

SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

| Vouchers | 3/2007 | 4/2007 | 5/2007 | 6/2007 | 7/2007 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Available | 498 | 498 | 498 | 498 | 498 |
| Utilized | 509 | 505 | 509 | 516 | 511 |
| Occupancy | 102.21% | 101.41% | 102.21% | 103.61% | 102.61% |

| ACTIVITY | 3/2007 | 4/2007 | 5/2007 | 6/2007 |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Applications | 56 | 39 | 58 | 46 |
| Walk-in/Appointments | 209 | 181 | 132 | 73 |

| WAIT LIST | 2/2007 | 3/2007 | 4/2007 | 5/2007 | 6/2007 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Section 8 * | 453/407 | 488/441 | 381/352 | 423/394 | 435/411 |
| Parkview Knoll | 55 | 56 | 51 | 61 | 69 |
| Blue Mountain Estates | 30 | 34 | 33 | 37 | 40 |
| Scattered Sites | 6 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| Schoolhouse Manor | 31 | 32 | 27 | 30 | 33 |
| Monterey House | 9 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 12 |
| Francis Murphy Apartments | 50 | 52 | 43 | 46 | 47 |
| Springfield Manor | 60 | 59 | 52 | 59 | 65 |

* 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.

| PUBLIC HOUSING | 4/2007 | 5/2007 | 6/2007 | Vacancy | Occupancy | Move in | Move Out |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|
| PVK | 28 | 28 | 28 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 |
| BME | 28 | 28 | 27 | 1 | 96% | 0 | 1 |
| Scat | 24 | 24 | 24 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 |

| RENTAL PARTNERSHIP | 4/2007 | 5/2007 | 6/2007 | Vacancy | Occupancy | Move In | Move Out |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|
| SHM | 32 | 32 | 32 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 |
| Monterey | 24 | 24 | 23 | 1 | 96% | 0 | 1 |
| Francis Murphy | 120 | 120 | 120 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 |
| Springfield Manor | 35 | 36 | 36 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 |

I. Reports

A. Energy Audits Both HUD and Rural Development require an energy audit every five years. In July we contracted with the Nelrod Company to do an energy audit of our 80 low-rent units and Monterey House in Hancock. This contract comes late for our public housing obligation and a couple of years early for Monterey, but gets us on one 5-year schedule going forward. (We had hired a vendor in 2003 to do the 5-year low-rent audit, who gathered the data, and then spent 3 years promising to get the results in the mail next week!)

B. ROSS Grant The Hagerstown Housing Authority and HAWC are helping Easter Seals to apply for a Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) grant to fund “the delivery and coordination of supportive services and other activities designed to help improve the living conditions of public housing residents who are elderly and/or disabled.” The Easter Seals request will be in the award range of \$250,000 per year for three years. Eligibility for the ROSS program is based on the individual being elderly or having a disability and being a resident of Public Housing. The participants will enter the program through a “no-wrong-door” approach. Entry points for ROSS would include: Housing Authorities, Easter Seals Adult Day Services, the Washington County Department of Social Services, the Washington County Commission on Aging, or the local Faith in Action organization, REACH.

There are approximately 510 City HA units and 56 County HA units occupied by elderly or disabled residents. If funded a ROSS Project Coordinator employed by Easter Seals would meet with the Housing Authority representatives to identify specific residents that would benefit from program enrollment. As residents are identified as possibly benefitting from the ROSS program or existing residents experience changes jeopardizing their independent function, the Housing Authorities would continue to make ROSS referrals throughout the 3 year grant period. In addition to benefitting elderly or disabled Housing Authority residents, the ROSS program will increase the stability of the PH population. By assisting residents to maintain their independence and improve their quality of life, ROSS participants can remain in their current housing situations resulting in the Housing Authority having more long-term and stable residents.

