



# Public Housing in Minneapolis & the U.S.: Key Developments

## MPHA Timeline

**1930s:** U.S. Housing Act of 1937 takes root with Sumner Field Homes, the first public housing in Minneapolis and Minnesota.

**1940s:** The Minnesota State Legislature enables local jurisdictions to establish their own public housing and community development agencies. Mayor Hubert H. Humphrey creates the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority (MHRA).

**1950s:** MHRA constructs Glendale Townhomes, which still provide homes to 184 families today.

**1960s:** Public housing grows to include apartments for low-income adults in 28 highrise apartment buildings across the city. Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey becomes a high-profile advocate for federal funds to fuel this new direction in public housing development.

**1970s:** Family housing expands with hundreds of new scatter-site homes developed through acquisition and rehab. MHRA becomes one of the first housing authorities to use the Section 8 rental assistance program.

**1980s:** The MHRA merges with Minneapolis Industrial Development Commission to form Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA). A reorganization mid-decade creates the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority as a department of city government.

**1991:** MPHA becomes independent from city government, with an independent board appointed by city officials and Cora McCorvey as its first Executive Director. At the time, MPHA is rated "At Risk" by HUD. MPHA transforms itself in following years to become one of nation's premier public housing authorities.

**1992:** MPHA opens Signe Burckhardt Manor as the one of the first public housing facilities with assisted living services for seniors.

**1993:** MPHA is one of the first housing authorities to institute an elderly housing plan, using a change in federal law to designate senior-only buildings. MPHA and Minneapolis Rep. Martin Sabo had championed this change in Washington as necessary to serve the growing low-income elderly population.

**1995:** The landmark settlement of the Hollman vs. Cisneros lawsuit generates more than \$100 million to replace concentrated, deteriorating housing in North Minneapolis with newly-built and acquired units, both in that neighborhood and around the metro area.

**1997:** MPHA's public housing program earns its first "High Performer" rating from HUD, which it retains to this day.

**2002:** Growing out of the Hollman settlement, Heritage Park opens in Near North Minneapolis, featuring 500 new homes including public housing, market-rate rental units, and affordable houses for sale.

**2005:** MPHA receives a \$14 million HOPE VI program grant to build Heritage Commons, an assisted living public housing facility using green technologies.

**2007:** MPHA's Section 8 HCV Program achieves a "High Performer" rating from HUD.

**2008:** MPHA, already a partial Moving to Work (MTW) agency, is granted full Moving-to-Work (MTW) status.

**2009:** MPHA applies \$50 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to create the nation's first public housing for dementia and memory care, Feeney Manor.

**2011:** MPHA celebrates its 20th Anniversary as an independent agency.

**2017:** After more than 25 years, MPHA's long-time Executive Director Cora McCorvey retires. The MPHA board hires Greg Russ, an industry leader with more than 40 years working in public and affordable housing.

**2018:** MPHA's board approves a Strategic Vision and Capital Plan that commits to a long-term effort to reinvest in deteriorating public housing, support economic opportunities for families, and protect the rights of residents.



## U.S. Public Housing Timeline

- **1934:** Public housing begins under President Roosevelt with a law creating the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration.
- **1937:** U.S. Housing Act of 1937 provides government subsidies for local housing agencies; limits new housing by requiring that for each unit created, an older, substandard unit must be razed.
- **1940s:** Congress authorizes more direct federal involvement to house returning veterans. The Federal Housing Act of 1949 provides money for 800,000 new apartments.
- **1950s:** Congress creates programs that leverage private investment to create new affordable rental housing.
- **1960s:** Highrises come to dominate the new approach to public housing. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is established. Scattered-site housing is first implemented, including single-family homes and smaller apartment complexes. New federal law ties public housing rent to tenant income.
- **1970s:** The second and final decade in which public housing construction continues to expand. Congress creates various programs under "Section 8," including the concept of rental housing vouchers.
- **1980s:** The Reagan administration cuts public housing funding. A general decline in support for programs serving the low-income is accompanied by an increase in homelessness.
- **1990s:** The National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing reports 86,000 of the country's public housing units are nearly uninhabitable. HUD introduces HOPE VI program for the demolition and rebuilding of more than 100,000 public housing apartments nationwide. In 1996, Congress creates the Moving to Work (MTW) demonstration, allowing the 39 housing authorities who ultimately apply to waive certain regulations and combine their funding streams to better serve their communities.
- **2016:** Congress reauthorizes the MTW program, and authorizes its expansion to 100 more agencies.

*While there have been changes to the structure of many federal housing programs, there has been no significant investment in new housing affordable to the lowest-income people in more than 30 years.*