

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STATISTICS

ACTIVITY	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009	9/2009
Applications	58	67	62	58
Walk-in/Appointments	269	245	251	218

WAIT LIST	5/2009	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009	9/2009
Section 8 Vouchers *	761/698	791/714	810/732	701/630	701/627
Parkview Knoll	52	54	57	54	54
Blue Mountain Estates	42	45	46	43	42
Scattered Sites	55	46	47	32	30
Schoolhouse Manor	35	35	37	33	31
Monterey House	5	5	4	5	5
Francis Murphy Apartments	64	66	71	68	69
Springfield Manor	48	49	52	48	47

* 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	5/2009	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009	9/2009	YTD Proj
Available	498	498	498	498	498	4,482
Utilized	497	495	497	495	498	4,468
Occupancy	99.80%	99.40%	99.80%	99.40%	100.00%	99.69%

PUBLIC HOUSING	7/2009	8/2009	9/2009	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move in	Move Out
PVK	28	28	27	1	96%	0	1
BME	28	28	27	1	96%	0	1
Scattered	24	22	22	2	92%	0	0

RENTAL PARTNERSHIP	7/2009	8/2009	9/2009	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move In	Move Out
SHM	32	32	32	0	100%	0	0
Monterey	24	24	24	0	100%	0	0
Francis Murphy	119	120	119	1	99%	1	2
Springfield Manor	36	36	36	0	100%	0	0

I. Reports

- A. FY2009 Audit - The 2.5 day site visit portion of this year's audit engagement was completed shortly after noon on September 30th. The audit staff complimented us on our documentation. Our Section 8 staff were particularly gratified to learn that the Auditors had been unable to find anything wrong with any of our records - even after they had us pull another 20 records beyond the initial 30 they had randomly selected!
- B. Education Subcommittee - The Education Subcommittee met on Thursday October 1. A series of brief open-ended questions were forwarded to staff for inclusion in a resident survey from which the Committee will be able to take personal stories that can be used when we talk to the public. In their review of the latest draft of the agency Strategic Plan the Subcommittee recommended inclusion of "Executive Director transition," and "becoming more self-sufficient." The Subcommittee meets next on Thursday, October 22 at 8:00 a.m.
- C. Housing Subcommittee - The Housing Subcommittee is negotiating terms with a local lender. Its next meeting is Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at 10:30 a.m. in the conference room.
- D. Blue Mountain Expansion - The Smithsburg Board of Zoning Appeals took favorable action on all of the approvals and waivers our site engineer, Triad Corporation, requested. In addition they further relaxed the zoning ordinance parking requirement, beyond what we had sought, so that all of the parking spaces would be elderly-friendly in width. Our application for planning money to the Maryland Affordable Housing Trust was submitted on October 1st with letters of support from Don Munson, Andrew Serafini, John Barr on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, Mickey Myers, Pastor Mark Mooney and Judith Ferro (whose efforts generated all of the letters of support).
- E. Project signs - We have completed the installation of project signs bearing the community name, our logo and the phrase, "Professionally managed by the Housing Authority of Washington County," at Blue Mountain Estates, Parkview Knoll and on the front of the Monterey House. In all of the other locations (where there was no previous sign) we are working our way through the permitting process. At Monterey we are seeking Town permission to install a project sign for the rear parking entrance that adds the text "Resident Parking Only" in dark gold. Mr. O'Brien will be able to show you examples of our "artwork" at the meeting.
- F. The Neighborhood Conservation Initiative (NCI) We have an offer that has been accepted on one foreclosed property, we will make an offer on a second unit on Monday and are actively searching for one more opportunity.
- G. SEMAP - The self-assessment portion of the Section 8 Management Assessment Program for FY2009 (SEMAP) was given a perfect grade by

HUD, winning us the maximum score of 103 and retaining our “high performer” status.

