

Women's  
Community  
Revitalization  
Project

Proyecto de  
Mujeres para la  
Revitalización  
Comunal

# 2022 RECOGNIZING OUR SUCCESS

## WOMEN'S COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROJECT

Since our founding in 1986, Women's Community Revitalization Project's (WCRP's) mission has placed women and their families at the center of our work.

During FY 2022, WCRP continued our three-fold strategy of physical, social, and leadership development, believing all three to be essential and complementary to achieving equity and dignity for women and their families. Our work included:

- Making substantial progress toward the creation and/or preservation of 168 homes. When completed, these homes will expand our affordable rental portfolio to 434 high quality homes.
- Further strengthening our close and constructive relationships with families who live in WCRP housing, supporting them in remaining stably housed and in pursuing personal growth and economic well-being.
- Developing grassroots leaders and building collective power, and advocating for policies that promote affordable housing and equitable development. After our successes in 2022, this work has cumulatively resulted in \$800 million in new housing resources for the City of Philadelphia.
- Shaping and adopting a new three-year strategic plan for upcoming fiscal years 2023 – 2025. Forty board and advisory committee members as well as staff participated in the year long strategic planning process.

We achieved this progress despite numerous challenges, including those related to the continued impact of the pandemic:

- Supply shortages increased the cost of building and caused delays in our construction schedules.
- The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on our constituents - low-income women and their families - who entered the pandemic with fewer resources than other population groups and are projected to have the slowest recovery from the impact of the pandemic.
- Philadelphia's affordable housing crisis only deepened during the pandemic, making the need for WCRP housing more critical and more visible.



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

### GOAL

Expand WCRP's portfolio of affordably priced rental housing for low-income women and their families.

### GOAL

Preserve WCRP's existing portfolio of affordably priced rental housing for low-income women and their families.

### GOAL

Continue to build the asset base for the Community Justice Land Trust (CJLT) through the development of owner-occupied as well as rental housing.

### ACHIEVEMENT

We completed and leased up 14 new homes in the Mamie Nichols Townhomes located in Point Breeze. This development includes 11 studio/one-bedroom homes as well as 22 larger units. The remainder of the homes will be occupied by December 2022.

We secured all financing for the Arlene Thorpe Townhomes, 27 affordable rental homes to be built in the Grays Ferry section of South Philadelphia. In addition, we secured land for two new developments in West Philadelphia (65 affordable rental apartments).

### ACHIEVEMENT

WCRP completed the preservation of 44 homes that were originally constructed and leased in 2005 (Karen Donnally and Iris Brown Townhomes).

### ACHIEVEMENT

With the development of Mamie Nichols Townhomes, we have expanded CJLT's inventory to a total of 109 properties, including 71 rent-to-own homes (Nicole Hines and Grace Townhomes), 5 homeownership units (Mamie Nichols Homeownership), and 33 permanently affordable rental homes (Mamie Nichols Townhomes). Our Land Acquisition and Predevelopment Loan Fund (established in 2021), raised \$1.3 million. A portion of these funds were used during the year to purchase one of the West Philadelphia sites as well as to cover a portion of predevelopment costs.

## ASSET MANAGEMENT

### GOAL

To manage and maintain WCRP's portfolio of high quality, affordably-priced housing for low-income families.

### GOAL

Strengthen the capacity of WCRP's property management.

### ACHIEVEMENT

This year saw a major push to fill newly completed units – both new construction and those that had been preserved during the year (58 lease ups not including ongoing turnover). In addition, our Property Manager worked closely with current tenants to support their applications for rental assistance and new subsidy opportunities.

### ACHIEVEMENT

We continued to refine the use of our new property management software, Yardi, including implementing a rent café, which allows tenants to pay their rent online.



### GOAL

Support tenant families in maintaining housing stability.

### ACHIEVEMENT

During the year, WCRP's tenant services staff supported 159 tenants who had gotten behind on their rent during the pandemic, a level of arrearages much higher than in pre-pandemic times. We worked intensively to help tenants with budgeting, negotiating payment agreements and linkage with financial assistance programs. We also raised \$150,000 in rental assistance to help stabilize housing. In addition, we intervened to resolve crises (physical and mental health, family violence, for example) that threatened housing stability.

### GOAL

To provide services to support families in achieving greater personal, family, and financial well-being.

### ACHIEVEMENT

WCRP provided affordable rental homes for 329 families in 2022. Our annual analysis of changes in tenant income over time showed a small rebound from the financial losses experienced during the pandemic. The income of current tenants who have lived in WCRP housing for more than four years increased by an average of 56%, up from an average of 52% the prior year. Although this change in 4-year income is both significant and moving in the right direction, it remains down from the 71% increase in 2019, just prior to the pandemic.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY

### GOAL

To build the leadership of our constituents and to win new resources that can be used to create more truly affordable housing for low-income women and their families.

### ACHIEVEMENT

In November 2022, Philadelphia voters ratified a significant change to the Home Rule Charter, requiring the city to make a guaranteed contribution from the general fund for affordable housing. This policy change is the direct result of advocacy by WCRP and the Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Housing (PCAC) and is the first time the city has committed a permanent source of housing funding from its own resources. This change will bring \$25 million into the Housing Trust Fund each year.

WCRP and PCAC moved our Land Justice Campaign forward by cultivating support in Philadelphia's City Council. We secured a sponsor, who introduced Land Justice legislation ensuring that city-owned land is developed by communities for purposes which they define. Hearings on the bill were held in June, with testimony provided by WCRP and PCAC constituents. It is expected to pass when voted on in December.

### GOAL

To build the individual and collective skills of a network of low-income women and men who will help to shape and lead WCRP's work.

### ACHIEVEMENT

WCRP continued outreach in the neighborhoods surrounding our two upcoming West Philadelphia developments, knocking on 400 doors and collecting 147 signatures for our petition in favor of affordable housing. A total of 29 West Philadelphia neighbors attended two community meetings in the spring and/or built their leadership by becoming more involved in WCRP's work. Two West Philadelphia residents joined WCRP's Advocacy Committee; by the end of 2022, Advocacy Committee membership had grown to 43 individuals.