



**HRA60**

Empowering Lives • 1964 - 2024

2024  
*Annual  
Report*

*Steadfast in Service —  
Adapting Through Uncertainty*





Juneteenth Celebration



Summer Youth Employment & Learning Program



HRA 60th Anniversary  
"The Daughters"



Sunrise: August 16, 1921 ~  
Sunset: June 21, 2024



HRA 60th Anniversary  
Special Recognition for Years of Service



Greater Hartford  
Puerto Rican Day Parade



HRA in the Community



ECE Program Pre-Service



New Britain Food  
and Resource  
Turkey Distribution



Here to stay. Here to serve. 60 years and rising.

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# *Steadfast in Service – Adapting Through Uncertainty*

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Dear Friends and Community Partners,

This year's annual report comes at a time of both deep resolve and reflection for our organization. As we continue to provide critical services through the close of the fiscal year, we also find ourselves navigating an increasingly complex and uncertain funding landscape.

We are proud to report that all programs operating through June 30, 2025, remain on track and uninterrupted. Our teams are actively finalizing project closeouts while also preparing for the anticipated continuation of key services in the new program year beginning July 1st. However, as of the time of this writing, award letters for several programs have yet to be issued, delaying final planning and staffing.

This moment calls upon our greatest strengths—resilience, preparation, and our unrelenting commitment to the communities we serve. Our staff have stepped up to ensure readiness, engaging in recruitment, pre-service planning, and communication strategies to ensure continuity, even as decisions beyond our control are pending.

We've heard from many of you—our funders, partners, families, and supporters—sharing your concern and encouragement. We are heartened by your recognition that HRA is a pillar of stability for New Britain, Bristol, and beyond. Please know that we are not going anywhere. We are here to stay, and we will continue to advocate, innovate, and deliver with integrity.

This report highlights both our successes and the ongoing challenges of operating a human services organization in today's environment. It also lifts up the stories of perseverance, leadership, and hope that define who we are.

Thank you for standing with us.

With gratitude,

**Dr. Marlo Greponne**  
Executive Director

**Mary Fortier, Esq.**  
Board President



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## Introduction: Ensuring Stability and Stewardship

This section highlights the foundational work carried out throughout the fiscal year to ensure HRA's financial and operational stability. We successfully transitioned and fully rebuilt the Finance Department following a complete departmental turnover. Every finance position was newly recruited and filled, resulting in the formation of a strong, well-qualified team. While this change resulted in the loss of approximately 15 years of institutional knowledge, HRA's senior leadership—anchored by over 28 years of executive experience, including 13 years as Planning Director—provided the continuity and expertise needed to guide and support this new team through the transition.

We are grateful for the invaluable support of our Board Treasurer, Joseph Tobias Freeman, whose consistent guidance has further fortified our financial oversight and stewardship.

Throughout this period, we maintained fiscal accountability by holding weekly internal meetings focused on payables, documentation, and compliance with all funder requirements. These efforts ensured accurate processing and transparent financial practices across departments.

Our agency remains timely in the submission of required financial and administrative documentation. The IRS Form 990 was submitted by the May 15th deadline, and at the time of this report's release, HRA is operating under an annual budget for FY 2025–2026 that has been formally approved by the Board of Directors.

This period of transition has been met with resilience, strategic planning, and a steadfast commitment to ensuring our mission-driven work remains uncompromised.

## Financial Stewardship

This year demanded not only routine financial oversight but also extraordinary adaptability. Following the full turnover of HRA's Finance Department, the agency successfully maintained fiscal continuity while onboarding a new team and safeguarding the integrity of every funding stream.

Our fiscal operations were strengthened by weekly internal reviews, deep collaboration with program leadership, and technical assistance from our Board Treasurer and external partners. This proactive structure allowed us to meet all major financial deadlines—including the IRS Form 990 filing, agency-wide budget submission, and multiple grant closeouts—without delay.

While we have met every regulatory requirement, the financial pressures facing community action agencies like HRA are escalating. Flat funding, rising operational costs, and growing community need continue to stretch our resources. And yet, we persist. Our fiscal discipline is rooted in values: transparency, integrity, and the strategic stewardship of every public and private dollar.

