



HARRISONBURG VA FRIENDLY BY NATURE



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Contact: Michael Parks, Harrisonburg Director of Communications
540.432.7701
Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov

Liz Webb, affordable housing program expert, named Housing Coordinator *Webb, currently HRHA Housing Choice Voucher Manager, to begin April 18*

HARRISONBURG, Va. – A 20-year expert in managing affordable housing programs with detailed experience and knowledge of Harrisonburg’s housing situation, Liz Webb is excited to take the reins as the City of Harrisonburg’s first Housing Coordinator.

Webb, who has served as Housing Choice Voucher Manager for the Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority (HRHA) since 2016, will conduct advanced work related to complex housing issues with an emphasis on developing, implementing, and overseeing strategies to achieve housing objectives and goals. The role was created following completion of the City’s Comprehensive Housing Analysis and Market Study, which worked to assess the overall health of the City’s housing stock and market conditions.

For Webb, the Housing Coordinator position was a perfect match for her experience and desire to improve her community.

“I’ve been on the service administration side of housing policy, and have always wanted to do more on the planning, finance, and development front,” Webb explained. “It’s an opportunity to learn and grow, and a chance to serve the city. Taking on a new role like this is challenging, but exciting - in some ways I have been preparing for this job my whole life.”

Webb’s career in the field of community development and affordable housing began with an internship at the City of Northampton, Massachusetts, where she researched and analyzed goals and effectiveness of grant-funded affordable housing and homelessness prevention programs, and assisted in preparing the five-year plan for the city’s Community Development Block Grant program.

“I have always wanted to contribute to how institutions meet the needs of constituents related to housing,” Webb said, reflecting on a career of housing-related work spanning all the way back to high school. “I’ve learned that this means listening, and synthesizing community input within a financial, regulatory, and strategic framework.”

Responsibilities in the intervening years between that internship and today have included researching, analyzing and interpreting legislation, codes and regulations for the Los Angeles County Voucher Program in California; conducting compliance and management audits of subsidized multifamily housing properties for the South Carolina State Housing Authority; and directing compliance for 180 properties across three states and multiple funding sources and project layers as the Director of Training and Compliance for Community Management Corporation.



Liz Webb (above) has been named as the City’s first Housing Coordinator. She starts April 18.

For more than five years, Webb has focused her attention on overseeing the administration of the housing choice voucher program in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, along with numerous other responsibilities for HRHA. The voucher program primarily serves households with incomes under 30 percent of the median family income, and subsidizes the cost of families' rent. However, there are frequently not enough vouchers to cover the need in this area, and those available are not always accepted by some landlords.

The work has given Webb an in-depth knowledge of the struggles some in our area face in securing housing, and the limitations some programs have in addressing those issues.

As she moves from HRHA over to City Hall, Webb is ready to help City staff move forward on the recommendations of the 2021 Housing Study. At the front of her considerations is affordable housing in our community, and how she can support long-term planning, problem solving, policy and program development, and management action around housing matters in Harrisonburg.

"Affordable housing is a critical need, in our community and everywhere, and how we address this challenge speaks to our values as a city," Webb said. "By obtaining the study and starting on its recommended actions, Harrisonburg is affirming that this issue is a priority. It will take coordination to integrate the information we have about local needs, market trends, zoning and land use, and program fund and development financing options."

As the City has focused on affordable housing and understanding the current housing situation in Harrisonburg, staff members have worked to analyze recommendations provided by the Housing Study and to consider options that could benefit the City's overall affordable housing goals. Harrisonburg City Council held a two-day housing summit in October focused on how best to turn the City's housing study into actionable items, and City staff has researched the study's recommendations to ensure the Housing Coordinator could hit the ground running.

Now, as that date nears, staff is eager to move forward on the work already underway.

"Harrisonburg City Council identified in 2019 that affordable housing was a key area we as a city needed to address over the next 20 years," Harrisonburg Interim City Manager Ande Banks said. "Staff immediately began work to make that vision a reality, and with Liz soon to join our team, we are excited about all we will be able to accomplish in this realm in the coming years."

Webb will begin with the City on April 18.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to 51,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

A Housing-Focused Career

Webb has held the following careers in the field of housing and community development:

Housing Choice Voucher Manager
Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

Director of Training and Compliance
Community Management Corporation – Winston-Salem

Asset Manager
South Carolina State Housing Authority, Contract Administration Division – Columbia, S.C.

Administrative Analyst
Community Development Commission, Assisted Housing Divisions – Los Angeles

Research Assistant
ICF Consulting, Housing and Community Development Group – Fairfax

Intern
City of Northampton, Office of Planning and Development



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