

### RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STATISTICS

ACTIVITY	1/2010	2/2010	3/2010	4/2010
Applications	51	25	90	73
Walk-in/Appointments	248	170	248	259

WAIT LIST	12/2009	1/2010	2/2010	3/2010	4/2010
Section 8 Vouchers (498)*	925/816	852/756	870/773	938/839	981/876
Parkview Knoll (28)	59	61	60	65	67
Blue Mountain Estates (28)	46	50	49	50	51
Scattered Sites (24)	37	37	40	55	62
Schoolhouse Manor (32)	29	30	29	29	31
Monterey House (24)	5	6	6	6	8
Francis Murphy Apartments (120)	69	72	75	86	83
Springfield Manor (36)	52	54	53	53	54

\* 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	12/2009	1/2010	2/2010	3/2010	4/2010	YTD Proj
Available	498	498	498	498	498	1,992
Utilized	496	495	489	487	490	1,976
Occupancy	99.60%	99.40%	98.19%	97.79%	98.39%	99.20%

PUBLIC HOUSING	2/2010	3/2010	4/2010	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move in	Move Out
PVK	27	28	28	0	100%	0	0
BME	28	28	28	0	100%	0	0
Scattered	24	24	24	0	100%	0	0

RENTAL PARTNERSHIP	2/2010	3/2010	4/2010	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move In	Move Out
SHM	32	32	32	0	100%	0	0
Monterey	24	22	22	2	92%	0	0
Francis Murphy	120	119	119	1	99%	0	0
Springfield Manor	35	36	36	0	100%	0	0

I. Reports

- A. Agency Brochures - Ms. Garrison has enclosed a revised Rent-to-Own brochure in this month's mailing.
- B. Pet Policies - At its April 29 meeting, HAWC staff discussed the pros and cons of allowing pets in rental units. After reviewing how the HAWC policy compared with those of other housing authorities (including Hagerstown City), and the actual amount of damage to HAWC property caused by pets over the years, staff divided into two groups to discuss the various policy options (e.g. breed restrictions, number of pets, deposits required) and the advantages/disadvantages to pet ownership with the goal of either recommending to the Board that the current HAWC pet policy be kept as-is, or be modified to better protect HAWC against pet-related expenses and/or improve the well being of all HAWC residents.

In the process we learned that we currently have 58 resident pets as follows:

LOCATION	# Units with Pets	# Units in Community	% Units with Pets
Parkview Knoll	7	28	25%
Schoolhouse Manor	16	32	50%
Springfield Manor	6	36	17%
Blue Mountain Estates	11	32	35%
Monterey House	1	24	5%
Scattered - Family	17	25	71%
Total:	58	177	33%

In the past 20 years we have had four units damaged by pets. In one the current resident paid to have the damage repaired. In one the damaged carpet was over ten years old and due for replacement at our cost. In one a concrete floor had to be washed repeatedly to remove urine odor and in one we delayed lease enforcement and the urine damage to the carpet and sub-flooring was significant.

Items that HAWC agree should be retained in the policy included: prior approval of pets; licenses required; dog/cats to be neutered or spayed; no additional rent; no renters insurance required and no pets to be allowed in the Community Rooms. Items requiring further discussion include whether to recommend adoption of size/breed restrictions, amount of pet deposit, number of pets per unit and the "Visiting" pet deposit.

A Pet Policy can be viewed as a type of insurance for the Authority. A "good" policy works to remind tenants of the cost of pet mis-behavior, protects the living environment of other residents and is viewed by the customers as fair. Staff will continue their discussion of pet policy options before bringing recommendations to the Board.

- C. Outlook - In the next several weeks the office will be moving its calendar

and email programs from a Novell platform to Microsoft Exchange. This will make it easier for our remote users (including maintenance staff and Commissioners) to synchronize their computers and mobile devices to our email and calendar system and it will make it easier for staff to schedule tasks and meetings. Meeting organizers will be able to send invitations to all attendees, both internal and external, whereas the Novell system was only an internal system. Staff will be trained on the new program May 17, after which an office-wide conversion will get everyone up and running.

- D. Section 8 Home Ownership - Qualifying applicants in the Section 8 program can use their rental assistance to help them make mortgage payments - in other words, to become home owners. HUD has established some criteria for eligibility for the home ownership feature such as the requirement that the family's income not be less than 2,000 hours of work at the federal minimum wage. With the minimum wage of \$7.35, this minimum income is \$14,700. HUD also allows local administering agencies to set a higher minimum income.

