

ANNUAL REPORT

2016

Submitted to the

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

The Central West Regional Capital Assistance Team (CW RCAT)

Leominster Housing Authority (LHA),

Host Housing Authority (HHA)

March 30, 2017

Peter Proulx - Executive Director

Phaldie Taliep – Director, CW RCAT





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Director's Summary

Dear Colleagues,

While this year has been new to all of us, it has been exciting.

On behalf of your CW RCAT Team, I would like to extend our thanks to all hardworking members of the Housing Authorities in the CW Region. This includes the Board Members, the Executive Directors, the Maintenance and Support Staff, as well as the Department of Housing Community staff.

We also extend our thanks to our colleagues at the Leominster HA, the CW RCAT HHA.

This Report highlights the steps taken by the CW RCAT to provide technical support, general support and guidance to the LHAs in the Central West Region. We believe that the process of relationship building that will help us to better serve the LHAs in the CW has been, and continues to be, successful. The information in this Report details what we have achieved with respect to the goals of the RCAT Program, namely, to work with LHAs and others to improve and maintain the public housing stock in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Sincerely

M. Phaldie Taliep

Director – CW RCAT

ABOUT THE RCAT

Per the enabling language (from C.235 of the Acts of 2014), the mission of the RCAT Program is based on the use of best practices that will allow authorities to work collaboratively thus

- *Increasing the technical capacity available for smaller LHAs for the modernization, preservation, and development of state public housing;*
- *Facilitating the economies of scale through increased collaboration relative to, but not limited to, bulk purchasing, capital planning and capital projects.*

Mission/ Vision

The RCAT will therefore provide local housing authorities with technical assistance and support in the execution of their annual capital improvement plans, maintenance plans and modernization projects.

The RCAT's long-term goal is to be an effective and efficient resource for LHAs, which would enable LHAs to focus on their core business.

The Central West (CW) RCAT Office locations

The Central West Region covers 5 Counties (Worcester, Franklin, Berkshire, Hampshire and Hampden).

Three (3) office locations were established to better serve the LHAs in the Central West. These include:

- North East Central MA office (Main office) in Sunset Tower, Leominster HA.
 - o One Project Manager (Sub Region A) and the CW RCAT Director



- South East Central MA office, Colonial Drive (Congregate Housing), Millbury HA.
 - o One Project Manager (Sub Region B)

