

# Caribou Housing Authority

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As our community attains a “new normal” in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Caribou Housing authority board and staff are deeply grateful to the organizations and volunteers who continue to partner with us to help ensure that vulnerable households in our community meet basic needs for food, housing, and health care. With your help our participants and authority are navigating what is surely one of the most challenging periods we will face together. Realizing the advantages of connectivity and collaboration, Caribou Housing anticipates growing existing partnerships and forging new bonds in order to expand our capacity to meet critical housing and supportive needs.

**Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program:** A federal program operated by the Housing and Urban Development that provides rental assistance to eligible households, covering the gap between the rent charged and 30 percent of their income, ensuring that the tenant does not experience housing cost burden. These families and individuals live in privately owned properties, both single-family homes and apartment building, helping people live independently while supporting local landlords.

- CHA distributed over \$1.010 million in total funds in support of 2,105 families: a slight decrease from 2,245 families but a significant increase from \$924 thousand in 2021.

**Mainstream Vouchers Program:** Mainstream Vouchers serve a household that includes a non-elderly person(s) with disabilities who is at least 18 years old and not yet 62 years of age at effective date of the initial lease up.

- 326 families were assisted and received \$144,093 in rental assistance.

**Emergency Housing Voucher Program:** These vouchers are for individuals and families who are 1.) homeless; 2.) at risk of homelessness; 3.) fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking or 4.) have a high risk of housing instability. Landlords who lease a unit to an Emergency Housing Voucher holder may receive a \$1,000 for each unit rented.

- Over \$99,473 in funds for rental assistance, security deposits, and landlord bonuses were distributed to assist 130 families.

**Landlord Participation Incentive Program:** In partnership with Maine Association of Public Housing Directors (MAPHD) and Maine Housing Authority, CHA was able to offer benefits to landlords who rent to a Housing Choice Voucher and/or Mainstream Voucher participants. The program offers the following incentives 1.) Security Deposit, landlords may request, on behalf of the prospective tenant, funds from CHA to pay the security deposit; 2.) Signing Bonus, landlords will receive a \$750 bonus for each new unit rented; 3.) Repair Grants, landlords may be reimbursed up to \$5,000, per year, on necessary repairs to a unit that failed its initial HQS inspection; and 4.) Damage Reimbursements, landlords may be reimbursed up to \$1,500, per unit, on damage cost beyond those covered by a security deposit.

- Between the four Landlord Incentive's, CHA distributed \$55,505 to landlords.

**Family Self-Sufficiency Program:** The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program offers financial and employment coaching to Voucher participants who are working full- or part-time. As an FSS household's earned income increases, funds are deposited into an escrow account for the participant to use upon successfully completing the program.

- The FSS program enrolled an additional 130 households, for a total of 650 program participants.
- 8 participants graduated from the FSS program, receiving an average of \$5,507 in escrow funds. One graduate family received \$13,730!
- Over \$23,624 was utilized by 17 participants for auto purchases and repairs, reimbursements for work clothes, and school supplies.

Expenditures from these funds directly support participants employment and asset building goals.

**HCV Homeownership Program:** The HCV Homeownership Program allows families that are assisted under the HCV program to use their voucher to buy a home and receive monthly assistance in meeting homeownership expenses. To participate in the HCV Homeownership program, the HCV family must meet 1.) specific income and employment requirements (the employment requirement does not apply to elderly and disabled families), 2.) be a first-time homeowner, 3.) attend and satisfactorily complete the pre-assistance homeownership counseling program, and 4.) meet any additional eligibility requirements set by CHA.

- Currently, CHA has one participant receiving assistance through the HCV Homeownership Program, who received \$3,335 towards their mortgage payment.

***Other Notable Statistics in FY 2022***

- Over \$1.3 million distributed to 67 participating landlords; a significant increase from \$1,010 million to 67 landlords in 2021; an 18% increase.
- The average annual household income is \$14,043, who is receiving an average rental assistance payment of \$359 towards an average contract rent of \$775
- Of 2,561 families, 42% have a person with a disability, and 18% are elderly.
- Of 103 vouchers issued in 2022, 47 participants leased up, 49 families were unable to find housing, and 7 families continue their search.

We are deeply grateful for the support of the Housing Board of Commissioners, the Caribou City Council, the City Manager, all City Departments, participating landlords, partnering organizations, and the community at large for our past and future endeavors to provide housing and services.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Plourde  
Executive Director