

Amy Salamon

From: R1 Planning Council <info@r1planning.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 12:39 PM
To: Amy Salamon
Subject: [Test] R1 Sept Newsletter - New Housing Counseling Services

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.



Laying a Firm Foundation

R1 Now Offers HUD-Certified Housing Counseling Services

Housing is a major topic that northern Illinois municipalities big and small will be tackling in the coming years. To support its government partners' essential work, R1 has expanded services, now offering HUD-certified housing counseling for residents in Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, or McHenry counties.

Housing counseling encompasses a mix of financial, legal, and social topics and includes

- Pre-purchase – budget analysis, loan education, closing costs and other fees
- Post-purchase – home maintenance, community resources, planning for emergencies
- Renting – understanding a lease, renter's rights, renter's insurance
- Foreclosure/Eviction – rights, mitigation options, bankruptcy education
- Home Improvement – financing repairs and updates through home equity loans or lines of credit, and assistance programs
- Fair Housing/Equity – rights, discrimination reporting procedures



It's more than financial advice. **Sarah Renicker**, R1 Grants Compliance Coordinator who is providing this free service, will meet individually with clients to determine their housing goals, provide resources, and develop action steps toward securing housing, all tailored to their personal situation. It fills a social gap in the community, particularly for those first-time home buyers or renters who might not know options available to them or steps needed to complete before receiving keys to their very own residence.

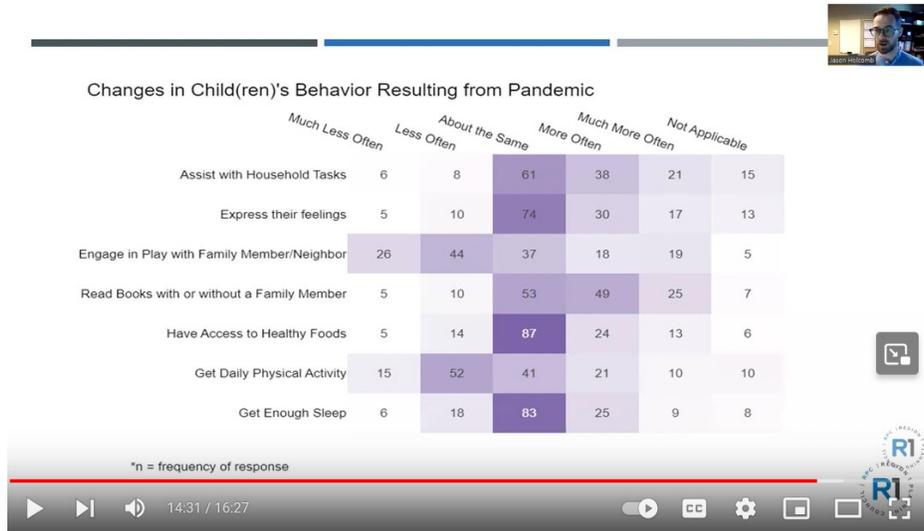
"Home ownership or rental is a major financial commitment, so we want people to go into it with their eyes wide open," says Sarah. "It's a partnership between me and the client. I give them resources and point them in the right direction, while they do research and keep on track."

After providing housing counseling services for one year, R1 will become a HUD-certified Housing Counseling Agency - the only one in the region. This designation makes R1 eligible for additional HUD grants. These funding sources and connection with HUD are critical to R1's long-term plans to increase the availability of affordable housing across its service area.

"I have a heart for helping people, previously working in childcare and education," she says. "Helping people get into stable housing gives them the foundation needed for security in all areas of their lives."

To set up an appointment with Sarah or for more information, contact her at srenicker@r1planning.org.

Alignment Rockford's Ready to Learn Report Shows Positive Progress



Alignment Rockford’s recently published Ready to Learn report shows that early childhood development made positive gains in several areas during the pandemic. The survey compared pre-and post-COVID-19 data across five key early childhood development areas, provided by public and private kindergarten teachers in Rockford and Harlem school districts. Alignment Rockford partnered with R1 to analyze and publish the data.

For an explanation of the survey data and what it means for early childhood development, watch the [explainer video](#) starring **Jason Holcomb**, R1 Director of Community Impact. The [full report](#) is available on Alignment Rockford’s website.

This report informs the Ready to Learn initiative, which provides educational experiences so that when Rockford children enter kindergarten, they are ready to learn.



Help us rethink parking! R1's Parking Strategies survey is now available and seeking your input on Rockford region parking improvements. Those improvements could be creative uses for public parking, alternative land uses, or identifying existing parking facilities that you would like to see changed.

You can take the survey online at [Engage R1](#) through October 1st. Your response will contribute to the Parking Reimagined plan, which aims to enhance parking across the region for environmental, economic, and social prosperity.

Watch our tutorial, [How to Navigate Engage R1](#), for instructions on navigating our public engagement site and using its features.

Showing Impact

WCCMHB Funded Programs Impact Videos Available



What impact have the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board (WCCMHB) funded programs made in the past year?

See for yourself!