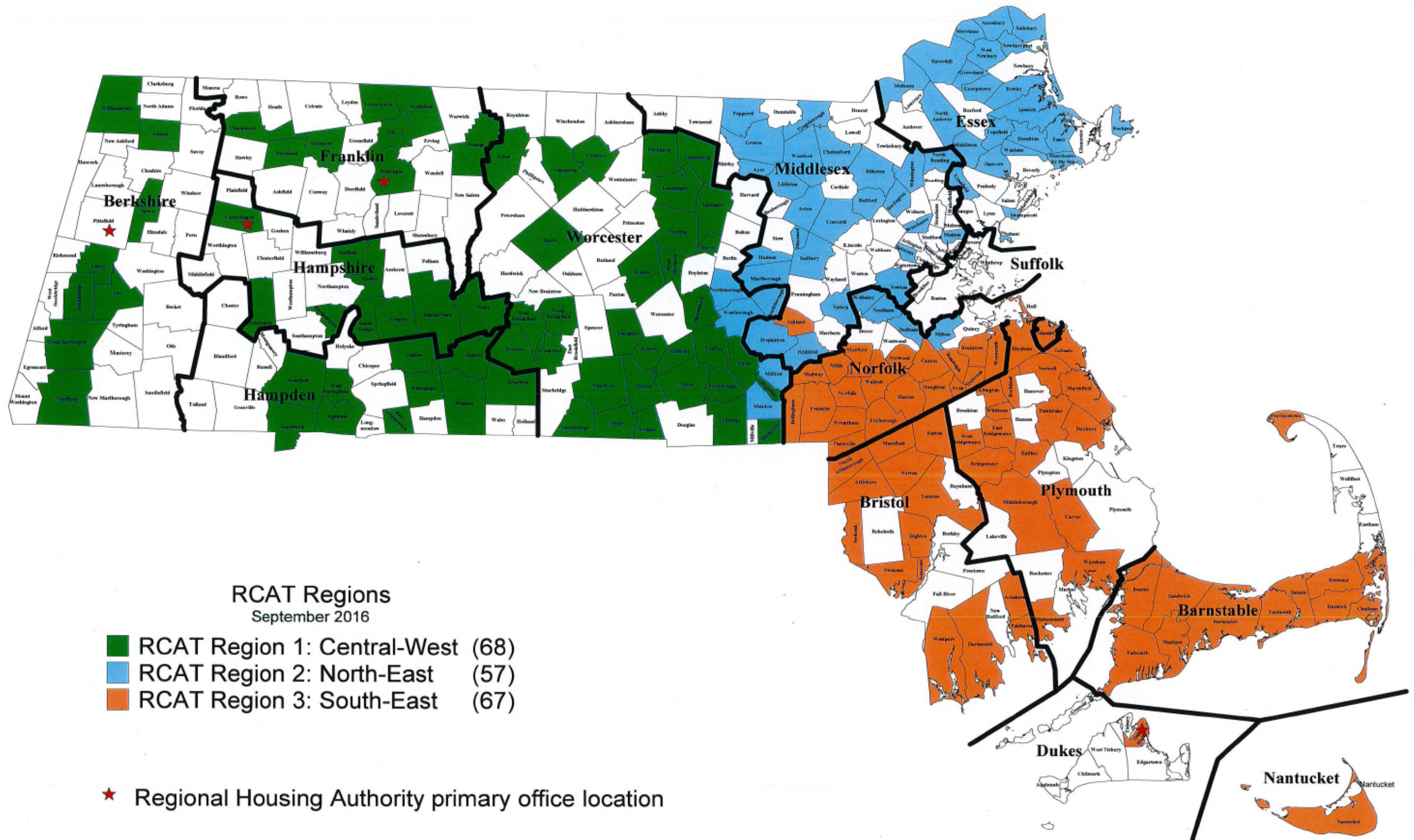
- Western MA Office, "The Pines", Wilbraham HA.
 - o Two Project Managers (Sub Region C and Sub Region D).



The Central West (CW) RCAT Team

	<p>Phaldie Taliep, Director for the RCAT Central/West Region. Phaldie's background includes planning, building engineering systems and project / program management, design and construction. Public sector housing (Cambridge HA, Boston HA, and overseas), facilities (DCAMM, UML Facilities, Town of Needham). Private sector housing, facility, asset management planning. Phaldie is MCPPO-certified and LEED-accredited.</p> <p>E: Phaldie@LeominsterHA.com O: 978-728-6995 C: 978-990-0139</p>
	<p>Steve Larry, Project Manager for the RCAT Central/West Region. He is responsible for Housing Authorities (Sub Region A). Maintenance Supervisor / Contract Officer at the Athol & Orange Housing Authorities. Chair of MAHAMS (Massachusetts Association of Housing Authority Maintenance Supervisors). Commercial and residential construction. Steve holds a Construction Supervisors license and is MMS Certified.</p> <p>E: RCATSteve@LeominsterHA.com O: 978-728-6996 C: 508-783-6983</p>
	<p>Barry J Nadon Jr., Project Manager for RCAT Central/West Region. He is responsible for Housing Authorities (Sub Region B). Maintenance Supervisor at Warren Housing Authority. Handled day to day operation of maintenance along with capital planning and procurement. Extensive experience in residential and commercial construction / site development. Holds a MMS (Massachusetts Maintenance Supervisor) certificate, Lead removal certificate and REAC certificate.</p> <p>E: RCATBarry@LeominsterHA.com O: Cell Only C: 978-394-5916</p>
	<p>David W. Siniscalchi, Project Manager for the RCAT Central/West Region. He is responsible for Housing Authorities (Sub Region C). Construction Management for the MA. Dept. of Corrections and then as Director of Capital Improvements and Skilled Trades for the Housing Authority of the City of Hartford. Holds an Unrestricted Construction Supervisor License (MA) and is currently pursuing certification for Building Code Enforcement (Local Inspector).</p> <p>E: RCATDavid@LeominsterHA.com O: Cell Only C: 978-394-9710</p>
	<p>Jonathan Leonard, Project Manager for the RCAT Central/West Region. He is responsible for Housing Authorities (Sub Region D). Maintenance Supervisor at Monson Housing Authority. Handled procurement and capital planning along with day to day maintenance. Extensive experience in residential and commercial construction / site development. Holds a MMS (Massachusetts Maintenance Supervisor) certificate and a Construction Supervisor License.</p> <p>E: RCATJonathan@LeominsterHA.com O: Cell Only C: 978-394-9009</p>