In our discussions of home ownership, we stressed the importance of long-term success. We are investing repair dollars in Rent-to-Own homes so that purchasing families will not be faced with major system replacements early in their tenure. We are also aware that changes in income and spending patterns take time to accomplish. If a family enters the home ownership program with an annual income as low as \$15,000 with a commitment for 15 years of home ownership subsidy (only half of the typical 30-year mortgage term), will they have increased their income enough to swing the mortgage on their own when the subsidy stops? A \$150,000 loan at 6% interest will have a \$900 monthly payment. Not even counting taxes, insurance and repairs, if utilities run \$200 per month the family needs a net annual income of \$44,000 to keep the payments at 30% of their monthly income. That will take an 8% per year increase in wages over the 15-year subsidy period. If increases in income were only 4% per year for 15 years, the starting income would need to be \$25,500 to reach the \$44,000 target income. At 2% annual wage growth the starting wage would need to be \$33,400, etc. Given that the 50% median figure for a family of four is currently \$34,600, the eligibility income cannot be set unrealistically high, but neither should it be set so very low that the goal of self-sufficiency cannot be attained.

- E. Rent-to-Own Time Line - Ten families attended our RTO program briefing on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Two families withdrew their expressions of interest following our briefing and we have now begun the qualifying process. As we anticipated, families fortunate enough to have found a very reasonable rental deal, may be able to save more on their own than they would be able to save while paying an RTO rent of \$1,100. The enclosed Gantt chart combines our current experience with the application process and the home purchase and repair cycle, allowing us to model the process over the ultimate purchase of 13-14 homes. Page one of the chart reflects steps that have already been taken, while the remaining two show how we have projected our first rental contract signing for September 1, 2010. The first family to be qualified will have a choice of three home locations. This may allow us to enter two to three rental agreements on September 1<sup>st</sup>, giving another set of families the choice of units that we place under contract

between now and June 15<sup>th</sup>. Adopting a more conservative 2/month plan, we would project leasing 14 homes by April, 2011.

Nine families were represented at the May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. We collected the following information from those in attendance to help guide our ongoing property search:

<b>Type of House</b>	Rancher - 8	Split Level - 6	Split Foyer - 3	Cape Cod - 5
	Two-story - 3			
<b># Bedrooms</b>	Four - 2	Three - 7	Two - 0	One - 0
<b># Bathrooms</b>	Two - 9	One - 0		
<b>Amenities</b>	Family Rm - 5	Porch - 6	Deck - 6	Carport - 2
	Garage - 6	Basement - 9		
<b>Location</b>	Hagerstown Area - 5	Williamsport - 3	Boonsboro - 4	Smithsburg - 3
	Cascade - 1	Sharpsburg - 1	Maugansville - 1	Funkstown - 1

- F. Preferred words - In the April meeting it was decided to bring this table to each meeting for a while to enable us to polish our positive language. Please add your own "No-no" words so we can further add to our table at the meeting.

<b>NO-NO WORDS AND PHRASES</b>	<b>POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES</b>
Development	Community
Project	Community
Houses	Homes
Housing	Homes
Elderly	Seniors
Households	Families
Affordable housing	Homes within reach of working families
Income limits/guidelines	
Disabled persons	Persons with disabilities

- G. Board vacancy - The Board of County Commissioners will not have filling vacancies on boards and commissions on their agenda until mid-June.
- H. Schoolhouse Manor follow up - Staff have scheduled a meeting with SHM tenants for early the week of May 10<sup>th</sup>. In that meeting they will review the

steps taken to brief the lawn maintenance contractor on our expected scope of work, they will review and explain the snow removal plan posted on the community building bulletin board which was inaccurately quoted at the last board meeting, and they will propose that motion activated lights be installed on rear patios at a cost under \$5,000 rather than site lights that would possibly cost as much as \$10,000. Several maintenance requests were researched following the meeting and work items were completed and the procedure for calling in work items has been explained. We have a completed work order on file signed by the tenant on the same day the request was issued for an oven adjustment, and no followup work request. An request for accommodation form has been provided to the gentleman having difficulty using his freezer space.