HRA remains committed to refining our internal systems, leveraging new financial tools, and advocating for the sustainable funding necessary to meet our community's evolving needs.



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## Program Continuity Through Uncertainty

Despite funding delays and the ongoing unpredictability of the fiscal landscape, HRA has remained unwavering in its commitment to uninterrupted service delivery. Through June 30, 2025, all major programs—including Early Head Start, SNAP outreach, Weatherization Assistance, and VITA—have continued to operate without disruption. This is not by chance, but by design: behind the scenes, our teams are engaged in a continuous balancing act, sustaining current services while actively developing mitigation strategies in response to ever-shifting funding realities.

As required by the Federal Head Start Act, we are pleased to report the following financial data for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024:

- **Total Revenues:** \$20,261,674
  - Government Grants: \$17,693,688
  - Program Income: \$818,350
  - Nongovernmental Grants/Contributions: \$1,193,279
  - Bond Debt Service Funding: \$434,859
  - Rental and Other Income: \$121,498
- **Total Expenses:** \$19,963,783
  - Salaries and Benefits: \$9,855,616
  - Direct Client Assistance: \$5,351,345
  - Professional Services: \$1,642,076
  - Occupancy: \$1,359,812
  - Depreciation, Interest, Supplies, Other: \$1,754,934
- **Change in Net Assets:** +\$297,891
- **Net Assets, End of Year:** \$8,021,660

This duality—maintaining excellence in the present while preparing for the unknown—demands both strategic foresight and emotional resilience. Our staff have shouldered this complexity with grace, implementing contingency plans, adjusting workflows, and preparing communications long before official notifications arrive. Yet, what is most remarkable is that none of this burden is ever transferred to the families and individuals we serve.

Many of our clients arrive at our doors carrying heavy emotional, financial, and social burdens. The last thing they need is to sense our internal uncertainty. And thanks to the incredible professionalism of our workforce, they never do. Our staff continue to greet each client with care, dignity, and the calm assurance that they are in good hands—regardless of the external pressures we face.

The needs of our community—urgent, complex, and deeply human—always take precedence. It is this clarity of purpose that enables our team to stay focused and mission-aligned, even in the face of ambiguity. Their ability to sustain high-quality services without missing a beat is a testament to the strength of HRA’s internal culture and the extraordinary caliber of the people who power our work.



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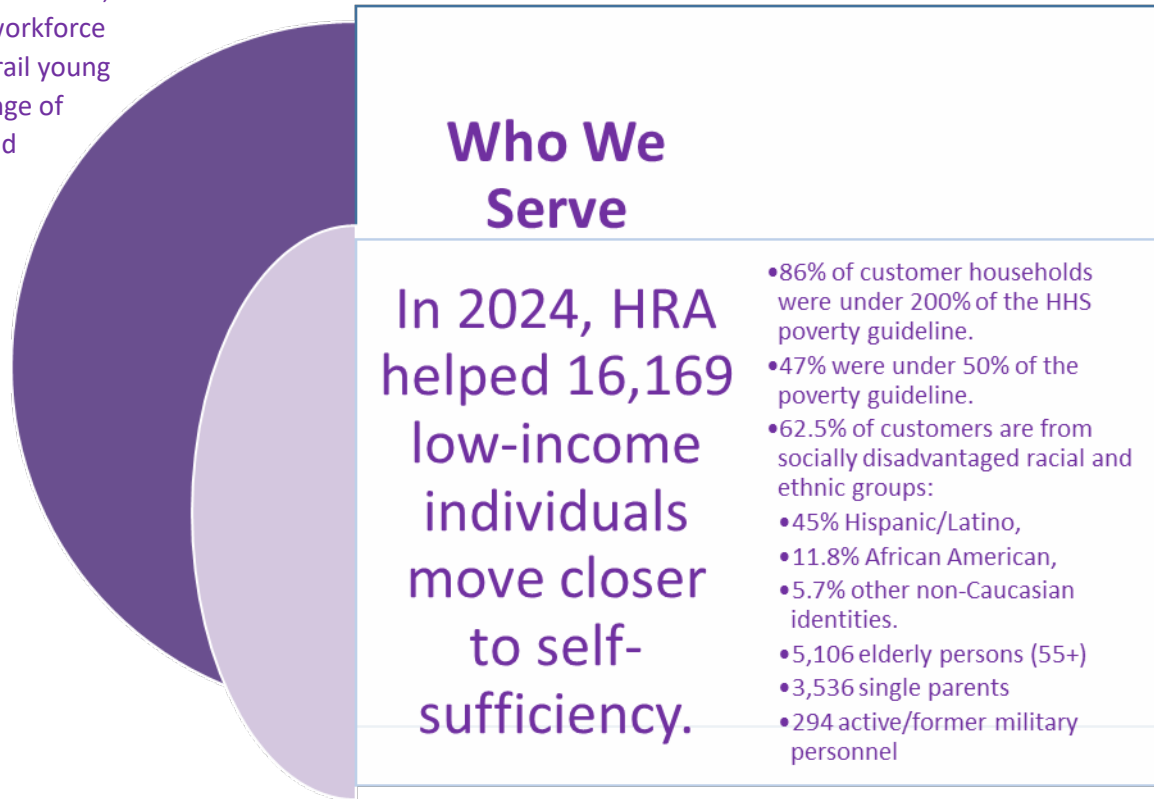
## Proactive Planning: Summer Youth Employment