- For a Map of the Sub Regions (A, B, C and D), see Map on Page 12 of 19



Contract Term

Leominster HA, the Host Housing Authority (HHA) for the Central West RCAT, executed a contract with the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The Contract is for three (3) years and includes an option to renew for up to two (2) additional one year periods.

Leominster HA, the CW RCAT HHA, is one of three (3) HHA's for the RCAT Program (for details, see Diagram 1). The RCAT Program serves 185 Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) in Massachusetts. This includes staffing, equipment, facilities and other resources necessary for the effective and efficient delivery of the RCAT program.

The RCAT's services to the LHAs allows the LHAs to *gain staff hours as it hands off capital-related duties to the RCAT. In addition, LHAs, through the RCAT, communicate with DHCD Capital Staff, regarding capital related issues (source: Regional Capital Assistance Team Program Guidelines, DHCD, May, 2017).*

RCAT Services

DHCD was charged to establish a program (the RCAT) based on best practices to allow authorities to work collaboratively.

The RCAT is established to work with LHAs to facilitate this collaborative process, including

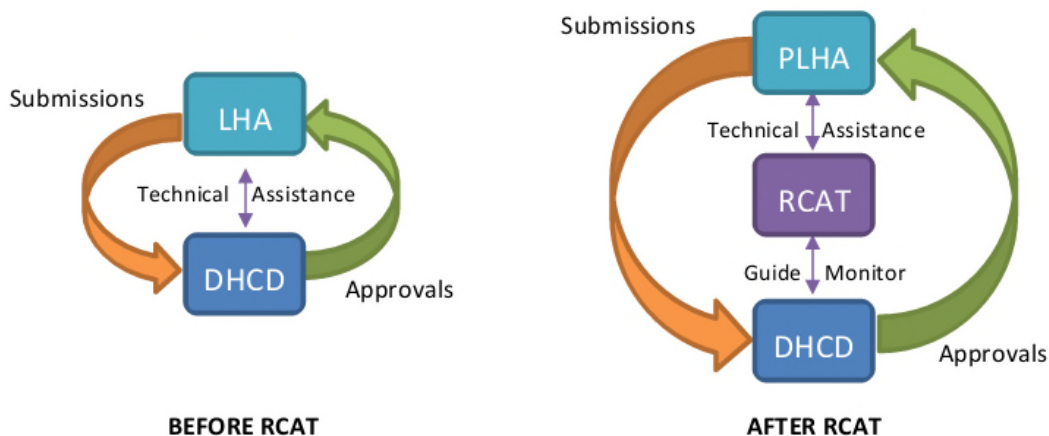
1. Conducting an annual Physical Needs Assessment (PNA)
2. Developing an Annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), including the creation of a 5-year plan Capital Plan, as well as maintaining the plan between the annual (and periodic) plan submissions to DHCD.
3. Performing Project Management duties for all capital projects, with particular focus on implementing projects (initially under \$50,000 in the 1st year and up to \$100,000 in the 2nd year). This also includes general support for projects (under \$10,000) that are handled by the LHAs, as well as for projects that are managed by DHCD (over \$100,000).
4. Assisting the LHAs with securing additional capital funds from DHCD or other leverage sources.
5. Creation of an annual Maintenance Plan and guiding the LHAs.
6. Working on the establishment and implementation of a bulk procurement program, and/or force account crew program. Bulk procurement and/or the Force Account Crew program would have to be cognizant of the unique challenges in the CW

RCAT Region (namely, extensive travel distances and the logistics of for successful program implementation).

