



Housing and Community Development

Issue January 2020

From the Manager

Happy New Year!

It's not only a new year but a new decade which offers us so many opportunities for success. It's time to set goals and rid ourselves of bad habits. My new year's resolution is to help others achieve their goals. I want to help 365 families and individuals achieve their goal. Whether it's buying a house, getting a new job, going to school, learning a new skill or just saving for the future. The City's Housing and Community Development Division offers and supports programs that can change people's lives. Through this newsletter and other outreach efforts, we will be stepping up our game to bring you news you can use.



We invite you to join us at one of four Community Resource Fairs being held around the city. The next one is scheduled for February 1, 2020 from 10:00am -2:00pm at Jefferson High School. At the event you will find a variety of resources such as employment opportunities, childcare options, social service offerings, and housing programs. We are bringing the City out to the community one Saturday a quarter to provide a one-stop-shop for services. At this next event we will even have groceries. If this event is not for you, please tell a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker or even stranger. It's amazing how helping someone else can result in a blessing for you.

Visit our webpage and watch as we add new features, information and programs throughout the year. Our staff has been tasked with making our programs easier to access and more impactful. We will be sharing success stories throughout the year and the next one could be yours! We are going to be trying something different and stepping outside our comfort zone so that we can have different results. I challenge you to do the same. The year 2020 means vision. Our vision is a community where everyone is benefiting from the prosperity that Tampa is experiencing. What's your vision for your life? We'd like to help.

Your humble servant,
Vanessa B. McCleary
HCD Manager



Heart Awards

This year, the City of Tampa's HCD Division "owned the show" at the 2019 Heart Awards. The Heart Awards celebrates the love of home and the American Dream of homeownership. The event, held by the Housing and Education Alliance, has become Tampa's premier awards show and recognizes individuals and organizations that support housing education, development, and financing for first time homeowners.

Treana Gatson-Gardner, a 14-year Housing Counselor with the City, received the coveted Tom Zuniga Education Award for her extraordinary commitment to homeownership education and Housing Counselor, LaTasha Hicks was nominated for the award for her role in educating residents. HCD Manager, Vanessa McCleary, took home a Super Housing Hero Award in recognition of her leadership and active role in elevating the programs offered by the City's Housing and Community Development Division.

Success Stories – Stephen Banyra



As a church music director, Stephen's job has many rewards; a big salary isn't one of them. If he bought a home to fix up, he wouldn't have money for the renovations. He began looking at prefabricated homes but worried about their safety and quality.

He had almost given up when he found Urban 360° by Domain Homes. Stephen says it was Juan Concheiro's video on the website that helped him change his mindset. In the video, Juan, a new home advisor with Domain Homes, encourages people who may not think they can buy a home to take that first step.

Feeling hopeful, Stephen went to the Sales Center located at 815 E. Palm Avenue and met Juan in person. Juan explained the Urban 360° program and told Stephen that he may qualify. They helped him qualify for loan assistance and a fixed-rate mortgage. Stephen then worked with Juan to choose a floor plan and a lot that met his needs.

Stephen credits the unique partnerships that Urban 360° has with lenders with making his loan possible. Stephen's new home costs less than his rent and he's delighted with the quality of the construction. "These are very solidly built homes with the same construction processes and materials as high-end Domain Homes," says Stephen. "I feel really good about that, and I won't have to worry about costly repairs or unexpected maintenance."

Success Stories – Mr. Smith

In September 2018, Mr. Smith was involved in an automobile accident. As a result of his injuries, his employment as a laborer eventually ended. Without income, Mr. Smith was unable to pay his mortgage and soon found himself in a dilemma. He turned to the Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Inc. (CDC), for budgeting and mortgage assistance resources. Working with Foreclosure Prevention Counselor, Katria Watkins, Mr. Smith was able to reduce his expenses and develop a sustainable budget, making the family eligible for the City's Foreclosure Prevention Assistance Program. On November 1st, 2019, Mr. Smith received news that he had been awarded \$15,000 in reinstatement assistance. Thanks to the CDC of Tampa, Inc. and City of Tampa, the Smith family received the help they needed.



Employee Shout Out!

HCD's Kayon Henderson oversees the City's Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program, which has become a model for state & national programs. Thanks to her hard work, the City recently received a \$947,477 grant from the state to fund this program!