Amidst funding delays and shifting program guidance, HRA's Youth Employment team demonstrated exemplary foresight and operational precision. Long before formal award notices were received, our staff launched a proactive planning effort to ensure that young people in our region would not miss a critical opportunity for summer employment and skills development.

Funded by the State of Connecticut through the Capital Workforce Partners Workforce Board, the Summer Youth Employment Program is a vital pipeline for work readiness and youth development in our region. Application outreach, eligibility screening, and orientation sessions were all completed ahead of schedule—positioning the agency to activate placements the moment funding is released.

This work reflects more than just logistical readiness; it underscores our commitment to equity in workforce access and our refusal to let uncertainty derail young people's growth. Staff navigated the challenge of preparing for a program without a confirmed start date with both sensitivity and resolve. At no point was the internal stress of this uncertainty transferred to our youth participants or their families. Instead, what they experienced was continuity, encouragement, and belief in their potential.

This is the HRA standard: mission-first, people-centered, and prepared to rise above bureaucratic noise to meet community need.



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### Infrastructure Growth: 246 Lake Avenue

The development of the Early Childhood and Family Services Center at 246 Lake Avenue marks a powerful chapter in HRA's ongoing investment in the Bristol community. Previously occupied by a disinvested and underutilized facility, this property became part of HRA's portfolio following the acquisition of the Bristol Community Organization. Upon assuming responsibility, HRA immediately prioritized capital improvements and reimagined the site as a hub for early education and wraparound support services.