The RCAT is also responsible to

- a. Organize 2 group trainings per year on topics most relevant to the needs of the LHAs in the region. Training needs should be determined with input and feedback from LHAs Executive Directors (EDs), Maintenance and Support Staff.
- b. Conduct a vacant land survey of land owned by LHAs to identify areas for potential housing development.

The creation of the RCAT Program established a communication system that is very different, as shown in the diagram below, than what has been in place historically.



The extent of the CW Region and the remoteness of some LHAs necessitated a critical look at what the best approach would be for outreach as well as an understanding that it would require constant review to ensure that it was working.

The CW RCAT Team's outreach to LHA's was therefore cognizant of the need to establish a relationship with all LHAs in the CW Region, as well as the need that this needed a multi-prong approach. While it was essential to introduce the CW RCAT Team, it was also essential to convey that we are a call away and that we will respond to requests for assistance. Relationship building and explaining the RCAT program were seen as two sides of the same coin. The former had to be strong and had to be reinforced constantly. This key to the process of explaining the RCAT program and getting LHAs to reach out the CW RCAT was delivery of promises. This would be as

simple as returning a call and showing how to access information (DHCD, State Procurement, State Contracts, etc).

Two CW RCAT introduction letters (on July 1, 2016 and on August 4, 2016) were emailed to all of the LHA's in the CW Region.

The CW RCAT Project Managers (PMs) scheduled meetings to meet each of their assigned LHA EDs. Where possible, the PM was accompanied by another PM or the Director. In one instance, all of the CW RCAT visited four (4) LHAs including the Williamstown. These meetings began on July 29, 2016. By September 30, 2016, the CW RCAT Team had met with all of the LHA EDs (and a number of Maintenance Superintendents) in the CW Region. Some LHAs had a single visitor from the CW RCAT, namely, the PM, while others had two visits from the CW RCAT, namely, the PM and the Director.

The discussion during each visit included the services being provided by the RCAT program as well as to begin the process of identifying LHA needs that the RCAT could address. These needs included among others assistance with projects, using COMMBUYS, procurement of material and equipment, and hiring consultants.

The Service Agreements were also discussed; these were emailed to each LHA, which they had to sign. Service Agreements for the CW Region were signed by October 2016.

Additional outreach to LHAs included coordinating training with the two (2) ED Associations in the CW Region. Working with CEDA (the Central MA Executive Directors Association) and WMHAEDA (the Western MA Housing Authorities Executive Directors Associations) allowed the CW RCAT to reach out to all LHAs in the CW Region (non-RCAT as well as ones from the NE RCAT Region).