The application submitted on July 19th will channel ROSS funding to HHA residents, and will offer services to HAWC’s 56 elderly low-rent seniors as an in-kind service. HAWC will be the link between Easter Seals and the HUD funding stream as part of our contribution to the process. Once the services are in place, HAWC will pursue purchase of basic information and referral services for our 212 other senior citizen customers that do not live in HUD-funded units.

C. Decorations When tenants move into HAWC managed units they are told that they have to consult with Maintenance before planting things outside so we can keep it reasonably easy to maintain the grass and shrubs we provide. These “flower rules” are not covered in our lease or in our Tenant Handbook. Another or our “house” rules is to ask tenants to take down Christmas decorations by the end of January each year. Currently staff are drafting new language for inclusion in tenant handbooks to record our “exterior” rules because of a most unusual occurrence: Christmas lights have been up 365 days at one unit because they

became Valentine's lights in February, then St. Patrick's Day lights, then Father's Day lights, etc. As the seasons change other decorations are being added to the basic string of white, red and blue lights. Some neighbors think her approach looks wonderful and some think it looks cluttered! This tenant did not think much of our request to provide a decoration schedule that would call for only 180 days of decoration per year! So we are struggling to define how much exterior uniformity it is reasonable for us as landlords to require/request.

- D. New Porch completed Francis Murphy's new front entry porch was completed by staff last month. You can see a front-view on our web site if you navigate to Programs -> some pictorial views -> Francis Murphy Senior Apartments. Vendor bids for this project had ranged from \$9,600 to \$18,000. We did it with our Maintenance staff for just under \$3,000 in materials plus 3,400 in labor. This project has helped answer the question, "Who should we use for concept drawings on small projects?"
- E. CCTV Added In early July Francis Murphy tenants were able to tune to cable channel 99 and view traffic passing through the entry foyer. Now when a visitor buzzes their apartment they can also "see" who is calling for added security. This project improvement came in just under \$2,500.
- F. In the month of June we mulched. Plantings at Elderly and scattered family sites all received the treatment.

II. Action items

- A. MASS Certification MASS, the Management Assessment Subsystem, is one of the four components of the PHAS (Public Housing Assessment System) grading process that HUD applies to public housing authorities annually. In agencies like ours that are High-Performers, the PHAS process occurs every two years, so we did not go through this scoring in 2006. The MASS component consists of six areas where we gather statistics from our programs and self-certify to the accuracy of what we report. PHAS also includes a Resident Satisfaction survey HUD will conduct, a financial grade HUD calculates based on audit information and other financial data submitted over the course of the year and a physical inspection of a sampling of properties last conducted in June 2005. The PHAS score applies only to our 80 units of low-rent public housing.

Our software provides documentation of all of the numbers we include in our self-certification. In the sub-area of unit turn-around, the length of time between tenancies the average number of days we lost rent for the ten vacancies we experienced was 39.4 days. Last year was a "skip" year for us - good thing, our average turnaround days was 72.57. The major reason for the reduction we realized this year was cooperation between Maintenance and Management staff.

In the Work Order sub-area we reduced the average time to do a tenant-generated work request from the previous three-year average of 7.45 days to 4.35 days in FY2007. This reduction is primarily due to the good work being done by the Manager of Maintenance promoted to this position in January 2006, Bill Rogers.

For annual inspections we pull a report from our occupancy data table that shows that all 80 units received a unit inspection in FY2007. In the area of Security we report the dates the Board adopted tenant screening policies. Family Self-Sufficiency is our lone economic self-sufficiency effort, but gets us the points available! Accordingly staff recommend adoption of resolution 2007-16 as follows:

WHEREAS, *it is the mission of the Housing Authority of Washington County to improve the quality of life by providing decent, safe and affordable housing to the citizens of Washington County;*

WHEREAS, *the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of Washington County monthly reviews the agency's finances, leasing rates, capital fund expenditures and maintenance operations;*

WHEREAS, *all of the elements incorporated in the Management Operations Certification are captured in the Authority's automated systems allowing documentation of elements through printed reports from the software systems;*