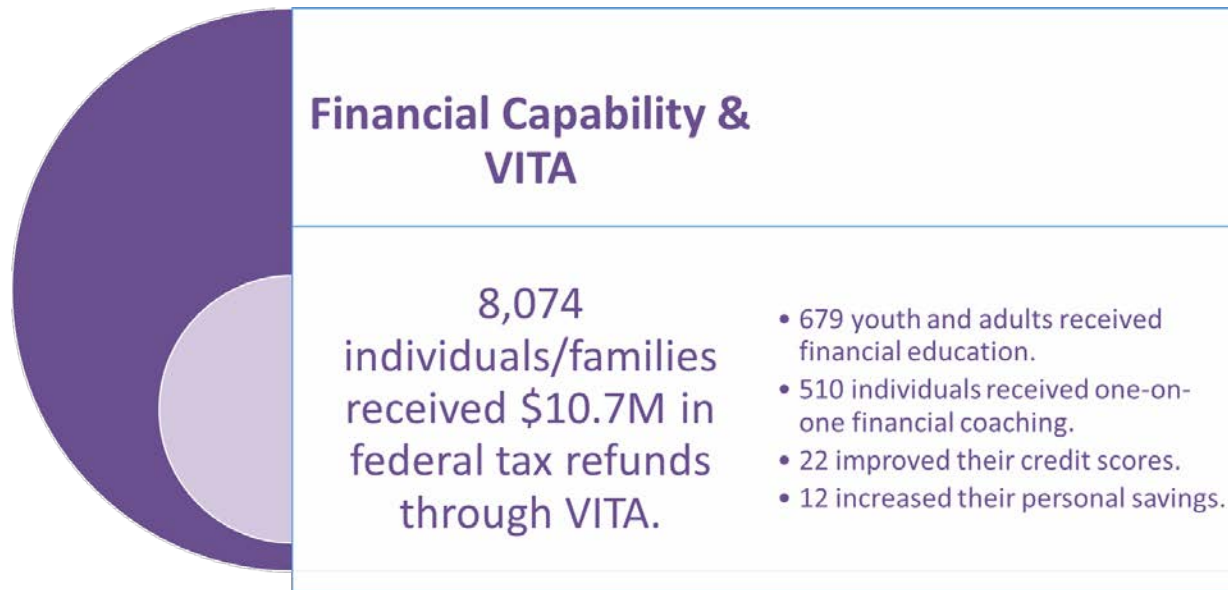
Today, the facility houses five classrooms serving children ages 0–5: three Early Head Start classrooms and two Head Start classrooms. This expansion represents a significant investment in high-quality early learning, particularly the addition of Early Head Start programming, which had never before existed in this part of the community. The successful completion of renovations and launch of these classrooms has transformed the landscape of early education access for families in Bristol.

Building on this foundation, HRA is now expanding its impact by activating the adjacent facility to serve as the Family Services Center. This addition will enable us to deliver comprehensive services—including case management, goal setting, and holistic support—to the very families whose children attend the early learning classrooms next door. This co-location model creates a one-stop shop for families, enhancing convenience, continuity, and the overall experience of care.

In a region that has long needed revitalization and increased service equity, the transformation at 246 Lake Avenue is a testament to HRA's commitment to strategic investment, access, and opportunity. It is a physical and philosophical embodiment of our belief that every child and every family deserves access to high-quality, integrated services that support growth and long-term stability.



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### **VITA Success: 8,000+ Households Served**

This year, HRA's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program shattered previous records—serving over 8,000 households across our region and returning millions in refunds and tax credits to the community. Powered by a remarkable team of more than 300 dedicated volunteers, this program exemplifies the impact of collaboration, preparation, and trust.

VITA is more than a seasonal service—it's a gateway to financial stability. For many families, this is their only opportunity each year to connect with a trained professional who helps them claim earned income credits, child tax credits, and other critical supports. It also serves as an entry point to broader services across HRA, from SNAP enrollment to housing navigation.

The scale and precision of this effort require robust coordination. Our volunteers undergo rigorous IRS training, and our program managers oversee site logistics, quality reviews, and client education in multiple languages. In a climate where tax preparation often feels intimidating or inaccessible, HRA's VITA program offers something radically different: a trusted, no-cost resource grounded in equity and dignity.

This year's results reflect the extraordinary commitment of our VITA team—and our community's growing confidence in HRA as a partner in their financial wellbeing.



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Wellness Resource  
Thanksgiving Celebration



Wellness Resource  
World AIDS Day



Strengthening HRA Team Spirit Kickoff



Strengthening HRA Team  
Spirit Kickoff



Wellness Resource  
World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil



CT Race in the Park



NB Youth Prevention Palooza



New Britain Food  
and Resource  
Diaper Bank



Annual Staff  
Professional Dev. Day



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## Community Engagement: Reaching People Where They Are

This year, HRA reinforced its role as a trusted presence in the neighborhoods we serve—not just by offering services, but by *showing up* where people live, work, gather, and grow. From family resource fairs and school-based events to weekend festivals, holiday giveaways, and pop-up enrollment tables, our staff were there—ready with information, encouragement, and unwavering commitment.

