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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### The Utica Municipal Housing Authority as a Catalyst for Change: Rebrands to People First

**Utica, New York** (July 29, 2021) - UMHA (Utica Municipal Housing Authority) proudly announces that, as an acknowledgment of its core beliefs and practices, it is rebranding and changing its name to People First, effective immediately.

The new name, People First, is a reflection of the holistic approach and practices implemented by the organization by engaging in compassionate, transformative “quality of life” services to meet the needs of the greater Utica community. Likewise, the name change more effectively embraces the organization’s mission of prioritizing the best interests of people first, and doing so in a people friendly, people focused, and people driven approach. As Executive Director Robert R. Calli notes, “we possess a duty and responsibility, both as an organization and as fellow human beings, to enhance the quality of life of the people we serve within our community.”

People First will continue its rich history and legacy of enhancing the quality of life for our region’s most vulnerable populations, including economically challenged families, the homeless, veterans, at-risk populations, disabled community members, and elderly residents. The transition to People First represents the opportunity to be more than a “key”, by providing hope and assistance to people not only to overcome the social challenges of securing safe, clean, and affordable housing accommodations, but also overcoming other impediments, such as education, disabilities, career development, and independent living skills.



People First is a fair housing and equal employment opportunity agency.  
The housing act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of housing.





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By prioritizing the needs of people, People First seeks to utilize its mission and practices as a stepping stone to encourage and challenge our residents to unlock their full potential. Under People First, the organization will better serve as a local, state, and national model for offering quality housing and personalized services that move residents and the local community at large progressively forward for the welfare and betterment of both.

Established in 1937, the MHA of the City of Utica, New York is one of the longest tenured housing authorities within the United States. People First is proud to continue its long established heritage and reputation to offer housing and supportive services that value, prioritize, and fulfill the essential needs of the people and community we serve. As a leading example of a housing authority myopically focused on the people it serves, the name People First is a true and accurate representation of its caring roots and its commitment to each of its residents.

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## FACT SHEET

### About

People First, the successor in title to Municipal Housing Authority of the City of Utica, New York, has served the affordable housing community in New York State with distinction since its establishment in 1937. Based in Utica, NY, People First offers a variety of affordable rental housing units, including apartments and townhouse style units.

People First is a housing authority created pursuant to New York State Public Housing Law and the United States Housing Act of 1937. We are an independent public benefit corporation working in close conjunction with the City of Utica, and receive direct funding and subsidization from a myriad of funding sources, inclusive of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to offer affordable housing opportunities to eligible recipients within our community.

People First owns, manages, and/or administers housing choice vouchers to over 1,000 properties throughout the greater Utica region, and has the privilege to serve in excess of 3,500 residents. People First has a duty and a responsibility to offer our residents with a people-centric strategic philosophy that ensures the needs of people are valued, prioritized, and fulfilled.

**People First is committed to transparently providing, developing, and offering life-building opportunities to the eligible residents of the City of Utica.**



Quality affordable housing opportunities.



Partnerships with private and public entities and service providers to optimize resources through innovative programs and collaborations.



Education, literacy, social, career development and economic self-sufficiency programs.



Neighborhood development and revitalization, housing rehabilitation, and stabilization activities.



Efficient and effective management of resources.



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## Continuing Successes

- ✓ High occupancy rates of affordable housing developments.
- ✓ Strong financial reserves and annual fund balances.
- ✓ Fully functional resident and case management services.
- ✓ Successful completion of the HOPE VI rental and homeownership program.
- ✓ Highly regarded Modernization Department that has leveraged over \$16,000,000 in grants and financing to rehabilitate affordable housing units and install energy improvements.
- ✓ Operational resident councils that provide input into housing authority practices and protect tenant rights.
- ✓ Continued high scores on affordable housing assessment systems.
- ✓ Successfully developed a 50-unit scattered-site affordable housing complex in the Cornhill neighborhood of the City of Utica, known as Roosevelt Residences.
- ✓ Partnered and collaborated with Utica College relative to the construction of 36 suites of on-campus housing, which was completed in 2018 and is known as Pioneer Village.
- ✓ Implemented a “Quality of Life” management philosophy, which focuses exclusively upon the establishment of rapport and relationships with people, which ultimately results in the creation of trust, credibility, and accountability.

people **Friendly** | people **Focused** | people **Driven**



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