NOW THEREFORE *the Board approves the Public Housing Assessment System Management Operations Certification prepared by staff for fiscal year 2007.*

- B. Changes in income and rent calculations In reporting income to housing agencies clients do what educated taxpayers do with IRS rules: They learn the system and arrange details of their personal affairs so that the rules work in their favor. We have a pair of rules that some families seem to interpret as encouraging frequent changes in employment. It works like this: If you quit a job and report it to us by mid-month we will reduce your rent for the first of the following month (e.g. reported 1/15 and the 2/1 rent goes to zero). If you start a job at the beginning of the next month and report it to us in a timely fashion, your rent will not increase until the first of the **second** following month (e.g. you went to work on 2/2, you reported it by 2/20 and your rent stays at zero for 3/1 and is scheduled to go up on 4/1). If you are getting the picture you will not be surprised to learn that the client quit this new job in March, reported the change before the 20th and paid zero rent on 4/1 as a result of the sudden decrease in income. Has the assisted client in this scenario has found the poor man's income shelter? This pattern doesn't have to happen too often for our staff to begin wondering if the job-quitting behavior has more to do with avoiding rent than with leaving an unsatisfactory job situation.

A sister agency came up with a simple way to adjust their policies that ensured that all of a client's actual income would be factored into the rent calculation: They do not process an interim change when another change is in process. In the example above the decrease in income reported just before 3/20 would not be processed until after 4/1. On 4/1 the client would pay rent on the income the family received in March, and **then** a decrease based on the loss of employment would be in order. By taking away the "free ride" in these circumstances, all motivation to time the quitting and starting of jobs in concert with interim change reporting rules would go away, and we believe might focus on the value of working and ease up on the number of changes our staff has to process in a year's time. We have examined this change in light of "legitimate" changes in income that do occur and do not believe that it will have any negative impact on our customers. Clients that go to work will still benefit from one month of income not affecting their rent-to-owner payment since their increase will go into effect on the first of the second month following the increase in

income. According ly staff recommend adoption of resolution 2007-15 as follows:

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of Washington County must adopt policies for is housing and rental assistance programs that define when income increases and decreases must be reported; and

WHEREAS the existing policy can be abused by customers that quit jobs to avoid rent increases by allowing those with an increase in income to have a month of grace, making the effective date for any increase the first of the second month following timely reporting of the increase;

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved that the Section 8 Administrative Plan and the Admissions and Occupancy Policies of all of our programs be amended to include the following provision:

If the new rent is a reduction and there is a previous increase in rent that has not been applied (i.e. the rent based on the increase in income has not been paid at least one time), the change will be effective the first of the second month after the rent amount is determined.

- III. Board Evaluation - The items brain stormed in June are listed in the 6/14/06 minutes. We will review that listing, and focus a bit on the “What do we need to function” portion of the list along with “What additional steps should we take.”

The Commissioner training at the spring MAHRA conference provided Mr. Keesecker with a 27-question pre-assessment tool that is enclosed with this mailing. Reviewing these questions may provide useful ideas for the specific topic of new board member orientation and generally for the subject area of board member education.

(On July 3rd the Williamsport Town Council indicated their preference for a Board Member that resides in the Town, and asked their Clerk to place an ad for volunteers in the Town newsletter.)

- IV. September agenda high-lights:

- A. Review/tutorial on how to use the first page of the Management Report to identify trends
- B. Lay the groundwork for strategic planning in our Board evaluation session

- V. Upcoming events

- A. The list of “Next Meetings” is on the Agenda this month.
- B. Back in February, Leadership Washington County emailed us the following message: In addition, based on your needs and what you want to learn more about, our next seminar will focus on strategic planning. That was the overwhelming favorite for workshop topics. Mark your calendars now for **Thursday, September 20th** -- the date for the next seminar in the series dedicated to building better boards.