



# HO-CHUNK NATION DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT

June 5, 2022

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Housing is to assist tribal members in obtaining housing that meets generally accepted standards of safety, decency, sanitation, and comfort. In doing so, the Department shall safeguard the interests of the Nation, enhance the sovereignty of the Nation, and exercise stewardship over those resources committed to it by the Nation and foreign jurisdictions.

**Heather Cloud**  
Executive Director

# ANNUAL REPORT

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## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING (HOUSING)

The Department of Housing is made up of four teams to carry out the goals and mission statement for the Nation and tribal membership. The four teams are Home Ownership Office (HOO), Heavy Equipment (HE), Finance Team, and Rental Management Office (RMO).

Home Ownership continues to assist tribal members with goals and matters relating to owning a home. There is potential for more program opportunities with the approval of future funding sources.

HE is working hard this year to address work orders for individual site development and assisting other departments. The team of professionals are finding future opportunities and growth for the Nation.

Finance team is continuously ensuring efficient workflow for the Department by processing all payments to vendors, processing all rental payments, informing tenants of balances, and hope to expand services and funding with a Grant Program Manager. The Finance team is now working hand in hand with the Department of Treasury on the Home Ownership Program processing of payments and updating client files.

RMO has rental units across Wisconsin, primarily in the areas of greatest tribal populations, such as Black River Falls, Wisconsin Dells, Baraboo, Madison, Nekoosa, Wisconsin Rapids, and Tomah. We hope to increase our housing inventory.

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## HOME OWNERSHIP OFFICE (HOO)

The Home Ownership Office (HOO) staff has been very busy and thrilled for being awarded a Housing Improvement Program (H.I.P) - American Rescue Plan (ARP) through the BIA. The HOO staff has been assisting applicants with questions and answers regarding the grant and following up with H.I.P applicants. The HOO starting accepting application in October of 2021. The HOO staff continues to meet with the IT department to develop online HOP applications; this will provide easier access to all services available and allow transparency to enrolled Ho-Chunk members. HOO is actively participating in many trainings being offered. HOO continues to have a great working relationship with other departments. The HOO continues to assist all current/future applicants.

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## HOME OWNERSHIP OFFICE (HOO) MISSION STATEMENT

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The Home Ownership Program receives an annual allocation of funding that assists Ho-Chunk Nation Members to fulfill their dreams of owning a home. The Program assists Ho-Chunk Nation members with new home construction, existing home purchases, existing mortgage, and down payment assistance with an outside lender. HOP also offers home repair loans and elder roofs.

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## **HOO ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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- ❖ The Home Ownership Program has awarded one (1) applicants:
  - One VHOP- New Construction
- ❖ The Existing Mortgage Assistance Program has awarded thirteen (13) applicants.
- ❖ The Down Payment Assistance Program has awarded (2) applicants
- ❖ The Home repair loans Program has funding. This program is currently assisting a total of seven (7) applicants.
- ❖ The Elder Roof Program has funding. This program is currently assisting a total of nine (9) applicants.
- ❖ Elder roofs completed: six (6) three (3) are scheduled to begin in June. Four (4) are currently pending.
- ❖ The Waste Management Program continues to provide operating trash/recycle pick up for elders, and public spaces for the following areas: Tomah, Black River, Nekoosa, Vesper and Wisconsin Rapids. This program is assisting seventy-one (71) Elders.
- ❖ BIA ARPA- Home Improvement Program (HIP)
- ❖ The Home Ownership office (HOO) was awarded a Housing Improvement Program (H.I.P) - American Rescue Plan (ARP) through the BIA. The HOO starting accepting application in October 2021. There are currently 115 (one hundred and fifteen) applicants. The grant can service a max of 22 (twenty-two) Tribal Members. A total of 15 (fifteen) pending projects and there are 13 (thirteen) closed projects. HOO staff is Initiating audit of paperwork and workflow
- ❖ HOO is currently working with IT in developing easier access to online applications.
- ❖ HOO is in transition to utilizing Access as the main data base for all programs.
- ❖ HOO continues to properly stamp and make a cover sheet for all incoming applications and send to Records Department; for safe storage.

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## **HOO PROBLEMS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN**

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- ❖ HOO is developing usable data for grants.
- ❖ HOO will have on-boarding manuals for new employees.
- ❖ HOO will Revise all polices when affected by a new change.
- ❖ HOO will follow all policies and procures for each program as documented.
- ❖ HOO will audit all programs monthly.
- ❖ HOO will have work flows for all the active programs.

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## **HOO GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR**

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- ❖ The HOO would like to have education seminars for tribal members regarding home ownership, maintenance, and general upkeep of their home.
- ❖ The HOO plans to take advantage of any training and education course.

