

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STATISTICS

ACTIVITY	12/2007	1/2008	2/2008	3/2008
Applications	34	51	27	39
Walk-in/Appointments	87	109	71	97

WAIT LIST	11/2007	12/2007	1/2008	2/2008	3/2008
Section 8 Vouchers *	591/540	561/531	510/473	517/474	548/502
Parkview Knoll	89	89	83	86	88
Blue Mountain Estates	56	58	53	56	53
Scattered Sites	13	14	13	14	18
Schoolhouse Manor	43	43	37	39	38
Monterey House	13	14	12	13	12
Francis Murphy Apartments	53	50	58	60	59
Springfield Manor	86	88	80	83	85

* Where two numbers are shown, the first is total applications and the second is persons free of debts or criminal records that would bar them from participation.

Vouchers	12/2007	1/2008	2/2008	3/2008	4/2008	YTD Proj
Available	498	498	498	498	498	2,490
Utilized	483	492	492	483	474	2,424
Occupancy	96.99%	98.80%	98.80%	96.99%	95.18%	97.35%

PUBLIC HOUSING	1/2008	2/2008	3/2008	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move in	Move Out
PVK	28	28	28	0	100%	0	0
BME	28	28	28	0	100%	1	1
Scat*	21	22	22	2	100%	0	0

* 2 units are "off-line" for major capital improvement work.

RENTAL PARTNERSHIP	1/2008	2/2008	3/2008	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move In	Move Out
SHM	31	31	31	1	97%	0	0
Monterey	24	23	23	1	96%	0	0
Francis Murphy	120	119	119	1	99%	1	1
Springfield Manor	36	36	36	0	100%	0	0

I. Reports

- A. A note on agenda planning - Some of the resolutions being offered by staff have more program impact than others. Some may seem self evident and others may seem obscure. In the agenda presentation we have tried to arrange for discussion time for the more substantive items like maintenance charges (2008-9) and Section 8 hearings (2008-10), while others were placed on the consent agenda. To draft these resolutions, the actual policies are revised, checked for consistency, and then printed with strikeout and redlining. Because of the volume of changes on this month's agenda enclosures are provided for the items on the voting agenda and not for the items on the consent portion of the agenda. If Commissioners want to examine the policy pages for consent agenda items, call the Executive Director. If Commissioners want to ask questions about consent agenda items at the meeting the proper step is to ask the Chair to remove the item from the consent agenda when he brings the consent items forward for a vote.
- B. More positive feedback on the office move - Not only are employees appreciative of ample free parking (saving \$30.00/month or so), but we have lots of fresh air, even temperatures throughout the office (except when someone accidentally switches the system into heat mode on a warmer day) and this week, new copiers were delivered under our State contract with Lanier that do more and cost less. Such a deal. We are bench-marking new computers for two employees that seem to be cutting processing time by more than half on operations we do countless times each day and that will be welcomed.

II. Action items

- A. Policy updates - The Authority subscribes to a policy update service provided by the Schiff Group. This service originally came to us through NAHRO. The principal is Joe G. Schiff, HUD's Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing during the senior Bush Presidency. 2007 was a very quiet year in terms of policy recommendations - and as it turns out, it was too quiet. When we made our 2008 renewal we discovered that we had been omitted from their 2007 email list, leaving us a bit of catch-up work on various policies.
1. Administrative Plan updates - Five new terms need to be added to the glossaries of our admissions and occupancy policy and our Section 8 Administrative Plan, and accordingly staff recommend adoption of resolution 2008-3 as follows:
- WHEREAS the Housing Authority presently uses an update service for its Section 8 Administrative plan and its Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policies applicable to rental assistance programs that is produced by the Schiff Group, formerly a subcontractor of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Organizations (NAHRO); and*
- WHEREAS through HUD Notices and statutory changes the following new terms have come into currency:*
1. *Enterprise Income Verification*
 2. *Domestic Violence*

3. *Dating Violence*
4. *Stalking and*
5. *Immediate Family Member*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Administrative Plan and Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policies be changed by staff to incorporate language and missing definitions of terms as recommended by the Schiff Group Agency Plan Updating Service.

2. Homeownership - A final rule on the use of Section 8 in support of homeownership published in October, 2007, now allows units not yet built to be placed under contract. In evaluating how to add this provision to our existing homeownership chapter we concluded that the "Schiff" version of the homeownership plan was more clearly written than our present plan, therefore staff are recommending adoption of the Schiff-Homeownership Plan in its entirety by passage of Resolution 2008-5 as follows:

WHEREAS the Housing Authority presently uses an update service for its Section 8 Administrative plan that is produced by the Schiff Group, formerly a subcontractor of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Organizations (NAHRO); and

WHEREAS on October 22, 2007 HUD published a final rule allowing Housing Choice Vouchers to be used to purchase units not yet under construction;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Administrative Plan be changed by staff to add clauses defining the circumstances and conditions relating to contracts for purchase of units not yet under construction as recommended by the Schiff Group Agency Plan Updating Service by incorporating the language for chapter 23 in its entirety in place of the existing chapter.

