

Housing Authority Takes the Wait Out of Housing Processes



Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

At a Glance

Constituents: 5,200 families

Location: Cincinnati, Ohio

OnBase Integration: Emphasys Elite®

Departments Using OnBase: Leasing for Low Income Public Housing, Housing Management, Legal

The Problem

Business as usual was not an option. Confronted with multiple operational paper-based processes challenged the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority's (CMHA) ability to manage housing services efficiently. Most program tasks were initiated on paper and manually tracked. Retrieving records frequently took hours or even days because applicant and tenant documentation was located in physical files and stored offsite. Folders that were misfiled or sitting on another employee's desk added to the process delays.

Effective disaster recovery was challenging as well. The housing authority required employees to copy all paper files and ship them to an offsite storage location, resulting in expensive storage costs to ensure documents were not lost. Since the files were paper, document retrieval was also time-consuming and prone to errors.

Everything changed when the housing authority implemented OnBase.

The Solution

With OnBase enterprise content management (ECM), staff retrieves needed information in seconds from anywhere in the agency. OnBase stores information in a single, central repository that automatically files and archives applicant documents. Files are also backed up daily, ensuring information is secure.

In the Leasing Department for Low Income Public Housing (LIPH), OnBase tracks applicant requests and monitors matching verification receipts, eliminating repetitive file checking. LIPH staff members receive notifications electronically once a file is complete, accelerating eligibility decisions so applicants quickly receive the housing assistance they need.

“Before OnBase, we manually pulled files to add changes to the housing application, which took up a lot of time and required leaving the office to find files. Now, there’s no paper file so the information is found and modified in a couple keystrokes.”

- *Becky Chandler*

Information Technology Manager, Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

CMHA leveraged the successes it learned with the LIPH and applied it to the Housing Management Department as well. Now, the new Housing Offers process ensures that vacant units turnaround in a timely manner. An automated workflow sends notifications when deadlines have been exceeded so property management specialists follow-up with the eligible applicants. With automated business workflows, staff members proactively manage exceptions, allowing CMHA to provide housing for eligible applicants faster.

Streamlining forms processing leads to \$98,000 annual savings

Problem: Before OnBase, a centralized copy center produced move-in forms and documents in bulk and then distributed hardcopies to each property management site. Every time a move-in occurred, staff assembled move-in “packages” and shipped them to the resident. After completing the paperwork, CMHA duplicated each form so both the tenant and CMHA had a completed copy.

Solution: With OnBase, the housing authority streamlined the move-in process by pulling existing data from Emphasys Elite® to pre-fill and barcode move-in packages that are printed on-demand. Once tenants review and sign the documents, staff members scan them into OnBase for future use and the completed package goes to the tenant. This automation led to an approximate savings of 3,860 hours in interview, document preparation and filing time – a \$98,000 cost savings each year.

Automated workflows save nearly 4,500 employee hours annually

Problem: CMHA mailed eviction notices to tenants and manually tracked deadlines and cut-off dates. Employees retrieved and copied associated documentation from tenant files and interoffice mailed them to the Legal Department. Once the department received the paper files, employees read through them to determine what information was needed. Employees then re-entered the information into a case management system to create and print a hearing docket for court.

Solution: Now, CHMA uses OnBase to automate the eviction process. Electronic workflow timers and notifications alert employees of deadline cut-off dates and OnBase automatically assembles tenant files required by the Legal Department for court filings. Employees then upload needed documents into the court case management system and instantly print hearing dockets. By automating eviction processes, CMHA saves about 4,500 employee hours, translating into a cost savings of more than \$80,000 annually.

Improves constituent services by speeding up business processes

Problem: LIPH employees frequently receive tenant transfer requests. Since the transfer process was paper-based, employees manually routed information for review and determination. Once a tenant completed a request, it was submitted to the property management specialist for review



and sent to the property manager for a hand-written response. Transfer forms were then sent via interoffice mail to departments for additional reviews and processing.

Solution: By using OnBase, CMHA reduced transfer processing times by 405 hours, saving more than \$8,500 annually. The process begins with OnBase workflow assigning tasks to appropriate employees to complete. This allows multiple people to work on the same transfer request simultaneously so constituents get the services they need, faster.

Allows staff to focus on constituent services

Problem: Prior to OnBase, CMHA employees recorded constituent phone calls so they could listen to them after retrieving related documents from offsite storage. Once located, employees were tasked with researching the

information so they could address constituent inquiries. Since the process was manual, CMHA accumulated a backlog of calls and decreased constituent satisfaction with its services.

Solution: By implementing an ECM solution, CMHA no longer works with paper files – everything is digitized and stored in OnBase so it can be accessed when constituents call. With immediate information access, the housing authority decreased its call backlog while saving more than 270 employee hours – a cost savings of nearly \$50,000.

CMHA is the recipient of a 2012 National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials' award for its digitization efforts with OnBase enterprise content management.

Yearly Savings	Hrs	\$\$\$
Wait List Hours / Cost Savings	3,095	\$57,113
Backfile Hours / Cost Savings	271	\$51,404
Security Dispo Hours / Cost Savings	221	\$5,252
Housing Offer Hours / Cost Savings	1,167	\$26,581
Move-In Hours / Cost Savings	3,860	\$98,196
Move-Out Hours / Cost Savings	1,043	\$24,680
Transfer Hours / Cost Savings	405	\$8,790
Damage Claim Hours / Cost Savings	241	\$5,639
Grievance Hours / Cost Savings	170	\$3,990
Eviction Hours / Cost Savings	4,492	\$80,278
Total Savings:	14,964	\$361,924

With the implementation of OnBase, CMHA saves nearly 15,000 employee hours annually, translating into a cost savings of about \$362,000 per year.

Business Processes, Simplified.

Are business processes holding you back? We can simplify the way you work to help you meet your organization's objectives—reducing costs, saving time and increasing productivity each step of the way. As North America's leading end-to-end business process solution provider, we put decades of industry experience to work for you—delivering award-winning solutions to thousands of customers nation-wide, backed by a 100% satisfaction guarantee.

Connect with a Business Process Expert

When it comes to simplifying your business processes, the first step is connecting with one of our experts to better understand how we can help. Get started now!

[Connect With an Expert](#)