

New Center to Help Families Become Self-Sufficient

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BRISTOL, Va. — A new center to assist families in public housing will be established in Bristol, Virginia by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Bristol Redevelopment and Housing Authority. HUD's "EnVision" center will offer assisted families support to help them achieve self-sufficiency, according to a written statement. EnVision centers provide a centralized hub to access support in economic empowerment, educational advancement, health and wellness and character and leadership.

"We will not measure success by the number of people who enter this new EnVision center," Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Joseph J. DeFelice said in the statement. "Success will be measured by the number of individuals who achieve greater self-sufficiency — who no longer require assistance from our programs — who gain the financial independence to be able to rent, or even buy, their own homes."

Lynn Pannell, the authority's family self-sufficiency director, will oversee the program, which will be housed at the current Find A Way office.

"The EnVision center designation will allow us to expand and enhance our case management offerings to BRHA clients as well as to those in need throughout the greater Bristol communities. Under a nonprofit umbrella, we plan to work with our partners to be a 'one-stop' resource combating a generational cycle of poverty," authority Executive Director Lisa Porter said.

"This fits with our long-range plans for the Authority as we reposition ourselves for the future." Mayor Neal Osborne said it will provide assistance to residents in both Bristols.

"This designation is an important advantage for Bristol and will provide a streamlined approach to resources for residents working to achieve self-sufficiency," Osborne said. "EnVision centers offer valuable training that delivers educational opportunities, leads to future employment and improves health outcomes by eliminating barriers to access. We're excited to receive this designation and to begin the process of providing services to Bristolians on both sides of the state line."