Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC)

5 - Year Strategic Plan
December 2013 – December 2018

Adopted by:
Chautauqua County Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC) Board of Directors

December 2013
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It is my pleasure to share with you some goals and plans our Strategic Planning team, comprised of Board members, Staff, and Community partners, has recently developed as we consider the future of Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC).

Earlier this year, the Strategic Planning Team Committee was formed to consider CHRIC’s next five years. Comprised of current and former board members, staff, and community partners, this group included Board Chairman Larry Pace, former Board Chair and Founder Len Faulk, Peter Lombardi of the Jamestown Renaissance Corporation, Dunkirk City Councilwoman Stephanie Kiyak, JobStart Chautauqua Inc. Board member Richard Alexander, and Staff Members, Debbie Grien, Eileen Powers, Tom Maggio, and Mayra Alvarado.

Thank you for the dedicated effort you have each provided to the CHRIC Strategic Planning process. I recognize that you have collectively invested many hours in developing and refining a vision and mission, a set of values, and overarching goals for the organization and I am enthused by the results.

We would also like to thank our consultant Collective Impact, LLC and specifically Bruce Decker, Denina Bautti-Cascio, and Steven Heasley for providing guidance and leading us through a process that was both quite challenging and rewarding.

I would like to briefly draw your attention to a few key items in the strategic plan.

- First, CHRIC’s staff and Board members are fully engaged in exploring new partnerships with other organizations and communities throughout Chautauqua County that have not been fully cultivated in the past,
- Increasing the CHRIC profile across the County is vitally important to our continued success. We will create and capitalize on new opportunities to strengthen our outreach in a multitude of ways through better branding and public relations initiatives,
- We are committed to developing thoughtful new programs and improving current ones to ensure Chautauqua County residents receive the highest quality services available,
- CHRIC will strive to increase its financial sustainability while maintaining mission oriented projects throughout Chautauqua County.

This strategic plan presents the groundwork for CHRIC moving forward. We hope that you will join us and make Chautauqua County a better place to live, work, and play.

Sincerely,
Joshua Freifeld, Executive Director
Overview and History of the Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC)

Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation & Improvement Corporation (CHRIC) was founded in 1977 to improve the housing stock of Chautauqua County, New York. CHRIC is a private, not-for-profit agency overseen by a Board of Directors made up of community representatives.

CHRIC became a chartered member of the NeighborWorks® America network in 2003. Working in partnership with others, NeighborWorks® organizations provide leadership to strengthen communities and create affordable housing opportunities for low-and moderate-income families.

CHRIC has been helping residents of Chautauqua County purchase, repair and maintain their homes since 1978 through lending programs and grants for necessary home repairs, improvements to rental properties, and adaptations for the elderly and disabled. CHRIC has received eleven federal grants through nation-wide competitions. As a county-wide not-for-profit housing agency CHRIC administers grant funds provided by federal, state, local & private agencies. CHRIC also provides assistance with Homeownership Education Counseling to first time homebuyers and has completed a Foreclosure Prevention Counseling program for existing homeowners.

In recent years, CHRIC has provided area communities with assistance in obtaining funding for community development projects such as: the Dunkirk Lighthouse Project, Yorker Museum Project, the downtown Main Street Revitalization Project in Sherman, Restoration of the Brocton Arch, and the Village of Bemus Point Waterfront Revitalization Project. In October 2013, CHRIC celebrated its 35th anniversary of providing services for residents and communities in Chautauqua County.

CHRIC maintains the following primary lines of business operations. The specific funding sources and grants change from year to year, but at any point in time might include:

**Rehabilitation:**

1. NYS Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC)
2. Federal Home Loan Bank’s Affordable Housing Program (AHP)
3. Various municipal Community Development Block Grants
4. NYS Housing and Community Renewal (HCR) Access to Home (adaptations/modifications)
5. NYS HCR RESTORE (emergency repairs for seniors)
6. NYS HCR HOME
7. HUD Lead Hazard Control
8. Healthcare provider/insurance-based funding for modification & adaptations
9. Privately funded rehab assistance for military veterans
Overview and History of the Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC)

NWA Counseling Services:
  (1) Homeownership fees
  (2) Rental Fees
  (3) HUD Housing Counseling funding through NWA
  (4) Private funding from commercial lenders