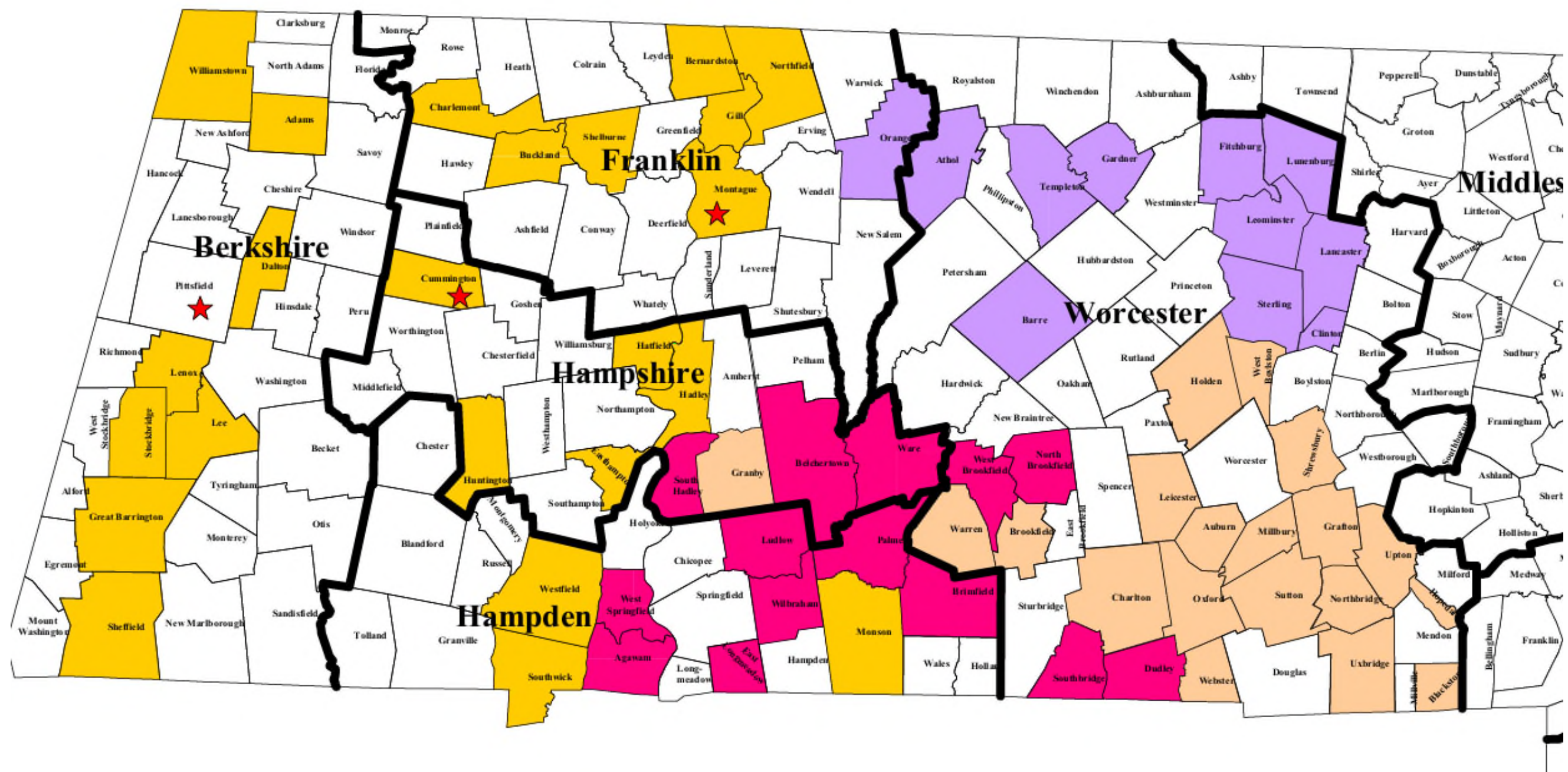
Demographics, Population Supported, PLHA List and Map

There are 68 LHAs in the CW Region. However, five (5) were re-assigned to the NE RCAT due to its low apartment count. They include Westborough, Southborough, Northborough, Mendon and Milford. One LHA (North Adams) sold the State-funded buildings (and apartment units). There are now 62 LHAs in the CW Region.

A number of Housing Authorities (HAs) in the CW Region have formed Regional Housing Authorities; all three (3) are located in Sub Region D (see details below).

The Table shows the number of apartments (units) in each Sub Region (A through D) as well as the total number (7,407) of apartments (units) in the CW Region.

7,407 Units	Steve Larry, PM Sub Region A 1960 Units	Barry Nadon, PM Sub Region B 1920 Units	David Siniscalchi, PM Sub Region C 1747 Units	Jonathan Leonard, PM Sub Region D 1780 Units
1	Athol HA	Auburn HA	Belchertown HA	Berkshire Cty. Regional HA
2	Barre HA	Charlton HA	Brimfield HA	Dalton HA
3	Clinton HA	Oxford HA	East Longmeadow HA	Great Barrington HA
4	Gardner HA	Brookfield HA	Ludlow HA	Lee HA
5	Lancaster HA	Webster HA	Palmer HA	Lenox HA
6	Orange HA	Dudley HA	Wilbraham HA	Stockbridge HA
7	Templeton HA	Blackstone HA	Agawam HA	Adams HA
8	Fitchburg HA	Grafton HA	Granby HA	Franklin County Regional HA
9	Leominster HA	Hopedale HA	South Hadley HA	Hampshire Cty. Regional HA
10	Lunenburg HA	Northbridge HA	West Springfield HA	Montague HA
11	Sterling HA	Upton HA	North Brookfield HA	Shelburne HA
12		Uxbridge HA	Warren HA	Williamstown HA
13		Holden HA	Ware HA	Easthampton HA
14		Southbridge HA	West Brookfield HA	Hadley HA
15		Leicester HA		Hatfield HA
16		Millbury HA		Monson HA
17		Shrewsbury HA		Southwick HA
18		Sutton HA		Westfield HA
19		West Boylston HA		



