

Hillcrest Village

40 Leander Street
Providence, RI 02909



The owner of Hillcrest Village had made few efforts to repair the property or keep it fully rented in recent years, and there was great concern that its continued deterioration would eventually make it uninhabitable. POAH's 2005 purchase ensured instead that the building would be returned to good operation, with rents remaining affordable for at least 20 years.

Project Partners

- Rhode Island Housing
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The Preservation Challenge

Hillcrest Village, a 130-unit property in the Manton neighborhood of Providence, is a seven-story building which sits on nearly five mostly wooded acres at the top of Leander Street. Its upper floor apartments feature very appealing views of nearby North Providence and Johnston. Hillcrest was built in 1980 with federal subsidies making it affordable to low-income elderly and disabled residents; however, by 2005, the property was plagued with low occupancy as well as significant disrepair, leading Rhode Island Housing, the state's housing finance agency, to conclude that the owner was disinvesting preparatory to opting out of its rent subsidy contract.

Rhode Island Housing brought POAH into discussions about purchasing Hillcrest Village as a package with Pocasset Manor; both were under the same ownership and were nearing the expiration of their affordability agreements. Providence appears often in lists of 'most expensive cities in the country', and housing officials were clear that they had no intention of losing the project-based subsidies which make Hillcrest Village affordable.

POAH's Role

The Hillcrest Village purchase was financed with a combination of tax exempt bonds and 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). The funding package included monies for a number of important upgrades to the building, including a new roof, windows and elevator. A security system protects both access both to the public entries and to individual apartments; fire and life safety upgrades also offer tenants an enhanced feeling of well being.

One of the most notable changes is to the building's heating system. In the context of soaring energy bills which threaten the affordable operations of its portfolio, POAH has directed close attention to energy efficiency in its rehab planning and budgeting. Properties, for example, have installed low-energy lighting, low-flow showers and toilets and Energy Star-rated appliances to replace older models. But the focus has also included an exploration of renewable options, such as the cogeneration equipment installed at Hillcrest Village. There, the new heating system harnesses energy which is a byproduct of thermal production and converts it to electric power for the building. Capturing such previously wasted resources is an essential element of managing affordability for the long term.