Acquisition Rehabilitation Resale:
  (1) NYS HCR HOME CHDO funding (Jamestown Homes)
  (2) City of Jamestown HOME CHDO funding
  (3) NYS Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC)
  (4) Federal Home Loan Bank’s Affordable Housing Program (AHP)
  (5) NWA capital lending

Community Development:
  (1) NYS Office of Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation
  (2) Various municipal Community Development Block Grants
  (3) NYS HCR Main Street
  (4) NYS HCR Rural Area Revitalization Program (RARP)
  (5) Restore NY
  (6) HUD Rural Housing & Economic Development (RHED)

Project Overview

In July 2013, Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC) engaged Collective Impact, LLC to facilitate an organizational assessment and strategic planning process resulting in the production of this 5-Year Strategic Plan for the organization. The primary purpose of the plan is to better position CHRIC to realize financial sustainability while maintaining fidelity to its mission.

The CHRIC Planning Team

Joshua Freifeld - CHRIC Executive Director
Debbie Grien - CHRIC Director of Finance
Eileen Powers - CHRIC Director of Housing Rehab Services
Mayra Alvarado - CHRIC Homeowner Program Manager
Tom Maggio - CHRIC Special Projects Manager
Larry Pace - CHRIC Board President

Len Faulk - Former CHRIC Board Member/Founder
Stephanie Kiyak - City of Dunkirk
Peter Lombardi - Jamestown Renaissance Corp.
Rich Alexander - JobStart Board Member
Jim Mayshark - Sherman Businessman
Acknowledgements

The Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation want to acknowledge NeighborWorks® America for supporting this strategic planning process.

Many thanks also go to the large number of community residents who contributed to the process by completing surveys, participating in the community discussions, and offering their insight and opinions through the interviews conducted. The dedication of the CHRIC Planning Team in reviewing research findings and formulating the goals and strategies addressed through the plan is very much appreciated.

The Planning Process

The Chautauqua County Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation began work on the 5-Year Strategic Plan in August of 2013. The first work session with the Planning Team was facilitated by Collective Impact, LLC and was designed to explore their expectations for the planning process and identify key issues that would be examined through research that would inform the final plan.

During the three month period of September through November information was gathered from key community stakeholders, former CHRIC customers, and the leadership of CHRIC through a number of processes that included:

- An on-line stakeholder survey,
- Two community discussions held in Jamestown and Dunkirk, NY where local residents were engaged in a facilitated discussion about community needs,
- A survey of former CHRIC customers, and
- Interviews with selected key informants.

A second work session was held with the Planning Team in October and issues related to vision, mission, core values, and desired outcomes were discussed. The team also identified strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats that affect CHRIC and reviewed the results of the two community discussions.

In November, the CHRIC leadership completed a number of self-assessments provided by the Collective Impact consultant team including:

- Organizational capacity assessment,
- Cost-Benefit analysis,
- Sustainability forecasting, and
- Programs and services expansion assessment.

The consultant team analyzed the findings from the self-assessment instruments and the stakeholder engagement processes and prepared reports for review by the CHRIC Planning Team during their third and final work session held in early December. The Planning Team then selected “goal champions” and priority strategies they wished to include in the 5-Year Strategic Plan.

Our expectations for CHRIC include:

- Housing rehabilitation,
- Create stable and stronger neighborhoods,
- Network building and collaborative action,
- Youth development, and
- Aggressively seek alternative financing options.

- Participants at Dunkirk Community
Summary of Key Findings

Strengths of the Local Housing and Community Development/Revitalization Market:

- High quality existing homes with great character and historic significance.
- Affordable housing options and development costs.
- Land Bank – capital for acquisition and rehabilitation.
- Community Foundations.
- Neighborhood Associations and citizen engagement.
- Good medical care, schools, and community services.
- Development offices in larger cities.
- County-wide tourism.
- Elected and governmental officials.

CHRIC has done a great job in our community repairing older homes.
- Survey Respondent

Challenges/Needs within the Local Market:

- Increase homeownership rates.
- Better maintained rental units.
- Single family starter homes.
- Specialized housing options.
- Single person housing options.
- Mismatch between needs and existing profile of homes.
- Increase investments in community development/revitalization projects.
- Finance demolition of non-functional housing and construction of “right-sized” new housing.
- Costs of new construction.
- Engage landlords and renters in neighborhood/community projects.
- Improve recreational opportunities and “green spaces”.
- Proactive process for code enforcement.

