

Housing Authority of Alameda County
Commission Meeting Report
April 10, 2024
Peggy McQuaid

The Housing Authority of Alameda County (HACA) Commission met for the regular meeting on April 10, 2024.

4. Executive Director's Report

Wait List

As mentioned last month, the wait list for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program opened April 2 – April 5. Unfortunately, due to a vendor error, the application process was disabled at 9:00 pm PDT rather than midnight. To ensure applicants that attempted to apply during this period have the opportunity to submit an application, HACA will conduct an additional waitlist opening in the near future. An update will be provided by April 12, 2024.

During the time the applications were accepted, 30,000 applications were received. Two hundred applicants came into the HACA office and 60 were helped on the phone. It is currently unknown how many were assisted at the satellite facilities.

FY2022-2023 Closeout and Financial Audit

HACA's Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2023, is officially closed, and we have received the audit report with a clean opinion that our financial statements are fairly stated. Staff plans to present the Audit Report with the accompanying financial statements to the Commission at the June meeting, along with the Budget request for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

5. New Business

5-1 Amendments to Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Administrative Plan

BACKGROUND

HACA's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program Administrative Plan (Admin Plan) sets forth HACA's policies for administering the HCV Program in a manner consistent with HUD requirements and HACA's PHA Plan. When necessary, HACA amends the Admin Plan in order to incorporate new or changed HUD regulations or guidance, new or revised HACA policies or program initiatives, or to make clarifications or corrections. Only substantive policy changes require Housing Commission approval, and in general, only substantive policy changes are redlined for your review. HACA's Admin Plan is available for public review.

DISCUSSION and ANALYSIS

HACA has revised the Admin Plan due to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) implementation of Sections 102 and 104 of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA). These policies will not be implemented until January 1, 2025, or when HACA transitions to HUD's Housing

Information Portal (HIP), whichever is later. HIP will be HUD's new platform for housing authorities to submit applicant and participant data to HUD. Though these policies will not be implemented immediately following approval, HUD is requiring all housing authorities to update the Admin Plan in advance.

This plan must be submitted to HUD by April 17, 2024. HUD has 75 days to approve the plan.

Passed unanimously.

5-2 Annual Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan for the July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 Fiscal Year

BACKGROUND

HUD requires that every Public Housing Authority (PHA) prepare and submit PHA Plans. The PHA Plan is a guide to the housing authority's policies, programs, operations, and strategies for meeting local housing needs and goals for the upcoming fiscal year. Housing authorities initially submit a 5-Year PHA Plan, followed by subsequent Annual PHA Plans until the next 5-Year Plan is due to HUD. HACA's Annual Plan covering July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, is due to HUD by April 17, 2024. HUD has 75 days to approve the Plan, after which HACA will make the approved Annual Plan available to the public.

DISCUSSION and ANALYSIS

Staff has prepared HACA's Annual Plan using HUD's streamlined HCV Only Annual Plan template as HACA is classified by HUD as an HCV-only PHA. This year's Plan largely describes changes to HACA's Administrative Plan regarding policies that govern eligibility and rent determination due to the implementation of Sections 102 and 104 of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA). These HOTMA Administrative Plan revisions are included in this Annual Plan per HUD requirements. However, these policies will not be implemented until January 1, 2025, or when HACA transitions to HUD's Housing Information Portal (HIP), whichever is later. (HIP will be HUD's new platform for housing authorities to submit applicant and participant data to HUD.) In addition to these Administrative Plan revisions, the Annual Plan also describes HACA's progress in meeting its goals since the last 5-Year Plan submission.

As required by HUD, HACA met with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) members on January 20, 2024, and January 24, 2024 to review the Annual Plan and provide an opportunity for the RAB to submit any comments on the plan. No comments affecting elements of the Plan were made at the RAB meetings.

The Public Hearing was held on this item at the March 13 meeting with no public comment.

Passes unanimously with a suggestion staff investigate considering compensation for the RAB participants in this process.

5-3 Amendment to Contract with I Sterling, Inc. for Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection Services

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

All Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Special Program units require initial and subsequent annual or biennial inspections and must meet HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS). In addition, HACA is required to conduct special inspections in response to tenant or owner requests. When repairs are needed, HACA must also conduct a re-inspection.

HACA staff currently conduct the majority of initial and special inspections. Ongoing annual and biennial inspections have been conducted by contracted inspectors for many years. I Sterling, Inc. has now provided approximately ten years of inspection services to HACA and has continued to perform satisfactorily. In addition, I Sterling Inc. has been extremely responsive in providing additional support for inspections as needed. Most recently, HACA has needed additional inspections capacity to address the backlog caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and due to extended staff leaves.

