



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 9/23/2025

To: Board of Commissioners, Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Community Development Commission
Staff Name and Phone Number: Martha Cheever 707-565-7521
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Updates to Housing Authority Administrative Plan

Recommended Action:

Approve updates to Sonoma County Housing Authority Administrative Plan

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Housing Authority (SCHA) administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Program) under contract with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This Program enables very low-income households to rent from private landlords at fair market rental rates and provides rental assistance in the form of project-based vouchers, tying assistance to specific units. Vouchers provide the best avenue to housing stability for low-income households.

A required element of program administration is a Public Housing Authority Administrative Plan (Administrative Plan). The Administrative Plan serves as a local guide for implementation of HUD's requirements. On July 29, 2016, the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) was passed which made sweeping changes to the administration of federally funded rental assistance programs. These changes have been implemented over time and are yet to be fully enacted by HUD. Approval of the proposed changes incorporates required HOTMA changes while providing flexibility to implement specifically as required by HUD. Updates also include some local policy changes.

A description of key changes being made to the Administrative Plan are included as attachment 1 to this item. All red-lined changes may be accessed here: <https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/ODyut98iWkA/>.

Discussion:

The Sonoma County Housing Authority (Housing Authority) administers the Housing Choice Voucher and the Mainstream Voucher Program under contract with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Vouchers are the federal government's primary method for helping low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled rent housing from private property owners.

Federal regulation 24 CFR § 982.54 requires all Housing Authorities to adopt a written Administrative Plan to

ensure that local programs operate within HUD's requirements. The Administrative Plan dictates the program's waitlist management, preferences, and other local needs-based policies.

On July 29, 2016, the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) was signed into federal lawmaking sweeping changes to the administration of federally funded rental assistance programs. These changes were not intended to be implemented instantly, but over time. Since 2023, HUD has issued several supplemental guidance notices regarding full implementation of HOTMA for housing authorities. In 2024 housing authorities were required to have their Administrative Plans updated for full compliance beginning January 1, 2025. The Board approved all HOTMA revisions on March 26, 2024. However, on September 20, 2024, HUD once again postponed full implementation of HOTMA until such time as the HUD electronic systems are in place.

As of August 2025, housing authorities have not been notified of when HUD systems will be ready for-full implementation of HOTMA. To make our Administrative Plan accurate regardless of whether HOTMA has been fully implemented, modifications are being proposed to include both pre-HOTMA and post-HOTMA requirements.

The most significant HOTMA requirements place an asset limitation on applicants and tenants (Chapters 3 and 7). While implementation of these limitations is being clarified in our policies, they will not be implemented until such time as required by HUD.

The most significant local policy changes that are being made are the creation of a designated Mainstream Voucher program waitlist and the addition of a local preference on both the Mainstream Voucher and the Housing Choice Voucher waitlists for active Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) tenants (Chapter 4). These changes will allow for the Housing Authority to transfer active EHV tenants to a program that has ongoing funding thereby preventing households from reentering homelessness.

A public hearing on the proposed changes was held before the Community Development Committee on August 20, 2025. Written comments were accepted through August 4, 2025. All public comment received is included as Attachment 2 to this board item.

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Healthy and Safe Communities

Goal: Goal 4: Reduce the County's overall homeless population by 10% each year by enhancing services through improved coordination and collaboration.

Objective: Objective 3: Create a "no wrong door" approach where clients who need services across multiple departments and programs are able to access the array of services needed regardless of where they enter the

Agenda Date: 9/23/2025

system.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

03/26/2024 - Board approved changes to the Sonoma County Housing Authority Administrative Plan

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This has no fiscal impact.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

This item has no staffing impacts.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Description of Changes to the Administrative Plan

Agenda Date: 9/23/2025

Attachment 2: Public Comments Received

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None