sup>14</sup>Id.
- <sup>15</sup> “Fair Housing Laws and Presidential Executive Orders”  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/FHLaws/>
- <sup>16</sup> Id.
- <sup>17</sup> “Community Development Laws and Regulations”  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/rulesandregs/>
- <sup>18</sup> N.Y. Public Housing Law, Chapter 44-A of the Consolidated Laws of New York
- <sup>19</sup> N.Y. Pub. Housing Law, § § 403-404
- <sup>20</sup> N.Y. Real Property Law, Chapter 50 of the Consolidated Laws of New York, Article 7 – Landlord and Tenant
- <sup>21</sup> N.Y. General Obligations Law, Chapter 24-A of the Consolidated Laws of New York, Article 7, §7-105
- <sup>22</sup> N.Y. General Municipal Law, Chapter 24 of the Consolidated Laws of New York, Article 12-g – Landlord-Tenant Relations Council
- <sup>23</sup> N.Y. Public Services Law, Chapter 48 of the Consolidated Laws of New York, Article 11, § 228
- <sup>24</sup> City of Buffalo Charter, Chapters 242 (Housing Standards) and 249 (Inspections), *ee* [http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/codebook\\_frameset.asp?t=tcfull](http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/codebook_frameset.asp?t=tcfull)
- <sup>25</sup>City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/Programs](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Programs) © 2001-2008
- <sup>26</sup> City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/Employment\\_Training\\_Programs/ResidentandSelf-SufficiencyIntitatives](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Employment_Training_Programs/ResidentandSelf-SufficiencyIntitatives) © 2001-2008
- <sup>27</sup> “City of Buffalo – General Fund 2008-2009 Adopted Budget,” *see* [http://www.city-buffalo.com/files/1\\_2\\_1/Mayor/2008-2009AdoptedBudget/Section\\_II\\_General\\_City\\_Charges.pdf](http://www.city-buffalo.com/files/1_2_1/Mayor/2008-2009AdoptedBudget/Section_II_General_City_Charges.pdf) at page 2.
- <sup>28</sup> “BMHA Four Year Plan.” [http://www.city-buffalo.com/files/1\\_2\\_1/Mayor/FourYearPlan2008/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority.pdf](http://www.city-buffalo.com/files/1_2_1/Mayor/FourYearPlan2008/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority.pdf), at page 4-4.
- <sup>29</sup> City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/Achievements](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/Achievements) © 2001-2008



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<sup>30</sup> Id.

<sup>31</sup> Rental Assistance Corporation of Buffalo, <http://www.racbny.org/>

<sup>32</sup> Id.

<sup>33</sup> Id.

<sup>34</sup> City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/PartnerAgencies](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/PartnerAgencies) © 2001-2008

<sup>35</sup> City of Buffalo,  
[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo\\_Municipal\\_Housing\\_Authority/ApplicationInformation](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Buffalo_Municipal_Housing_Authority/ApplicationInformation) © 2001-2008

<sup>36</sup> Id.

<sup>37</sup> Id.

<sup>38</sup> Id.

<sup>39</sup> Id.

<sup>40</sup> Id.

<sup>41</sup> “Applying for Public and Subsidized Housing,” *Neighborhood Legal Services*,  
<http://www.nls.org/housing/psapply.htm> © 1991-2000