Since the execution of the initial contract in April 2019, I Sterling, Inc. has conducted approximately 16,000 HQS inspections for a total cost of approximately \$540,000. The remaining contract authority is sufficient to cover the anticipated inspections during a transition period while HACA completes the new solicitation for inspection services. HACA intends to terminate this contract extension once a new contract for inspection services is awarded and executed, and no later than December 31, 2024

Passed unanimously.

5-4 Extension of Purchase Order with AppleOne for Temporary Employment Services

BACKGROUND

HACA has an ongoing need for temporary employment services to support agency operations during periods of unexpected staffing shortages due to extended leaves and vacancies as well as for special projects that require short-term increased operational capacity. In December 2023, HACA issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for temporary employment services.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Staff received proposals from ten (10) firms of which one was deemed to be unresponsive as it did not address all the requirements of the RFP. The remaining nine (9) proposals were evaluated by a selection committee comprised of the Executive Director, the Finance Director, and the Human Resources Manager. The proposals were evaluated in accordance with the criteria established in the RFP and Abacus Services Corporation was the highest ranked proposal with 257 points out of a maximum possible 300 points.

HACA's historical expense per year for temporary employment services has fluctuated from a low of \$150,000 to as high as \$250,000, depending on the number of vacancies as well as number of employees on long term leaves of absence. Staff estimates a need of \$200,000 per year with the understanding that if additional funds are required during the term of the contract, Commission approval will be requested.

The appropriation for FY2023-2024 is included in the approved HACA and PACH budgets. Expenses for future years will be budgeted in those respective years.

Passed unanimously.

5-5 Extension of Purchase Order with AppleOne for Temporary Employment Services

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Currently, HACA has existing temporary staff through AppleOne assigned to support housing programs and accounting operations due to extended staff leaves and vacancies. HACA issued an RFP in December 2023 and is requesting approval in April to authorize the execution of a new contract for temporary staffing services with a new vendor. However, HACA has determined that it will continue to require temporary staff from AppleOne through May 2024 to ensure a seamless transition to a new vendor and to minimize adverse impacts on operations and service delivery.

Passed unanimously.

5-6 Appoint a Scholarship Committee for the 2024 HACA Scholarship Program

BACKGROUND

Every year, the HACA Scholarship Program provides an opportunity for participants of the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program and for tenants of HACA-managed housing, to apply for a scholarship that can be used to pay eligible expenses related to their education.

Commissioners Gerry, Chawla and Goldstein were appointed to this committee.

Program Activity Report

Currently there are 6,893 Section 8 HCV (Housing Choice Voucher) program units under contract. The average HAP (housing assistance payment) subsidy is \$1864, the average tenant paid rent is \$612, the average contract rent is \$2437.

PACH (Preserving Alameda County Housing, Inc) has 230 PBV (Project Based Voucher) Units. These are properties owned by HACA.

Albany currently has 9 HCV contracts. The average contract rent is \$1648, the average HAP payment is \$1305, the average rent paid by family is \$343 (21% of total rent).

I discussed the continued drop in HCV contracts in Albany with the Executive Director. This number is a point in time number and we now have 11 voucher holders using their vouchers in Albany.

The Family Self Sufficiency Program (FSS)

The FSS Program is a partnership between low-income families on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This five-year program, which began 30 years ago, helps families who are receiving rental assistance move to economic independence.

FSS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Program Coordinating Committee (PCC)

On Wednesday, March 13, 2024, the FSS team hosted its quarterly PCC meeting. The PCC consists of Alameda County agencies, non-profit organizations, FSS graduates and FSS participants. Its purpose is to offer guidance and strengthen our FSS program. The PCC members provided program updates regarding their respective agencies and shared helpful information. The next PCC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

Scholarships

Scholarship applications for the HACA Scholarship program were made available to participants of the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program and tenants of tenants of HACA-managed housing. This year one outstanding applicant will be chosen to receive an additional award of up to \$1,000. The Donald C. Biddle Memorial Scholarship applications will be sent separately this year. HACA Scholarship applications are due by 8:00AM on Monday, April 15, 2024.

FSS PROGRAM SUMMARY

March 2024

Total Clients Under Contract: 223
Graduates: 3
Escrow Disbursed: \$ 56,262.02
Ports In: 0
Ports Out: 1
Terminations: 2
New Contracts: 2
Case Management Referrals: 5
Job Referrals: 21