Upcoming Events – Community Resource Fair

Community Resource Fair - February 1st, 2020
Jefferson High School, 4401 W. Cypress Street

The City of Tampa Housing and Community Development Division is hosting its 2nd Community Resource Fair. The event will be held on Saturday, February 1st, 2020, at Jefferson High School, 4401 W. Cypress Street from 10am-2pm. These events are designed to be a “one-stop shop” to help area residents receive program assistance. These quarterly events support the City’s “Action Today Resilient Tomorrow” initiative; a reminder that our actions (or inaction) as an individual and as a community will affect our tomorrow. The action of bringing resources together and meeting the needs of residents will ensure that Tampa communities enjoy a sustainable, strong and resilient tomorrow. To register for this event or to learn more, please visit our website www.tampagov.net/HCD.



Education Resources - Housing, Human Rights and Employment workshops will be conducted in English and Spanish during the Resource Fair Topics include “Home Buying with Ease” and “Navigating Through Disability Rights.”

Morning Sessions 11:00am & 11:30am
Afternoon Sessions 1:00pm & 1:30pm

Don't miss this exciting event!

Future Community Resource Fair

April 11th, 2020 - University Area CDC, 14013 North 22nd Street

Water/Wastewater Customer Assistance Program

The City of Tampa’s Water/Wastewater Customer Assistance Program was developed to aid low-income customers with their water and wastewater utility bills. To qualify for the program, an applicant must:

- Be the primary residential account holder; and
- Reside in the home; and
- Meet low-income requirements;
- Renters and Homeowners as long as not receiving Section 8.

Definitions:

- Low-income = maximum household income no more than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI)

Qualifications for program:

- Residential single-family OR non master-metered multi-family customers only.
- Customer must live at the address for which the assistance is requested.
- Primary utility account holder OR have power of attorney/legal authority for the account holder at that service address and responsible for payment of utility bill.
- Must participate in the water conservation program.
- Recertification required annually.

NOTE: Rate assistance is NOT available to landlords for their rental properties.



Financial Literacy Workshops

City of Tampa Housing and Community Development Division along with the Parks and Recreation Department partnered with Tampa Bay Federal Credit Union to host a series of financial workshops for the City's youth. Age-dependent workshops were designed to engage elementary, middle and high school students in fun and meaningful ways. Elementary students participated in a 3-week course that taught banking basics and celebrated their achievement with a well-deserved pizza party. Teens and parents met once a month for 4 months and learned about spending/budgeting, financial tools, and credit/lending. This year's workshops are anticipated to begin in February 2020. For enrollment information or to locate a participating Parks and Recreation center, please contact the HCD at 813-274-7940.



New Employee Highlights

Angela Robles *Housing Counselor*



Angela Robles joined the City as a Housing Counselor to help applicants qualify for the Water/Wastewater Customer Assistance Program. Before coming to the City of Tampa she worked as a Medical Assistant/Office Manager for a doctor's office where her medical and accounting skills were used on a daily basis. "I love what I am doing as it gives me an opportunity to help others which is a great passion of mine."

Ebone Clifton *Outreach Coordinator*



Ebone Clifton has joined the Housing & Community Development division to increase awareness of programs and services offered by City of Tampa. Her role focuses on connecting an organization's ideas and practices to the public by providing educational components that engage the community. "I love everything about Tampa and its bright future! In this new role I hope to create partnerships throughout the community to sustain a lifetime."

Marquaz McGhee *Community Development Specialist*



Marquaz McGhee is the City's newest Community Development Specialist. He is working with the City's housing and construction partners to expand affordable housing. He comes from the non-profit community where he assisted families in achieving the dream of homeownership. "Providing people with decent and affordable housing provides me with enormous gratification and at the City of Tampa, I have the unique privilege to be paid to do what I feel is my calling."

Terry Thomas *Community Development Coordinator*



Terry Thomas joined the City to take a similar role to one he had with Hillsborough County. He brings over 20 years of federal program experience to his new role as the Community Development Coordinator. He is responsible for contract management and oversight of all of HCD's construction related developments including new construction, owner occupied rehabilitation, and public facility improvements. All activities are currently funded with CDBG, HOME, and SHIP and he is responsible for the program reporting and the monitoring component to ensure program compliance.

Maurice Foster *Human Rights Investigation Supervisor*



Maurice Foster joins the City of Tampa as the new Human Rights Investigation Supervisor. He is a new Tampanian leaving his home in Georgia where he was the Director of Fair Housing and Legislative Affairs with the Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity. He will lead the City's Human Rights Office and assist individuals and families with cases of discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations. He is excited to be joining the team and looks forward to expanding the office and its effectiveness in the community.

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