% Stakeholder’s Indicating There Are ‘Not Enough’ Housing Units

- Starter Homes: 34%
- Large Homes: 20%
- Large Apartments: 61%
- Manufacturing or Mobile Homes: 12%
- Public Housing: 20%
- Small Apartments: 11%
- Housing for the Elderly: 61%
- Housing for Special Needs: 70%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%
Summary of Key Findings

CHRIC Organizational Strengths

- Knowledgeable staff.
- Good leadership.
- Expertise in grant writing.
- Financial management.
- Positive reputation in communities served.
- Responsive to new opportunities and trends.
- Public-private partnerships focused on community development.
- Rehabilitation of existing housing.
- Customers are pleased with the services received at CHRIC.
- Customers achieve positive outcomes from their experiences with CHRIC.

CHRIC Organizational Challenges

- Waiting list for some services.
- Lack of understanding among some community leaders and the general public about services provided by CHRIC.
- Need to better market the organization.
- Loan defaults.
- Need for increased capital for acquisition and rehabilitation.
- Need to diversify financial resources.
- Funding is becoming harder to access.
- Outdated technology systems.
- Restricted cash flow.
- Ability to sell rehabilitated homes within the current housing market.
- Overcoming past relationship “strains.”

Due to some past experiences, the acquisition, rehabilitation, and re-sale program may take some selling to staff and board.

- Interviewee
Strategic Action Plan

CHRIC Vision

“CHRIC, partnering with Chautauqua County, envisions a region where well-informed residents work together to ensure that their communities have quality affordable housing that is sustainable, with diverse neighborhoods that are economically vibrant.”

CHRIC Mission

“Promoting neighborhood stabilization, community revitalization, and economic development through projects and partnerships that positively impact Chautauqua County and its residents”.

Core Values

At CHRIC, we believe our strength is rooted in our core values:
• CHRIC is committed to putting people and families in safe, affordable housing.
• CHRIC pursues excellence through hard work and dedication.
• CHRIC embraces change as well as being proactive and forward thinking.
• CHRIC acts with integrity, accountability, and professionalism.
• CHRIC serves the Chautauqua community and partners with compassion.
• CHRIC acts on all challenges in an ambitious and timely manner.
• CHRIC’s work culture operates with mutual respect, self-criticism, continual self-improvement, in a family-oriented environment.
• CHRIC is committed to Chautauqua County communities, clients, and partners and has a passion for improving the lives and housing stock of Chautauqua county residents.

Goals and Strategies

Goal Area: Board Development and Governance - anything related to the development and functioning of the board of directors and the governance of and accountability for the organization

Goal Champions: Larry Pace and Joshua Freifeld

Desired Outcomes:
• Strengthen Board committees.
• Increase efficiency of Board functions.
• Increase knowledge and skills of Board members.
Strategic Action Plan

**Benchmarks to Measure Progress:**
- BOD committee structure is clearly defined responsibilities of each committee are clear by July 1, 2014.
- BOD has reviewed, developed and/or modified corporation policies by July 1, 2014.
- BOD self-assessment and training session has been completed by July 1, 2014.

**Strategies for Action:**

Complete within 6 Months:
1. Improve new Board member orientation and training processes.
2. Engage BOD in a self-assessment process as recommended by NeighborWorks.
3. Review organizational By-Laws and governance practices and amend By-Laws as necessary to reflect current practice.
4. Review the current BOD committee structure and identify and strengthen the role of each committee as appropriate to improve board functioning. (on-going)
5. Increase diversity of BOD to better reflect communities served. (on-going)
6. Assure adequate board approved policy is in place that addresses:
   - Regular review of salary structure,
   - Regular review of programs and services,
   - Evaluation of BOD performance,
   - Lobbying, advocacy, and partisan activity,
   - BOD attendance and participation,
   - Board review of resource allocation,
   - Purchasing,
   - Document retention,
   - Gift acceptance and fund raising, and
   - Asset investment.

Complete within 1 year:
7. Engage board members in conversations with municipal and state level elected officials about needs within the service area and CHRIC’s role in meeting those needs. (on-going)
8. Personnel Committee and BOD review of salary structure within organization. (on-going)

**Goal Area:** Human Resources - anything related to staffing, including hiring, retention, training, compensation, etc.

**Goal Champions:** Debbie Grien, Eileen Powers, and Joshua Freifeld

**Desired Outcomes:**
- Improved levels of staff knowledge, skills, and expertise.
- Improved compensation, benefits, and incentives.
Strategic Action Plan

Benchmarks to Measure Progress:
• Staff training needs are assessed and in-service training plan is in place by July 1, 2014.
• BOD has reviewed salary and benefit structure by July 1, 2014.