3. Policy updates - VAWA - The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed by Congress in late 2005 and signed by President Bush in January 2006. The legislation said it was self-implementing. Normally, HUD issues instructions on how to implement new legislative requirements but has failed to do so to date. Some HUD Field Offices are pressuring their housing authorities to implement this statute, therefore the Schiff Group decided to make VAWA policy recommendations with the full expectation that this will not comply exactly with what HUD will publish in the future. Accordingly staff recommend adoption of Resolution 2008-6 as follows:

WHEREAS the Housing Authority presently uses an update service for its Public Housing Admissions and Occupancy Policy and its Section 8 Administrative plan that is produced by the Schiff Group, formerly a subcontractor of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Organizations (NAHRO); and

WHEREAS on November 9, 2007 the Schiff Group provided the Authority with suggested policy language as an interim step until HUD provides their guidance for the Violence Against Women Act signed into law in January 2006;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Administrative Plan and the Admissions and Occupancy policies be changed by staff as recommended by the Schiff Group Agency Plan Updating Service.

4. Policy updates - Smoke Detectors - Staff recommend adoption of Resolution 2008-7 as follows:

WHEREAS Functioning smoke detectors are critical for the safety of our residents.

WHEREAS; This means that the smoke detectors must be either hard-wired with appropriate battery backup or contain operating batteries; and

WHEREAS; From time to time residents either improperly remove their batteries or fail to report to management when a battery fails;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Admissions and Occupancy policies be changed by staff as recommended by the Schiff Group Agency Plan Updating Service to make failing to keep smoke detectors operable a condition under which the lease may be terminated.

5. Policy updates - Limited English Proficiency (LEP) - Staff recommend adoption of Resolution 2008-8 as follows:

WHEREAS the Housing Authority presently uses an update service for its Public Housing Admissions and Occupancy Policy and its Section 8 Administrative plan that is produced by the Schiff Group, formerly a subcontractor of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Organizations (NAHRO); and

WHEREAS on March 29, 2007 the Schiff Group provided the Authority with suggested policy language to implement final guidance for Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons placed in the Federal Register by HUD on January 22, 2007;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Administrative Plan and the Admissions and Occupancy policies be changed by staff as recommended by the Schiff Group Agency Plan Updating Service.

6. Policy updates - Procurement Policy - Staff recommend adoption of Resolution 2008-11 as follows:

WHEREAS the Housing Authority presently uses an update service for its policies that require adherence with federal requirements produced by the Schiff Group, formerly a subcontractor of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Organizations (NAHRO); and

WHEREAS HUD issued a new procurement handbook and in May, 2007, the Schiff Group provided the Authority with suggested language to bring our handbook into compliance with the new HUD guidance;

WHEREAS staff have reviewed the recommended policy to insure that the thresholds for procurements follow Washington County policy;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the procurement policy be changed by staff as recommended by the Schiff Group Agency Plan Updating Service.

- B. Maintenance Charges - With the adoption of a new fiscal year budget and corresponding adjustments to wages, the charges for maintenance work need to be updated. The methodology for this calculation has been to average the wages of all maintenance staff and to divide this sum by the hours worked, bearing in mind that “hours worked” do not include vacation and holiday hours or staff meetings and training. While the “salary” portion of the calculation does include fringe benefits such as health care premiums, in years past it did not include our pension contribution, FICA, unemployment insurance or workman’s compensation. When these “new” costs of doing business are factored in the base labor rate increases to \$28/hour, a 12% increase from the current rate of \$25.00. When the cost of trucks, tools and the maintenance facility are added the rate jumps to \$40/hour. This additional information shows the true cost of doing business as background for setting a rate for FY2009. Staff are recommending adoption of resolution 2008-9 that applies a more modest 5% increase as follows:

WHEREAS the funding provided to the Housing Authority by the Department of Housing and Urban Development is only sufficient to provide basic maintenance services;

WHEREAS damages done to units by residents or their guests beyond normal wear and tear should be paid for by the tenant, as provided in the lease;

WHEREAS the Housing Authority wishes to include in the calculation of appropriate wage rates the cost of fringe benefits such as vacation, sick and holiday time in addition to cash benefits such as health care and FICA;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. That effective July 1, 2008 the base rate for Maintenance staff shall be \$27.00 per hour, with the rate for work done after normal business hours, weekends and holidays shall be 1½ times the base rate, or \$40.50 per hour, and
 2. That Authority staff shall provide all tenants with a 30 day comment period and provide any feedback received to the Commissioners at their June meeting.
- C. Section 8 Hearings - In all of our dealings with customers we try to resolve misunderstandings at the lowest possible level. Typically we work to avoid “issues.” We refer to this dialogue with customers as the informal stage, but this causes confusion in the Section 8 program where the regulations refer to a hearing before an independent party as an “informal hearing.” While we cannot change federal regulations, we can change the language we use in our own policy documents to refer to the meetings we hold with the hearing officer. Also following a recent hearing it was brought to our attention that some of our deadlines seemed to be in conflict. It was our intent to always give staff deadlines in terms of working days and to give customers deadlines expressed in calendar days. To illustrate the changes a redlined copy of the proposed revision to the Hearing Procedures we provide customers is included in this report. Accordingly staff recommend adoption of resolution 2008-10 to address both of these issues as follows:

WHEREAS the both the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program and the units owned by the Housing Authority have formal complaint procedures for the resolution of disagreements;

WHEREAS the formal hearing process in the Section 8 program regulations requires the Authority to establish an "informal hearing" process, creating confusion for staff and participants as to what the terminology means;

WHEREAS the Housing Authority desires to use the same language in its grievance policies and its Section 8 hearing policy and wishes to give complainants 10 calendar days for all actions and Authority staff 10 business days for their actions;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all instances of the word "informal" be deleted from chapter 16 of the Section 8 Administrative Plan, and that deadlines for applicant or participant actions always be expressed in terms of calendar days.

III. Upcoming events

- A. The list of "Next Meetings" is on the Agenda this month.