RCAT CENTRAL WEST 2016

- RCAT AREA "A" STEVE LARRY
- RCAT AREA "B" BARRY NADON JR.
- RCAT AREA "C" DAVID SINISCALCHI
- RCAT AREA "D" JON LEONARD

PLHA Needs

The CW RCAT used various techniques to solicit input from LHAs. These techniques included

- Attending meetings and other events with the two (2) area-wide ED Associations. The RCAT Program was explained at these events. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions and to raise matters that concerned them.
- The CW RCAT Team (PMs and Director) reached out on a regular basis to LHAs. This allowed us to ask questions regarding their concerns (projects, training, documents, reports, etc). This contact was by phone, email and face-to-face contact during site visits.
- Site visits were conducted in response to requests for assistance. A trip to a specific LHA was used to visit LHAs in the surrounding area and/or along the travel route.
- Outreach by phone was in response to an email, a phone call or just touching base to follow-up on an earlier call or email.

LHAs were encouraged to reach out to their RCAT (PM or main office) to request assistance, guidance, feedback, etc on projects, training needs, etc. The CW RCAT made every effort to respond within a day, unless the request necessitated following-up with another entity.

Feedback from LHAs regarding training and assistance included the list of issues listed below. A subjective system was used to rank the items. Access to COMMBUYS was deemed the most important as LHA ED understood that this was a crucial issue. Many attended an earlier COMMBUYS Training event, but felt that the training was not easy to follow.

1. How LHAs could access COMMBUYS.

- a. Some had accounts with COMMBUYS, but these accounts were Vendor Accounts; Buyer account were required in order to advertise projects (bids) on COMMBUYS.
 - i. This issue was considered to be a high priority item.
 - ii. The RCAT created a screen-shot “how-to” document for use by LHA EDs. This was shared with the NE and SE RCAT offices.
- b. Accessing State Contracts for material and equipment was also raised as a need. They found the process confusing and not user friendly.

- i. While this item was important, many felt that they could reach out to the RCAT for assistance. The RCAT has assisted with the purchase of ranges, sand/ice melt spreaders, printers, etc.
- 2. Assistance to help them comply with the requirements to have a Contract Registers (an Excel document).
 - a. This was raised on numerous occasions and is deemed a high priority. The RCAT is preparing a proforma document that includes
- 3. Preparation of Scopes of Work for projects under \$10,000.
 - a. This item is deemed a high priority; it is raised by LHAs on a regular basis.
- 4. LHAs were also concerned about the continued use of local contractors. They felt that these contractors needed guidance on public bids, prevailing wages, bonds, etc. The LHAs wanted to be able to use these local contractors.
 - a. This is priority item; it entails detailed planning for successful roll-out. The RCAT started the capacity building process by reaching out to small contractors, including encouraging contractors to become bonded.
- 5. LHAs were generally open to bulk procurement and the use of Force Labor Crews.

FIRST YEAR ACTIVITY

2016 Goals and performance Metrics

Service Agreements needed to be signed by December 2016 for all LHAs in each RCAT Region. The CW RCAT had 61 signed Service Agreements by the end of December.

Physical Needs Assessments Conducted, Projects Created, Capital Plans Submitted

The following table shows the number of Physical Needs Assessments (PNAs) on a quarterly basis for each Sub Region (A through D). The CW RCAT completed all December 2016 as well as March 2017 PNAs on time.

Physical Needs Assessments (PNA) Status (2017 Fiscal Year)						
FYE Dates	Sub Region A	Sub Region A	Sub Region A	Sub Region A	Total	
December	6	5	7	2	20	Complete
March	2	5	2	2	11	Complete
June	2	4	2	5	13	To Commence
September	1	5	3	9	18	Planned
Total	11	19	14	18	62	

The following table shows the number of projects created (built), closed, advertised for construction, as well as changes to the Capital Planning System (CPS) due to changes in building conditions **after** the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) has been submitted by the LHA.

