

To: The Board of Commissioners

Department or Agency Name(s): Community Development Commission

Staff Name and Phone Number: Martha Cheever, Housing Authority Manager, (707) 565-7521

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): All

Title:

Housing Authority Program Update

Recommended Actions:

- A) Approve Resolution of the Sonoma County Housing Authority approving the Sonoma County Public Housing Authority Annual Plan;
- B) Authorize the Executive Director to execute associated documents; and submit to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Housing Authority (SCHA) administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program under contract with the U.S. 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 also provides rental assistance in the form of project-based vouchers, tying assistance to specific units. The Voucher program is the single biggest program operated by the Community Development Commission. Vouchers provide the best avenue to housing stability for low income households, but funding from HUD allows SCHA to serve only 20 – 25% of those who qualify.

Each year, in accordance with HUD requirements, the SCHA updates its Public Housing Authority Plan (Annual Plan). The Annual Plan provides HUD, program participants, and other interested parties an update on goals and strategies laid out in the agency's 5-Year Plan, which was last approved in 2015. This update shares progress or changes made to the Housing Authority's programs and strategies for serving the needs of low-income and very low-income families, as well as updates made to reflect local housing needs and program goals.

For Fiscal Year 2019-20, the SCHA is updating its Annual Plan to reflect the new Mainstream Vouchers (Homeless) and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers, which were awarded to the program in 2018. Other updates include changes made to improve access to programs and the recent award of project-based vouchers to developments throughout the County.

The SCHA Administrative Plan (Local Policies) is a required attachment to the Annual Plan. The Local Policies support the Annual Plan, serving as the Housing Authority's guide for implementation of the program at a local level. A broad public engagement process will begin this Spring related to ensuring that the program is serving all vulnerable communities in an equitable fashion. A large-scale review and public engagement process will examine the degree to which, in a post-fire housing market, the voucher program is accessible to racial and ethnic minorities, as well as people with disabilities. This process will lead to revisions to the Local

Policies. Once public input has been sought and considered, proposed changes will be brought to your Commission for consideration. If the proposed changes are approved, the revisions will go into effect immediately.

Discussion:

Section 511 of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 requires that all housing authorities prepare a Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan, which includes both a 5-Year Plan and an Annual Plan for each interim fiscal year. The interim Annual Plans provide HUD, program participants, and other interested parties information related the Housing Authority's accomplishments, progress, and strategies for serving the needs of low-income and very low-income families.

The 2019-2020 Annual Plan includes the recent award of 98 Project-Based Vouchers to developments throughout the County, 50 new Mainstream Vouchers for homeless households and 10 new Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers that were awarded to the SCHA by HUD through a competitive process in 2018. These are the first new HUD vouchers awarded to Sonoma County since 2009. The Annual Plan also includes an update on the changes the Housing Authority has made over the past year to make the program more accessible to families in need, such as shortening the criminal background look-back period.

The Housing Authority's Administrative Plan (Local Policies) is a required attachment to the Annual Plan and the FY 19-20 Annual Plan currently reflects the policies in effect this past year. These Local Policies differ from the Annual Plan in that they are the guidelines for program implementation and operation at a local level.

In the coming months, staff will undertake public engagement as part of its larger housing equity agenda to understand ways that under-represented communities can more easily gain access to the vitally important assistance afforded by Housing Choice Vouchers. Data about housing disparities, including from the in-process Profile of Sonoma, will be analyzed and shared publicly in a variety of forums to gain advice and input about potential improvements to the waiting list system and the imbedded preferences.

Because the existing waitlist reflects prioritization based on historic preferences and practices that are being re-weighted or eliminated, review and revision of the Local Policies will include modernizing the waitlist. The SCHA will conduct extensive outreach to notify the community and those on the waitlist that this process is underway. The SCHA intends to modernize its waitlist so that it can gauge current unmet needs more effectively, fairly, and accurately to create a system that helps applicants better estimate their wait times.

Following robust community engagement, the proposed revisions to the Local Policies will be brought before your Commission for consideration.

A public hearing for the 2019-20 PHA Annual Plan was held on March 20, 2019 at the Community Development Committee. The item was recommended to your Board for approval by this Committee on that date.

As required by HUD, the proposed Annual Plan for FY 19-20 is consistent with the HUD-required Five-Year Consolidated Plans of the County of Sonoma and the City of Petaluma, the two HUD entitlement jurisdictions in which the Housing Authority operates the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Prior Board Actions:

3/20/2018: Approval of the Housing Authority's FY 18-19 Annual Plan

3/17/2015: Approval of the Housing Authority's 5-Year Plan

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 18-19 Adopted	FY19-20 Projected	FY 20-21 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	0	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	0	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Resolution approving the Sonoma County Public Housing Authority Annual Plan Public Housing Authority Annual Plan

Public Housing Authority Annual Plan

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

Certification by State or Local Official of PHA Plans Consistency with Consolidated Plan

PHA Certification of Compliance with the PHA Plan and Related Regulations including Required Civil Rights Certifications

Sonoma County Housing Authority Administrative Plan