Strategies for Action:

Complete within 6 months:
1. Review organizational chart and middle management responsibilities to assure that all current services and programs are properly managed and the organizational structure reflects all lines of business.
2. Assure a letter of employment or contract is in place for all personnel. (on-going)
3. Review staff responsibilities to assure there is adequate staff support for any new initiatives or community development/revitalization projects. (on-going)
4. Develop a training plan designed to increase staff knowledge, expertise, and skill sets related to services and programs offered by CHRIC. (on-going)
5. Review the current salary and benefit structure and improve staff compensation, benefits, and performance incentives to the extent possible. (on-going)

Goal Area: Programs, Services, and Facilities - anything related to the programs and services offered, assessing the impact of programs and services, as well as the organization’s physical resources such as its buildings, equipment, etc.

Goal Champions: Larry Pace and Joshua Freifeld

Desired Outcomes:
• Increased production.
• Increased involvement in community development projects.
• Increased portfolio of rental properties.
• Improved measures of impact and performance.
• Data driven decisions.
• Improved internal checks and balances.

Benchmarks to Measure Progress:
• Number of owner occupied rehabilitated homes is increased by 5% by January 1, 2015.
• Number of homes acquired for re-sale by January 1, 2015; 5 homes
• Portfolio of acquisition, rehabilitated, and sold homes is increased by 20% by January 1, 2016.
• Rental property portfolio is increased by 40% by January 1, 2016.
• Evaluative data is identified and collected to measure impact of all programs and services by July 1, 2014.
• 2 local communities are involved in a comprehensive community design planning process by January 1, 2016.
Strategic Action Plan

Strategies for Action:

Complete within 6 months:
1. Clearly define the programs and services provided by CHRIC. (on-going)
2. Identify any deficiencies and improve the process for acquisition, rehabilitation and re-sale of homes. (on-going)
3. Enhance understanding of all services and programs throughout the organization. (on-going)
4. Evaluate all services and programs to identify process inefficiency related to service delivery. (on-going)
5. Improve program design as may be necessary to improve service delivery. (on-going)
6. Review technology related equipment needs at all facilities and upgrade equipment and software on a scheduled basis in order to assure that all staff have access to needed equipment and supplies necessary to carry out job responsibilities. (on-going)

Complete within 1 year:
7. Evaluate services and programs and establish clear & measurable performance targets that define desired outcomes. (on-going)
8. Collect information from customers about program experiences and suggestions for program improvement. (on-going)
9. Train staff on how to use evaluative information to improve service delivery and program outcomes. (on-going)
10. Brief the BOD on all program evaluation findings. (on-going)
11. Identify any facility limitations that may need to be addressed to protect privacy, safety, security, and efficiency concerns. (on-going)

Complete within 2 years:
12. Increase the current portfolio of rental properties managed by CHRIC by 40% in 2 years.
13. Establish set aside in budget or new line item for needed equipment and supplies in 2 years.

Complete within 3 years:
14. Provide assistance and partnership for an abbreviated consolidated county-wide and fair housing plan and assist local municipalities in developing plans for more livable communities based on principles of comprehensive community design. (2-3 years)
15. Explore possibilities for funding a “Youth-Build” type of program within the county. (3-5 years)
Goal Area: Communication and Information Systems - anything related to sharing information within the organization and systems for storing, sharing, and using data

Goal Champions: Debbie Grien, Eileen Powers, and Joshua Freifeld

Desired Outcomes:
- Improved staff communication throughout the organization.
- Use technology to eliminate paper files and improve production.

Benchmarks to Measure Progress:
- Regular communications inform staff about all aspects of the organization by July 1, 2014.
- Technology needs are assessed by January 1, 2015.

Strategies for Action:

Complete within 1 year:
1. Assure all staff and Board members are kept informed of any changes in policy and procedure that potentially affects their job responsibilities. (on-going)
2. Brief staff on a regular basis on evaluative information collected and achievement of program benchmarks. (on-going)

Complete within 2 years:
3. Identify or dedicate funding to allocate toward technology upgrades.

Complete within 3 to 5 years:
4. Develop information systems (e.g. dashboard) necessary to effectively manage and evaluate all services and programs provided by CHRIC.