CPS Changes (20 December FYE and 11 March FYE LHAs)					
CPS Changes	Sub Region A	Sub Region B	Sub Region C	Sub Region D	Total
Projects Closed	96	153	84	50	383
Projects Built	108	132	117	21	378
Revisions to CPS	3	1	2	1	7

Vacant Land Survey

The vacant land survey is performed on a quarterly basis for those LHAs with fiscal year ends (FYE) during that quarter. The CW RCAT has, to date, completed, the vacant land survey for the December and March FYE LHAs in the CW Region. A separate report will be submitted by the CW RCAT.

Outreach (Training, Customer Satisfaction, Technical Assistance

Discussions with COMMBUYS revealed that only twelve (12) LHAs in the CW Region had a COMMBUYS Buyer Account. Setting up COMMBUYS Buyer Accounts for the 50 LHAs who did not have an account with COMMBUYS was deemed to be essential.

The process to set up COMMBUYS Buyer Accounts was also used to reinforce that advertising the project on COMMBUYS was a State (and DHCD) requirement for all projects above \$10,000.

Training LHA EDs and Maintenance Superintendents was the logical next step. This was coordinated with the COMMBUYS Enablement Team as well as with CEDA and WMHAEDA. Coordination with COMMBUYS included the identification and distribution of the relevant handouts given that the audience has had negative experience with COMMBUYS, albeit on a very limited basis.

Two training sessions were scheduled to ensure access to all LHAs in the CW Region; one (1) session was held at the Holyoke HA and the other was held at the Shrewsbury HA.

The CW RCAT developed a handout (Screenshots of the COMMBUYS system); this was shared with all LHAs in the CW Region as well as with the NE and SE RCAT offices.

The CW RCAT worked with COMMBUYS, as well as with the Presidents of both CEDA and WMHAEDA to market and advertise the two COMMBUYS training events.

The two tables below summarize the event, which were both well received and deemed very successful by COMMBUYS, CEDA, WMHAEDA as well as by the CW RCAT.

A total of 66 individuals attended; 48 attendees were from the LHAs in the CW RCAT region (including 6 Maintenance Superintendents from the CW RCAT), as well as 3 were from other RCAT LHAs.

TABLE 1 – ATTENDEES (Total excludes CW RCAT and OSD/COMMBUYS)						
Training Session	Total Number	CW RCAT LHA Attendees	Other RCAT LHA	Non-RCAT LHA	CW LHA Maintenance	OSD / COMMBUYS
Holyoke (1/18/2017)	29	22	0	7	4	2
Shrewsbury (1/25/2017)	37	26	3	8	2	3

In addition to the above, 59 LHAs attended, including 49 LHAs from the CW RCAT region.

TABLE 2 – LHAs IN ATTENDANCE				
Training Session	Total Number	CW RCAT	Other RCAT	Non-RCAT
Holyoke (1/18/2017)	23	19	0	4
Shrewsbury (1/25/2017)	36	30	4	2

That COMMBUYS training is an important matter for all LHAs, is reflected by the attendance of 15 individuals (representing 6 non-RCAT LHAs).

Accomplishments

The CW RCAT has made a difference to the LHAs in the region. This is supported by feedback from LHAs.

March 2, 2017 Email from the ED at Webster HA to DHCD

I just submitted our CIP Revision for the work noted below. Thank you to our RCAT rep. Without this program and the assistance made available to us through it this submission would not have gotten done today. They have been an invaluable resource especially over the last few weeks as we comb through site-wide FMS inspections. This program has had nothing but a positive impact for us. Thank you,

The initial outreach programs as well as on-going reinforcement have been successful. LHAs are reaching out to the RCAT for input, assistance and guidance.

September 16, 2016 Email from the ED at Dalton HA to the CW RCAT

Thanks for taking time to come out. I am looking forward to your assistance. Sincerely

The COMMBUYS Training events and the follow-up with LHAs were also successful. A number of LHA EDs have started to use the COMMBUYS system. The CW RCAT has stressed that LHAs can perform this task on their own, or jointly with the CW RCAT PM (main office) or the CW RCAT can perform this task on their behalf. We have also noted that they can change their mind at any time and as often as necessary.