- H. Financial Reporting - Mr. O’Brien plans to complete the first quarter financial reports by Tuesday, October 13. They will be emailed and posted on the management report page on the web, on Wednesday morning. With the audit field work falling the last week in September and the first Tuesday of October falling on the first, Mr. O’Brien did not get the extra preparation time we try to allow by planning our quarterly financial report meetings a week later!
- I. “Health Care For All” - In August the Chamber of Commerce sponsored an “Eggs & Issues” session on health care in Maryland. (Because the Commissioners wanted more time to consider the matter, the comments from the September Management report are being included again this month.) Vinnie Demarco pitched the Health Care for All proposal, and the Chamber representative talked mostly about health care proposals on the national level. He was very supportive of the objectives of the Health Care for All initiative, but was adamant that the Chamber opposed the 2% increase in the payroll tax. So, is the cost of health care a core issue for HAWC; and, if it is, should we make public our support for the Health Care for All proposal?

The steady increase in the cost of health care insurance premiums has a very real impact on the Housing Authority’s bottom line. We are very fortunate that Washington County has agreed to allow us to purchase coverage from their plan. When we became an independent unit of County government in 2000, the price of health care for our small agency would have been at least \$2,000 per employee more than the cost of County coverage and would not have been as comprehensive. One of the Health Care for All plan provisions that addresses our agency’s needs most directly is allowing small business owners to pool their numbers to get better health care deals. Over the last five years, our annual increase in health premium costs has averaged 7% per year. A 2% increase in payroll taxes that promises a reduction in overall health care costs seems like a reasonable gamble!

The Maryland Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (MAHRA) considers which legislation to support or oppose based on its possible impact on member agencies and on the legislation’s impact on our customers. Because unexpected health care costs ruin credit and cause financial disruption that leads to homelessness, should we look at proposals to curtail health care costs as a type of “housing solution?” Our customers are the lowest income citizens of Washington County and therefore make up the un- or under-insured target audience. Should we endorse the Maryland Health Care for All plan? Further information on the plan is available online at www.healthcareforall.com.

- J. Commissioner’s Calendar - Following up on the Board training event held at the special called meeting on September 17, staff have begun building a Commissioner’s calendar which is attached to this report.

- K. Housing Needs and the Strategic Plan - A first draft of a needs analysis was enclosed with the September Management Report. The data assembled so far indicate that:
1. We have 2,000 households in Washington County (outside of Hagerstown) paying more than 35% of income for housing;
 2. 55% of these households are families and 45% are elderly;
 3. 42% of these cost-burdened households are concentrated in four census districts immediately surrounding the City of Hagerstown;
 4. Therefore staff concluded that:
 - a. Our development efforts should be focused in the Hagerstown urban growth area; and
 - b. Because elderly and family need is almost equal, we should balance our development efforts between family and elderly communities.

In this month's discussion, staff hope for feedback on the following questions: Do the Commissioners agree with these conclusions? Are there additional questions that get at housing need that should be considered? What other considerations influence the "where and what" we build, and how do we best frame the discussion? At the September meeting the Commissioners agreed to revisit these questions in October. Richard Keesecker summarized our objectives as "building both elderly and family housing while remaining flexible enough to follow resource opportunities."

- L. Charges for tenant damages - Accidents do happen from time to time, and wall and floor surfaces get damaged by our tenants. On the one hand we say that we will re-paint walls after five years or as needed, and on the other hand our past practice has been to pass the entire cost of repainting a room to the tenant if we have to do wall repairs. We have not established a useful life for carpet, but if we were to agree that ten years seemed a reasonable figure, under present practice, we would charge the entire cost of carpet replacement to the tenant for a stain that showed up in year nine. When carpet has been well cared for and thus deemed not ready for replacement on the ten-year cycle, we could even face a decision to charge for carpet replacement in year 11 or 12.

If you apply the Authority's value of fairness to this discussion, should we amend our damage policies? Would it be more fair if we were to pro-rate the charge based on useful remaining life of the wall or floor area, and add a charge of, say, \$200 per room to cover our extra effort for having to do the repairs out of sequence (the cost of the inspection, the procurement and supervision, etc.)? Or should we be thinking about our budget and our fiscal health and charge 100% for all tenant damages regardless of the remaining useful life?

Based on feedback from our Commissioners, staff will draft language for the tenant handbook that either recognizes a "useful life" concept or makes it clear that damage charges will not be based on remaining useful life.