



Housing Authority
of the City of
Santa Barbara

DEAR FRIENDS,

2020 WAS CERTAINLY A YEAR LIKE WE HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE. Most notably, from our perspective, a national pandemic has uncovered the glaring social injustices among race and class in our country. The current public health crisis has laid bare system failures in the United States, and key among

them is the country's housing affordability crisis. In Santa Barbara, 80% of extremely low-income households are paying more than half their income on housing costs and renters must earn \$37.21 per hour, which is 2.9 times the state minimum wage, just to afford the average monthly asking rent of \$1,935.

It is undeniable that the impact of COVID-19 has been immediate and severe on low-income residents and people of modest economic means. The number of people living in poverty has grown by eight million since May, according to researchers at Columbia University's Center on Poverty & Social Policy. These same families were already struggling before the onset of the pandemic.

During this time, our community's most vulnerable have also struggled with housing and food insecurity. Thankfully, due to our resources and those of the City and other local non-profits working together, Santa Barbara has provided for many of their basic needs including stable affordable housing and access to nutritious food.

Although 2020 was not an ordinary year, we continue to be focused on our core work of providing affordable housing. As an "essential service", housing authorities have had to adapt quickly amid the COVID-19 outbreak to keep providing necessary and critical services to residents. Our goal was and is to maintain the same level of service as before the pandemic.

We are proud of the fact that not one individual or family in our programs lost their housing due to any economic hardships because of the pandemic. The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara (HACSB) represents 2,784 households on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and 1,370 households in our own properties. Landlords who participate in the Section 8 Voucher Program were also protected in terms of the full rent they receive. The program alone brings \$36 million annually into our community.

With COVID-19, civil unrest, and natural disasters as a result of climate change, it may be difficult to see any silver linings. But sometimes, when we get to the other side of our most challenging periods, we can recognize some positive aspects. We've learned to do with less, communicate in new and more efficient ways, to become nimbler and more flexible in business and daily life. It has offered us a new perspective and sense of gratitude on things we may have taken for granted – our family, friends, home, community, work, leisure, health, and even how we live.

We have an unexpected window now to deal with climate change. The destructive impact of income inequality and disparities in health care and housing are now plainly visible. We have an opportunity to focus on the common good and build a more humane society. The post-COVID world offers many possibilities, and the Housing Authority will continue to advocate for affordable housing, which is a basic human need.

We are deeply grateful for the support of the Housing Authority Commission, City Council, partnering organizations, and the community at large for our past and future endeavors to provide housing and services.

We hope that you enjoy this report which shares the efforts of our team in 2020. (HACSB 2020 Annual Report https://hacsb.org/download/annual_reports/HA_2020Annual-Report_FINAL.pdf).



Rob L. Fredericks
Executive Director/CEO



Patricia Wheatley
*Chair, Housing Authority
Board Of Commissioners*

Interested in the Housing Choice Voucher program? Go here for HACSB's General Information Brochure on Section 8 for Landlords:

<https://hacsb.org/download/brochures/Section-8-FAQ-for-landlords.pdf>