Our approach to community engagement is grounded in accessibility, dignity, and trust. We understand that for many of our neighbors, navigating complex systems can be overwhelming. That’s why we prioritize bringing services to them—on their terms, in their spaces, and at times that work for their lives. Whether it’s late evenings, weekend celebrations, or holiday breaks, our teams are present and active across New Britain, Bristol, and surrounding areas.

These efforts are powered by the hearts and hands of our staff. Despite heavy caseloads and daily pressures, they consistently extend themselves beyond standard hours to ensure that our programs are visible, approachable, and human-centered. Their dedication, even on holidays and after hours, is a testament to the culture of service that defines HRA.

Community engagement is not just outreach—it is relationship building. It is how we strengthen our presence, reinforce our values, and cultivate the trust that transforms services into solutions. This year’s outreach efforts will be visually highlighted through a collage of photos featuring our events, each with a brief caption and date to commemorate the moments we showed up—and stood strong together.



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## Workforce Development & Culture

HRA has weathered yet another year in the storm of the human services staffing crisis with both determination and strategic resolve. Like many agencies across the country, we continue to face persistent turnover and an increasingly competitive labor market—especially as we strive to recruit and retain highly qualified professionals committed to mission-driven work.

Despite these challenges, we have remained steadfast in our efforts to build a strong, capable, and values-aligned workforce. We have successfully recruited and onboarded new team members across departments, pairing each with tailored support and training to ease their transition and ensure service continuity. Our onboarding processes have been refined to include not just technical training, but also orientation to HRA's values, expectations, and trauma-informed culture.

At the same time, we are continuously evaluating our compensation structures, workplace supports, and career development pathways to stay competitive in a rapidly shifting field. Yet the odds we face are significant. With rising inflation, stagnant funding, and escalating community needs, our capacity to offer salaries and benefits that rival other sectors remains constrained. The reality is that our ability to compete for top talent is limited not by our commitment—but by the funding frameworks in which we operate.

Still, our team perseveres. They show up, lift others, and advance our mission every day. This year, we continued our tradition of staff recognition and support through agency-wide events, appreciation weeks, and professional development opportunities. These efforts help us retain the passionate, skilled, and resilient individuals who are the heart of our work.

HRA remains committed to advocating for better conditions for our workforce—not just within our walls, but across the field. Because we believe that those who serve others deserve to be supported, protected, and celebrated in return.

- 107 individuals improved their physical health and well-being.
- 140 parents/caregivers improved parenting skills and responsiveness.
- 109 seniors (65+) maintained independent living.
- 107 individuals with chronic illness sustained independent living arrangements.

## Health & Wellness



- 6,368 households received LIHEAP and emergency utility assistance.
- 42 households received eviction prevention and mediation services.
- 28 participants received financial capability skills training.
- 22 households accessed financial coaching or counseling.
- 42 emergency rent payments and 12 deposit payments were provided.

## Housing & Energy Services



## Food & Resource Center

7,226 individuals from 3,337 households were served between January–March 2025.

The New Britain Food & Resource Center saw 7,000+ visits from 3,240 individuals (2,426 households).

Through the Diaper Distribution Demonstration Project (D3RP), HRA distributed diapers in partnership with CAFCA and the CT Diaper Bank, serving 90+ families.



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## Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: Apprenticeships, Pipelines & Recruitment Innovation

In response to the national staffing crisis and its local manifestations, HRA has launched a multifaceted strategy to cultivate, recruit, and retain a strong and stable human services workforce. Recognizing that talent cannot simply be hired—it must be nurtured—we are investing in the long game.

Through new partnerships and funding proposals—including our Letter of Intent to the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA)—HRA is developing apprenticeship models and pipeline programs that place residents into real-world training tied to careers in health, education, and human services. These pathways are designed to grow talent from within the communities we serve, offering both economic opportunity and sector sustainability.

These innovations don't just support external workforce development—they are also a lifeline for our own agency's staffing challenges. By creating strategic entry points and on-the-job training, we're strengthening our internal recruitment pool, boosting morale, and building loyalty among those who might otherwise never have seen a place for themselves in this field.