- ❖ HOO will update and assist with writing policies and procedures for the Home Ownership Programs.
- ❖ HOO would like to gain knowledge in available grants that will improve the Home Ownership Program in the services provided to the Ho-Chunk Community.
- ❖ HOO plans to develop a business model to purchase and sell homes.
- ❖ HOO will apply for housing grants.
- ❖ The HOO Manager is to draft satisfactions for all HOP clients that meet the requirements. The HOO manger is currently working on Satisfaction and Foreclosure policy and procedure.
- ❖ The HOO continues to send all files to Records.

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### **HOO ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

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- ❖ HOO will partner with HHCDA in having educational seminars for tribal members regarding home ownership.
- ❖ HOO will partner with First Nations Financial Credit Union with assisting tribal members to seek housing loans in the Section 184 program.
- ❖ HOO will partner with the Labor Department (477 Program) and the Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) to assist in training funds for the Home Ownership staff.

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### **HEAVY EQUIPMENT TEAM (HE)**

The Heavy Equipment Team (HE) has revised and is still currently working on policies and procedures. The HE continues to assist all current/future applicants. HE is currently working on replacing equipment and vehicles. HE is also in the process of trying to catch up with some of the work requests and processing new ones as well.

HE applied for the DERA grant to help with replacing some heavy equipment. Additionally, the HE was able to use some Cares act funding for some crucial pieces of equipment that are used every day. Working with the Ho-Chunk Nation Transportation Department to begin vehicle replacement.

The HE was awarded the DERA grant (Diesel Emissions Reduction Act) which allows the HE to replace three major pieces of equipment (excavator, road grader, and a bull dozer). HE was also awarded some Cares Act funding to replace the mini excavator and skid steer that are used every day for each project .

The HE is currently working with the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to obtain a contract for the Ho-Chunk Nation Housing HE to help with wild land fires. This would bring revenue back to the Ho-Chunk Nation HE.

During the pandemic the HE helped the Ho-Chunk Nation Health Department by lending two employees to help out with the use of the Housing Department equipment such as the HE semi with trailer to haul cement blocks for tent installation in different locations and use of the HE semi to haul refrigerated box trailers full of food for the food to family program to each of the Ho-Chunk Nation distribution locations. The two employees also helped with the distribution of supplies and food. These two employees also helped with the COVID 19 test sites by setting up tents and data

intake for individuals getting COVID 19 test and helped by providing security at the Black River Falls Health Care Center.

The Heavy Equipment Team gained another truck driver. The new Office Manager is updating the office area, policies, procedures, and working with the task tracker to help with new projects and old projects.

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## ❖ HE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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- ❖ In Black River Falls the Heavy Equipment Team constructed a drive-way for the Community dumpsters.
- ❖ Demolished a trailer and cleaned the area by a trailer in the Indian Mission area.
- ❖ A final grade for a new home construction project.
- ❖ Drive-way repair in Tomah Wisconsin
- ❖ Demolished a small dwelling in Wisconsin Rapids (cleaned the area and spread topsoil where the dwelling once stood)
- ❖ Finished a storm damage project.
- ❖ Four drive-way repairs in Wisconsin Rapids.
- ❖ Had an emergency trailer demolition in La Crosse badly damaged by fire.
- ❖ Had an interdepartmental project for Tribal DNR, washout damage from heavy rains in Muscoda Wisconsin
- ❖ Projects in Wisconsin Dells
  - Trailer demolition
  - Final grade for 2 projects
  - Construct a drive-way for one of the projects
  - Land clearing for a new home project.
- ❖ Stock piling for future projects that are on the horizon.
- ❖ Awarded DERA grant to purchase new machines to update the HE Fleet with machines that produce less pollution and are more efficient.
- ❖ Cares act funding to purchase two crucial pieces of equipment which are used in every task and project.
- ❖ Added a new employee a truck driver.
- ❖ Updated the office area with new light fixtures
- ❖ Updated the garage area with new service doors.
- ❖ Updated the cold storage with new furnaces.
- ❖ Established stock piles in Black River Falls and in Tomah for numerous drive way projects
- ❖ Had a couple of demolitions (house and a trailer home)
- ❖ Helped the Health Department with lending two employees
- ❖ Helped the Ho-Chunk Nation DNR with lending an employee for some burn projects
- ❖ Completed some older projects that were overlooked from the pandemic.
- ❖ Completed maintenance on all the heavy equipment including small repairs.
- ❖ Accomplished another season of snow plowing
- ❖ Community clean up with dumpsters at the water tower area in Black River Falls.

