

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STATISTICS

ACTIVITY	5/2009	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009
Applications	72	58	67	62
Walk-in/Appointments	261	269	245	251

WAIT LIST	4/2009	5/2009	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009
Section 8 Vouchers *	731/668	761/698	791/714	810/732	701/630
Parkview Knoll	56	52	54	57	54
Blue Mountain Estates	42	42	45	46	43
Scattered Sites	67	55	46	47	32
Schoolhouse Manor	33	35	35	37	33
Monterey House	6	5	5	4	5
Francis Murphy Apartments	63	64	66	71	68
Springfield Manor	52	48	49	52	48

* 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	3/2009	4/2009	5/2009	6/2009	7/2009	YTD Proj
Available	498	498	498	498	498	3,486
Utilized	498	494	492	495	500	3,473
Occupancy	100.00%	99.20%	98.80%	99.40%	100.40%	99.63%

PUBLIC HOUSING	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move in	Move Out
PVK	28	28	28	0	100%	0	0
BME	28	28	28	0	100%	0	0
Scattered	22	24	22	2	92%	0	2

RENTAL PARTNERSHIP	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009	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	119	120	0	100%	3	2
Springfield Manor	35	36	36	0	100%	0	0

I. Reports

- A. Education Subcommittee - The Education Subcommittee meets next on September 10, at 10:00 a.m. The committee is developing open ended questions to pose to our customers to elicit their personal story of how housing assistance changed their lives and looking at the educational angle of each of our strategic plan components.
- B. Housing Subcommittee - The Housing Subcommittee negotiated terms with a local lender and is not meeting with proponents of senior centers to fine tune our approach.
- C. Blue Mountain Expansion - BMGM Architects will submit drawings to start the zoning appeals process in the Town of Smithsburg on September 1st. The Board of Zoning Appeals meets at 7:00 p.m. on September 24 at Town Hall. Hard copies of the site layout and cover letter prepared by Triad Engineering are included in the packets being mailed to the Housing Authority Commissioners. Electronic copies of these documents are at the bottom of the HAWC home page.
- D. The Neighborhood Conservation Initiative (NCI) sub-recipient grant agreement with the County arrived in our offices on Tuesday, 9/1/09! We negotiated a minor wording change with the County Attorney to permit the County to advance funds for property purchases and sent the signed copies back to the County on Friday morning.
- E. SEMAP - The self-assessment portion of the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) was completed the first week in September. We certified that we earned all of the possible points, to which HUD will later add some numeric factors calculated from data we submit electronically relative to leasing and spending factors. The self-assessment involved reviewing random samples to make sure we are complying with program requirements in the HUD-funded rental assistance program such as:
1. Selecting new families from the waiting list in accordance with written policies;
 2. Testing all contracts to make sure the rent to be paid is reasonable;
 3. Correctly verifying income, calculating rent and using the correct utility allowance factors; and
 4. Having supervisory personnel perform Housing Quality Standards inspections for quality control purposes throughout the year.
- F. Financial Reporting - Following the close of our fiscal year on June 30, Mr. O'Brien has 60 days to close the books and prepare unaudited financial statements. So by the end of August, he will have entered the information provided to the Board at the July meeting on a special HUD-maintained web interface. With the implementation of project-based accounting, HUD had to change this Financial Data Schedule (FDS) reporting mechanism to fit their own rules; and, after a year of dialogue and false starts, we were able to submit our final audited information for FY2008 on

September 1, 2009! Because of these FDS problems, HUD gave housing agencies a ten-day extension for the initial data entry of 2009 information, but we were able to upload our 2009 data on September 2nd.

- G. “Health Care For All” - Last month the Chamber of Commerce sponsored an “Eggs & Issues” session on health care in Maryland. 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.
- H. Capital Fund for FFY2009 awarded - Our Federal Fiscal Year 2009 funding award came early in September, and the Annual Contribution Contract has been signed and returned to HUD. This year’s funding amount is \$108,265.
- I. Tenant feedback on Maintenance wage rates - Three tenants provided comments stimulated by our letter announcing an increase in the rates we would charge for tenant-damages. One asked for further clarification on what would constitute “tenant-damage,” one urged us to aggressively pursue the collection of bad debts from residents that would damage our units and then move and the third urged us to level our washers so that the belts wouldn’t wear out (the tenant had placed one blanket in a washer; and, when the washer shook violently on the spin cycle, assumed the machine was not level).

- J. Housing Needs and the Strategic Plan - A first draft of a staff-needs analysis is enclosed with this report. A needs analysis is a required portion of the HUD Five-Year Planning process and provides a useful framework for our discussion of where to put our energies in terms of housing development priorities. Please ask lots of questions so that staff can research the "right" issues.

II. Action items

- A. Payment Standards - Last week new proposed fair market rents (FMRs) were published by HUD. We weight the decision on how to set our Payment Standards in relation to the FMRs (HUD allows Payment Standards to range between 90 and 110% of the FMRs) by looking primarily at the impact of rising rents on our tenants. In our experience about half of our landlords seek rent increases each year, and very few request less than a \$25 increase. If we were to leave our Payment Standards unchanged, the tenant would have to absorb the financial impact of these rent increases, ending up paying more than 30% of their rent for housing. In addition, when utility costs born by the tenant go up, that cost comes off the amount available within the bounds of the Payment Standard to pay rent to the landlord. Last year utility rate increases were modest, but we anticipate the cost of energy will again go up this year. Therefore staff recommend adoption of resolution 2009-12 as follows:

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of Washington County Maryland ("HAWC") may annually adjust the Payment Standard used in the Housing Choice Voucher program to levels that are appropriate to assist lower income families in finding affordable rental units in our jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, clients needing units located outside the corporate limits of the City of Hagerstown Maryland find very few rental opportunities that work financially within the HUD established Fair Market Rent limits;

WHEREAS, the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 gave housing agencies the authority to set payment standards within a range of 90% to 110% of the HUD established Fair Market Rents;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Payment Standards for Housing Choice Vouchers used in Washington County, Maryland, outside the corporate limits of the City of Hagerstown effective November 1, 2009 be set between 100% and 110% of the FMRs as follows: 0-bedroom \$593; 1-bedroom \$681; 2-bedroom \$870; 3-bedroom \$1,255; 4-bedroom \$1,296 5-bedroom \$1,490; and trailer pads \$348.