This strategy is rooted in equity and intention. Our goal is to diversify the human services workforce, bridge longstanding opportunity gaps, and increase the number of individuals entering the sector who reflect the identities and lived experiences of our clients.

The Apprenticeship and Workforce Pipeline Initiative also complements our broader efforts to remain competitive in a constrained funding landscape. In tandem with our compensation reviews and enhanced onboarding protocols, these workforce pathways represent a proactive, future-forward strategy to meet both present and emerging staffing needs.

Together, these approaches reflect HRA's commitment to innovative, inclusive, and sustainable solutions to one of the most urgent challenges facing our sector.



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## Celebrating 60 Years of Service & Remembering Dr. Alton Brooks

In November 2024, HRA proudly celebrated 60 years of unwavering service to the communities of New Britain, Bristol, and beyond. This milestone was more than an anniversary—it was a living tribute to the generations of staff, partners, and families who have shaped our story and inspired our future.

The celebration of our 60th Anniversary spanned the entire year and marked the first time HRA embarked on a full-year communications, publicity, and strategic media campaign. With the expert guidance of Jessela Marketing, the agency launched a robust outreach initiative that included bilingual television commercials, print media coverage, expanded social media storytelling, and increased public visibility of our programs and services.

This year-long celebration featured several signature events. Our first-ever **Annual Gala**, held on **November 8, 2024**, brought together community leaders, supporters, staff, and alumni for an evening of recognition, inspiration, and joy. Special thanks go out to our generous sponsors and donors whose contributions made the event not only possible, but unforgettable.

The annual meeting was also a highlight of the year, featuring a moving performance by the **Daughters of Nzinga**—a cultural tribute to legacy, power, and purpose. These events reflected the spirit of the anniversary: honoring our past, celebrating the present, and charting a bold future together.

This milestone was also marked by deep reflection, as we honored the life and legacy of the late **Dr. Alton Brooks**, a pillar of HRA's history and a steadfast champion for justice. Dr. Brooks dedicated decades of his life to advancing equity, civil rights, and opportunity—not only through HRA but across the state and beyond. His passing in 2024 left a profound void, but his spirit lives on in every act of service we carry forward.

This year of intentional celebration reaffirmed HRA's values and visibility. More than a look back, it was a declaration of who we are and who we continue to become. A photo collage from this historic year will feature moments from the gala, the annual meeting, and community-wide celebrations—each with captions commemorating speakers, performers, and partners who shaped this remarkable year.



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## Closing Reflections

As we reflect on a year marked by challenge and transformation, one truth remains steadfast: HRA stands resilient because of the people who give life to its mission. From frontline staff to executive leadership, from longtime board members to first-time volunteers, every person in our network plays a critical role in keeping our agency not only functioning—but thriving.

We also recognize the essential role of our funders, donors, and elected officials—those who continue to place their trust in our vision and invest in our capacity to deliver. Your support ensures that we have the resources to do what we do best: fight poverty, empower families, and transform communities.

This report captures more than just outcomes. It captures the heart of a community in motion: adapting, expanding, and holding tight to the belief that every family deserves dignity, every child deserves opportunity, and every neighbor deserves care. We are not only proud of what we've accomplished—we are inspired by what lies ahead.

We are humbled by the trust that so many have placed in HRA—as a steward of public resources, as a provider of critical programs, and as a force for good. That trust fuels our commitment to continue taking up the torch and the sword in the fight to end poverty. It is a fight we have led for 60 years—and one we will carry forward with strength, strategy, and love for generations to come.

As we turn the page to a new year, we carry forward the lessons, partnerships, and momentum that have sustained us. And we recommit ourselves to the work—to serve boldly, to lead thoughtfully, and to rise together.

Thank you for walking with us on this journey.

With purpose, hope, and unshakable resolve,

Dr. Marlo Greponne  
Executive Director



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*“The mission of HRA is to improve quality of life by helping people achieve economic and social potential; responding to the causes and conditions of poverty; and building individuals, families and the communities we serve”*

**Help People Rise—  
Donate to HRA  
Today**



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