January 23, 2017 Email from the ED at Northbridge HA to the CW RCAT (copied to CEDA and WHMAEDA Members)

Thanks Phaldie! Last week's training was so helpful and you did such an amazing job organizing and motivating us all! Way to go!

I appreciate you.

Very Truly Yours,

January 23, 2017 Email in response from the ED at Northampton HA in response to Email from Northbridge HA Email to the CW RCAT

I couldn't have said it better!!!!

The PNA process with LHAs was well received by EDs and Maintenance Superintendents.

District Hours with CyberSense also went well; average duration was approximately 1½ to 2 hours.

The CW RCAT has worked with one contractor to encourage the contractor to get bonded. This Contractor followed the advice of the CW RCAT PM (Sub Region A) and is now successfully bonded. The CW RCAT continues to work with other small contractors.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board for RCAT Region 1 had its inaugural meeting on March 8, 2017. The meeting was held at the Double Tree Hotel in Leominster. Future meetings will be held in one or more locations that are located in close proximity to the Mass Pike.

2017 / FUTURE GOALS AND PROJECTIONS

Goals for the future include the following

1. Successfully complete the PNAs for the June and September FYE LHAs.
2. Roll-out the Maintenance Plan guide for use by LHAs; the RCAT will continue to work with LHA's to develop a maintenance plan.
3. Roll-out the Bulk Procurement and Force Account Crew Pilot Program for the CW RCAT LHAs; this would be used by the NE and SE RCAT teams.
4. Complete the roll-out of the CW RCAT Website.
 - a. Work with LHAs to include the CW RCAT Website link on their Website (for those with a Website at this stage).
 - b. Work with LHAs to setup their website (for those without a Website at this stage)
 - c. The Website will include available bids, information for LHAs, etc
5. Develop a COMMBUYS Statewide Contract handout for LHAs in Massachusetts. Share this handout with the NE and SE RCAT, as well as with CEDA and WMHAEDA.
6. Set up a Contractor Outreach program for small contractors. This will be developed in conjunction with the Leominster HA CPO, as well as business support entities.
 - a. Work with small contractors to encourage their participation in the Bidding Process. This includes encouraging them to register as Vendors.
 - b. Work with small contractors to build on the one contractor who was able to obtain Payment and Performance Bonds.
7. Continue the process to reinforce the RCAT services with LHAs.
8. Identify and encourage small design firms (all disciplines) to work on LHA projects.
9. Identify training programs for LHAs as well as the RCAT.

PROJECTED BUDGET

YEAR TWO BUDGET Mar 2017-Feb 2018	
EXPENSE DESCRIPTION	2017 APPROVED
Staffing - No staff person can be responsible for more than 2,500 units	
STAFFING EXPENSES TOTAL	\$ 592,338.00
Direct Program Expenses	
DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES TOTAL	\$ 50,000.00
Other Program Expenses	
OTHER PROGRAM EXPENSES TOTAL	\$ 82,725.00
GRAND TOTAL - BOND FUNDED	\$ 725,063.00
RCAT PENSION - OPERATING FUNDED	\$ 165,325.00
	\$ 890,388.00

CONTACT INFORMATION


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Regional Capital Assistance Team

Leominster Housing Authority ▼

Fitchburg Housing Authority ▼

Lunenburg Housing Authority ▼

Sterling Housing Authority ▼

Central-West Regional Capital Assistance Team

[DHCD Information on the Regional Capital Assistance Team](#)

[RCAT Program Guidelines](#)

RCAT Team Members

[Click here to search Team Members by County or Housing Authority](#)

Project Manager	Sub Region	Phone	Email
Phaldie Taliep	RCAT Director	978-728-6995 978-990-0139 (Cell)	send email
Steve Larry	A	978-728-6996 978-429-5647 (Cell)	send email
Barry Nadon	B	978-394-5916	send email
David Siniscalchi	C	978-394-9710	send email
Jonathan Leonard	D	978-394-9009	send email

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