CASE STUDY

When a nonprofit wanted to upgrade its phone system, it seized the chance to standardize technology processes across their multi-location footprint.

How a Simple Upgrade Helped a Non-Profit Streamline Its Processes and Save Time

> " I'm not just looking for technical solutions. I'm looking for a partner that's going to be with me in the good times and the bad. TPx is a good, solid partner that checks all of those boxes."
>
> *Brad Blake,*
> *Vice President of Information Technology, Preservation of Affordable Housing, Boston, MA*

The Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) is a mission-driven, national nonprofit that operates as an affordable housing developer, owner, and operator. POAH's mission is to preserve, create, and sustain affordable, healthy homes that support economic security, racial equity, and access to opportunity for all. POAH puts the needs of its residents first, so any IT investments must help the organization drive its mission while supporting staff and residents.

PROFILE

POAH is an affordable housing nonprofit that provides nearly 13,000 homes in 11 states and the District of Columbia.

CHALLENGE

- Balancing mission-focused IT requests and needs while staying on budget
- Overcoming inefficiencies of dealing with dozens of providers across the U.S.

SOLUTION

- Implemented the UCx cloud-based UCaaS system to help employees connect and collaborate anywhere
- Migrated/ported phone numbers, set up auto attendants and reorganized call tree structures

BENEFITS

- Eliminated having to deal with 60-70 telecom providers
- Standardized training process to improve employee workflows
- Eased pandemic impact with remote working capabilities

RESULTS

POAH has the tools and support to manage its IT communications solutions, but also to make sure it's taking full advantage of its investment

The Challenge

As the Vice President of Information Technology for POAH, Brad Blake wears several hats. His responsibilities include defining and executing on the technology strategy for the organization, as well as architecting and installing networks at various locations to support other systems such as property automation systems, monitoring solar and heat usage, and managing residential wireless networks. He works closely with the Development, Design and Construction teams, as well as with the Acquisitions team on new construction projects, large rehabilitations, and acquisitions of new properties. That's all in addition to his traditional technology-focused responsibilities.

"I would say one of the biggest challenges of working in the nonprofit space is balancing what needs to be done and what we want to do, and then finding the resources to do it," said Blake.

When Blake started at POAH in 2013, he noticed there weren't any formalized systems or processes in place across all of their locations. Since POAH would soon be expanding by adding several new properties, Blake recognized the value of creating a standardized system that could be replicated at all new locations.

Solution: A Single Provider and Standardized Processes

When it came time to update the phone system at POAH's corporate office in Boston, Blake saw an opportunity to standardize the technology and processes across locations. The corporate office used a UCx phone system provided by TPx, and Blake had been impressed with the services and support provided by TPx over the years. He knew working with a single provider like TPx would make expansion easier and help the organization achieve its goals.

"I approached senior management with a plan to consolidate by implementing UCx phone systems at all of our properties," Blake explains. "This consolidation would streamline things like training, education, invoicing, and billing."

With senior management approval, the POAH team set out on a roughly 18-month-long project to migrate and port all of its phones and phone numbers, set up auto attendants and reorganize its call tree structures.

"It was an extremely successful project. Not only did we roll it out to all of our corporate offices, but we also rolled it out to all of our property staff," Blake recalls. "We were able to create one training video on how to use your phone, how to

access your voicemail and how to set up your auto-attendant. Before that, I was dealing with up to 70 different telecom providers depending on the area."

By partnering with TPx, the POAH team created a standard baseline across all its properties and staff fir its phone system. The project eased everybody's comfort level, as most users learned the phone's operations right away, and those with questions could turn to the training manuals. With the need for affordable housing at an all-time high, having these standard processes in place make it possible for POAH to operate more efficiently, thereby helping it to more quickly expand its mission of providing affordable housing in more places.

Results: Flexibility for Adapting to Life's Challenges

Having the right partner and services in place gave POAH the flexibility to adapt to unforeseen challenges due to the pandemic, so it could stay focused on its mission. When the pandemic hit, the POAH team was able to quickly adjust to remote working conditions thanks to the business continuity capabilities of TPx's UCx solutions. Being able to securely connect and collaborate from anywhere allowed employees to continue to provide housing stability for their residents during a time of crisis. Blake credits his relationship with his TPx team as playing a crucial role in helping POAH adapt to these unexpected hurdles.

"I'm not just looking for technical solutions. I'm looking for a partner that's going to be with me in good times and bad. Someone that will not only help me manage my solutions, but also make sure we're taking full advantage of our investments," Blake says. "Let's face it — at the end of the day, IT equipment breaks. What's important is what happens when it does break — the response time, the communication, and whether the issue was resolved in a timely manner. TPx is a good, solid partner that checks all of those boxes."

About TPx

TPx is a nationwide managed services provider (MSP) delivering cybersecurity, networks, business internet and cloud communications at scale. For more than two decades, TPx has helped customers across every business sector address the growing complexity of their IT environments. With a full suite of managed IT services, TPx is making IT more accessible for businesses coast to coast. For more, visit tpx.com or follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.