Dive into the WCCMHB Program Year 23/24 Impact Videos playlist! All 35 funded programs have included a video showing the strides they have made in strengthening Winnebago County's mental health and substance use services. Project achievements, tangible results,

and testimonials are all featured, showing the transformative work that is being done.

Videos are available on the [WCCMHB Funded Programs page](#) on Engage R1 or on the [WCCMHB YouTube channel](#).

Consultations Available for Rain Garden Planning



Photo: Capitol Region Watershed District

Homeowners in the Buckbee and South Fork Kent Creek watersheds can receive a free consultation to plant their own rain gardens. Olson Ecological Solutions will conduct a property assessment and advise the owner on their garden's ideal location and size, and best plants to include. Garden purchases and installation are the homeowner's responsibility.

Request a consultation by filling out the [form](#) on the Engage R1 website.

This service is provided as part of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Section 319 grant funding, which educates communities on best management practices for pollution reduction in their local watersheds. In Rockford, that includes constructing a bioretention basin in the Spring/Rock Creek watershed at Ken Rock Park, and a bioswale in the Kent Creek

watershed at Park-Er-Woods. Tours of these sites are available by filling out the form at the [Engage R1 website](#)

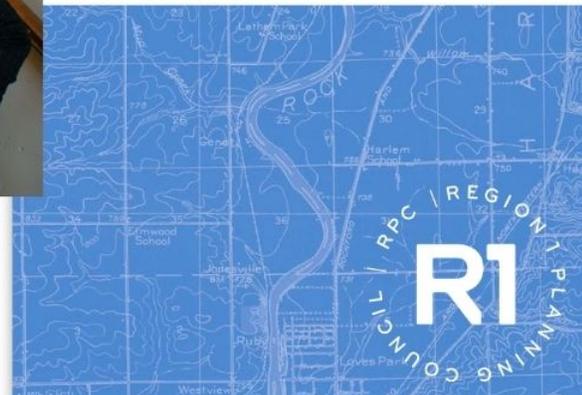
Don't live in these watersheds? You can receive assistance too! Contact Katie Walsh, Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District, at kwalshswcd@comcast.net to discuss.

A blue rectangular graphic with the text "Employee Spotlight" in white. In the background, there is a faint circular logo for "REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL | RPC | R1".

Employee Spotlight

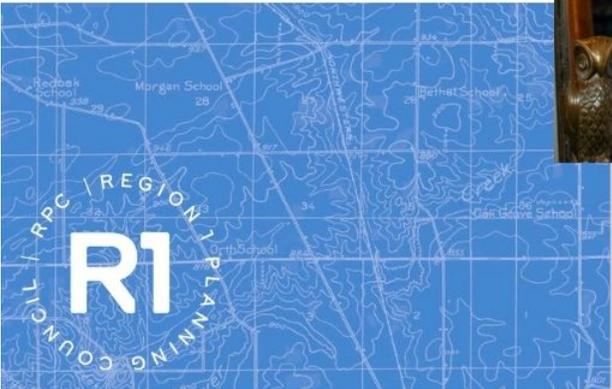


**April O'Brien-
Mitchell**
Project Assistant



April O'Brien-Mitchell joins R1 as a Land Bank Project Assistant. She has an Associate's degree in Business Administration and Management with multiple International Code Council certifications. April comes to R1 after more than a decade of Development Services for the city of Aurora and will be using that expertise to help the Land Bank and Trustee programs combat blight across Northern Illinois. As a Chicago native, April enjoys the mix of urban and rural landscapes the Rockford region offers.

Jack Sitter
Transportation Planner



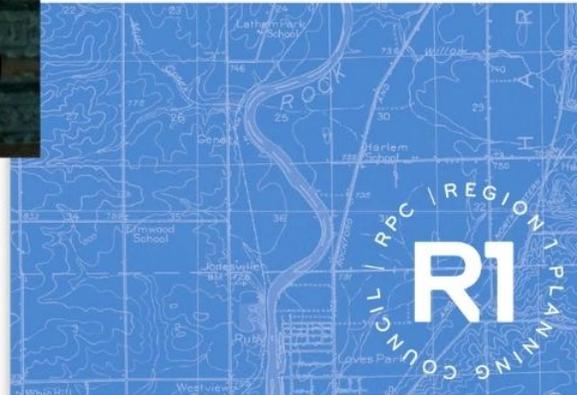
Jack Sitter joins the Transportation team as a Planner. He is a University of Oregon graduate, with a bachelor's degree in Planning, Public Policy, and Management. Transportation planning was a specific focus in his undergrad work. He will be working on the Safe Streets for All, LCI, and Transportation Resiliency projects.



Chloe Barnes

Transportation Planner

.....



Chloe Barnes also joins the Transportation team as a Planner. She is a University of Kentucky graduate, with two bachelor's degrees - one in Geography and one in Environmental and Sustainability studies - all in four years! A former Starbucks barista, she completed three planning internships - Jessamine County-City of Wilmore Planning and Zoning, Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, and the Village of Indian Head Park. She is a southwest Chicago suburb native, and excited to work on projects like LCI and the Youth Engagement Program.

Copyright © 2024 R1 Planning Council, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

127 N. Wyman St., Suite 101, Rockford, IL 61101

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