Complete within 5 years:
5. Increase the use of technology and electronic record to decrease paper files and improve information sharing.

Goal Area: Marketing, Branding, and Relationships - anything related to communication outside of the organization, brand identity, advocacy, and relationships with the broader community and collaborative partners

Goal Champions: Tom Maggio and Eileen Powers

Desired Outcomes:
- Improved recognition of the CHRIC brand in Chautauqua County communities.
- Strengthened collaborative relationships with community partners.
- Increased media presence within the local market.
Strategic Action Plan

**Benchmarks to Measure Progress:**
- 5 collaborative partnerships with area municipalities are established by January 1, 2015.
- CHRIC supports 3 local grass roots organizations in efforts to improve their local neighborhood or community by January 1, 2015.
- CHRIC website and social media sites are re-designed by July 1, 2015.

**Strategies for Action:**

Complete within 1 year:
1. Strengthen relationships with local governmental, non-governmental organizations, banks, faith-based entities, etc., that share the CHRIC mission. (on-going)

Complete within 2 years:
2. Strengthen the brand of the organization: (on-going)
   - Redesign and enhance the organizations website.
   - Redesign the organization’s logo to better reflect the scope of services provided.
   - Develop marketing materials with a consistent design and brand promotion.
   - Utilize social media sites to market services and programs and involve the public in community events and projects.
3. Develop a public relations (PR) plan for CHRIC. (on-going)
4. Provide technical assistance to local community development groups and neighborhood associations related to planning and implementation of local projects. (on-going)

**Goal Area:** Financial and Legal - anything related to financial reporting, accountability, and sustainability of the organization, and legal matters related to the organization

**Goal Champions:** Debbie Grien and Joshua Freifeld

**Desired Outcomes:**
- Increased financial resources available to the organization.
- Improved legal response and follow-up.

**Benchmarks to Measure Progress:**
- BOD approved polices related to fundraising are in place by July 1, 2014.
- Any outstanding legal issues affecting the organization are resolved by July 1, 2014.
- Unrestricted assets of the corporation are increased by 15% by January 11, 2016.
Strategic Action Plan

Strategies for Action:

Complete within 6 months:
1. Develop a fundraising plan for the organization.
2. Engage the BOD in fundraising efforts. Adopt BOD approved policies related to fundraising, solicitation, gift acceptance, and investment of unrestricted assets.
3. Review policies and procedures for directing and monitoring financial resources.
4. Develop and implement a procurement plan.
5. Respond to any legal issues in a timely fashion and assure adequate follow-up as may be required.
6. Pursue funding opportunities that might become available to support the development and implementation of new programs and/or services, as determined feasible. (ongoing)

Complete within 3-5 years:
7. Explore tax credit opportunities that might assist with project financing.

Sources of Information Used to Develop the Strategic Plan

• Market Opportunities Report, April 29th, 2013.
• Summary of Findings from Stakeholders Survey, November 25th, 2013.
• Summary of Findings from Customer Survey, November 26th, 2013.
• Summary of Findings from Community Discussion, September 30th, 2013.
• Summary of Findings from Community Discussion, October 11th, 2013.
• Summary of Key Informant Interviews, November 26th, 2013.
• Notes from Planning Sessions, August 26th, October 29th, and December 3rd, 2013.
• Summary of Review of Documents and Self-Assessments, November 29th, 2013.
  • Includes CHRIC Organizational and Financial Documents.
  • Self-assessments including:
    • CHRIC Organizational Assessment,
    • Cost-Benefit Analysis,
    • Sustainability Forecasting, and
    • Programs and Services Expansion Assessment.
2013 CHRIC Board of Directors

- Larry Pace, President
- Beverly Bailey, Vice-President
- Barbara Hoitink, Treasurer
- John Samuelson, CHRIC Attorney
- Karen M. Ardillo, Director
- Richard Babbage, Director
- James P. Barrett, Director
- Sylvia Faust, Director
- Katherine A. Kaus, Director
- Patricia M. Perlee, Director
- Peggy A. Preston, Director
- Carol White, Director

Dunkirk Lighthouse in Progress
CHRIC House, 52 Grant St., Jamestown

Before & After
Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation
and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC)
2 Academy Street – Mayville
New York 14757–1050

716–753–4650 – Main Line
716–661–7650 – Jamestown Area
716–363–4650 – Dunkirk Area
TDD – 1–800–622–1220

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NeighborWorks®
CHARTERED MEMBER

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