- ❖ Benevolent services both graveside and ceremonial to include snow removal and storm damage, water delivery.

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### **HE PROBLEMS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN**

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- ❖ HE is compiling usable data for grants.
- ❖ HE will have on-boarding manuals for new employees.
- ❖ HE will continue to update/revise all polices when affected by a new change.
- ❖ HE will follow all policies and produces for each program as documented.
- ❖ HE has audited all applications, sent notice to applicants, and is continuously updating the work plan.

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### **HE GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR**

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- ❖ HE will continue making processes more efficient for waste management
- ❖ Approval of new equipment will allow HE to complete work with less staff and decreased time of completion
- ❖ HE will provide proposals for Legislature to consider for:
  - Waste management concrete pad in Black River Falls
  - Wash Bay in Black River Falls

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### **HE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

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- ❖ HE will partner with Wisconsin DNR in fire suppression. Revenues generated from this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be placed in a restricted account for the future maintenance and replacement of heavy equipment.
- ❖ HE will apply for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Tribal Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Grant.

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## **FINANCE TEAM**

Finance plays a role in helping other departments reach and achieve their goals and tasks by process vouchers and journal entries for payments and completing deposits and working with vendors.

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### **❖ FINANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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- ❖ Updated all TrueBill tenant information
- ❖ All team members are able to work more efficiently with the InforLawson accounting system and running reports

- ❖ Collaboratively worked with HHCDA and Housing’s rental management team to assist tribal members with bringing rental accounts current through rental assistance programs.
- ❖ Submittal of budgets based upon spending caps provided
- ❖ Set up account to apply for Grants
- ❖ Grant writing training/certification
- ❖ Working with Heavy Equipment team to apply for the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Tribal Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grant
- ❖ In the process of taking over HOP Loan Accounting duties`
- ❖ With collaborative efforts with other departments we secured grant funding.
  - Tribal DERA Grant
  - BIA-ARAP – HIP Grant
- ❖ Sent out monthly statements to Tenant

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### **FINANCE PROBLEMS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN**

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- ❖ Finance is compiling usable data for grants.
- ❖ Finance will have on-boarding manuals for new employees.
- ❖ Finance will continue to update/revise all polices when affected by a new change.
- ❖ Finance team audited all special revenue accounts and balances and will work continuously with Treasury to ensure accurate reporting in InforLawson
- ❖ Worked with Treasury to ensure proper processing and reconciliation of Home Repair Loans through the Housing Finance team.
- ❖ Due to the covid-19 pandemic the legislative body passed a resolution to suspend mortgage payments for the Home Ownership Program loans. This caused an increase of phone calls to Treasury and Housing departments. HOP clients were calling to inquiry about their property taxes and home insurance payments.
- ❖ To help with the increase of phone calls Housing started helping with answering calls and is in transition to take over the HOP loan accounting duties.

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### **FINANCE GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR**

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Finance team is responsible for processing all invoices, billing, rental payments, deposits, oversight of funding, intake for Housing, communicate in-kind service requests and equipment rental.

- ❖ Finance will continue improve and make processes more efficient.
- ❖ Continue working with Treasury to ensure accurate reporting to the restricted accounts:
  - Elder Restricted Account
  - Veteran Restricted Account
  - All District and Community Rental Restricted Accounts
  - Home Repair Loan Account
- ❖ Hire a Grant Program Manager

- ❖ Identify more funding sources for Housing
- ❖ Create manuals, on-boarding and training manuals
- ❖ Publish all created manuals
- ❖ Continue to send out Monthly Tenant Statements
- ❖ Develop a HOP statement that is easy to read of the HOP clients and start sending out monthly statement

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## **FINANCE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

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Grants that were secured in Fiscal Year 2022

- ❖ Tribal DERA Grant
- ❖ BIA-ARAP – HIP Grant

Grants that are going to be pursued in Fiscal Year 2023

- ❖ Tribal DERA Grant
- ❖ ROSS Grant

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## **RENTAL MANAGEMENT OFFICE (RMO)**

The Department of Housing has undergone a substantial amount of change within the past year. We've gone through several new employee changes for multiple positions. The Rental Management Field Team which consists of the Construction II and HVAC team had to be retrained to implement a safe and sustainable way to complete maintenance work needed on rental units in all areas during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Department of Housing Rental Management Office received two (2) COVID Office Support workers. The job duties for the COVID Office Support Worker in assisting in Rental Management were to research for Rental Assistance with tribal members located in different counties of Wisconsin along with keeping our offices sanitized and cleaned on a daily basis. They were relieved of their job and duties in December of 2020.

The Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Housing Rental Management Office is striving towards keeping our neighborhoods a safe environment for Tribal Members. We're doing the best we can with what we can from our policies in place and within the scope of what is allowed from OOP and Legislatures. We have been working with Ho-Chunk Nation Police to obtain police report to properly address matters.

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## **RMO ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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- ❖ The RMO has worked on a total of seven (7) new Policies and Procedures were written and implemented, which include:
  - Rental Management Pet Policy
  - Applications, Admissions, & Occupancy Policy



- Tenant Passing Policy
- Uploading Online Applications Policy
- Communication Policy
- Move-In Procedure
- Unit Inspections
- ❖ The Rental Management Office is in the midst of working on Police Calls policy, entering COVID-19 positive tenant's unit policy
- ❖ The Department of Housing Rental Management Office has worked with the I.T. Department to establish an Online Application Database to better serve our Tribal Members.
- ❖ The annual fire inspection for the Whitlock property was completed in the month of January 2022.
- ❖ Annual Unit Inspections are scheduled to be completed in August of 2022. The Rental Management Office Support Team will be sending out notices in July of 2022.
- ❖ The Department of Housing Rental Management Office had a successful plowing season. Our elders were the main concern and making sure their safety was top priority.
- ❖ The Rental Management Office had one (1) Insurance Claims regarding our Rental properties in District one (1)
- ❖ Rental Management currently has 34+ Elder and Elite Elder tenants combined
- ❖ Rental Management is continuing to address all benevolent services for Tribal Members

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### **RMO PROBLEMS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN**

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- ❖ RMO is developing usable data for grants.
- ❖ RMO will have on-boarding manuals for new employees.
- ❖ RMO will Revise all polices when affected by a new change.
- ❖ RMO will follow all policies and produces for each program as documented.
- ❖ The Department of Housing had a substantial loss of tribal members who were tenants, due to COVID-19 Pandemic and other causes. A Tenant Passing Policy was implemented for this reason on April 26, 2021.
- ❖ The Department of Housing tenant's had a difficult time keeping up with the monthly rent and utility charges during the COVID-19 Pandemic. HHCDCA offered a great variety of Rental Assistance programs and a Utility Assistance Program for all Tribal Members to take advantage of. The Department of Housing continues to work along-side HHCDCA in aiding our tribal members and tenants get their monthly rent and utility charge paid.
- ❖ The Rental Management Office implemented and is conducting Preventative Maintenance for all of our Rental Units.
- ❖ Rental Management is currently working with HHCDCA to assist all tribal members that hold an active rental lease with the Rental Assistance Program.

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## **RMO GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR**

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- ❖ The Department of Housing Rental Management Office has been working along-side the Heavy Equipment Team in establishing a Community Clean-up to be completed in September-October 2022 for the Department of Housing's rental units only.
- ❖ The Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Housing has a total of 180 Rental Units in District 1, District 2, and District 3.
- ❖ The Department of Housing is currently waiting for Brock Burnstad to complete Soil Testing at 28632 HWY-21, Tomah WI 54660 to move forward with New Construction of a Duplex by HOLTZ BUILDERS INC.
- ❖ Rental Management Construction II and HVAC team are continuing to work together to maintain rental units in all districts
- ❖ The Department of Housing rental Management Office currently has a waiting list of 62 people for waiting for rental units in all areas. The waiting list consists of 19 single people and 43 families.
- ❖ Rental Management has a unit that was previously un-rentable, our General Contractor, HOLTZ Builders INC. completed an inspection and a proposal was submitted to renovate this unit. (ROBIN CT Property in Necedah)
- ❖ The Rental Management Office had applied for Lease lots 43, 44, 45, & 31-35, we've submitted multiple proposals, and we have been approved for recommended Legislative approval for these lots. These lots were to be utilized by the Department of Housing to build larger rental units to better service larger families. The Rental Management Office is awaiting an approval or denial of the lease application from Legislature
- ❖ Rental Management Office had also worked with Home Ownership Manager to obtain information in purchasing more rental units in areas most requested to live (according to the waiting list) to better Service our tribal members with more housing availabilities.
- ❖ The Department of Housing is still working on other ways we can achieve purchasing or building new housing for tribal members.

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## **HOP ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

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- ❖ RMO is tentatively planning with Social Services the options for a group home for displaced Ho-Chunk children
- ❖ RMO will continue collaborative efforts with the Finance team and HHCDCA to assist tribal members with available assistance.
- ❖ RMO is eager to begin training and planning to apply for future ICDBG grant opportunities.
- ❖ RMO will seek other CDBG opportunities to increase funding for housing within the communities.