

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF KING

RESOLUTION 5171

AUTHORIZING REVISIONS TO THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN RELATING TO THE FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PLAN

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority operates a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program governed by a Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Family Self-Sufficiency Action Plan is an exhibit of the Administrative Plan;

WHEREAS, revisions are often times necessary in the Administrative Plan in order to meet HUD guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority is proposing to add an exhibit to the Family Self-Sufficiency Action Plan describing our efforts to Affirmatively Advance Fair Housing as part of the Family Self-Sufficiency program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF KING:

The Housing Authority is authorized to add Exhibit A – *Addendum to the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan to Affirmatively Advance Fair Housing in the Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Plan* to the Family Self-Sufficiency Action Plan.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF KING AT A REGULAR MEETING THEREOF THIS 21st DAY OF JULY 2008.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF KING, WASHINGTON



NANCY HOLLAND-YOUNG, Chair
Board of Commissioners



STEPHEN J. NORMAN
Secretary-Treasurer

EXHIBIT A – ADDENDUM TO AFFIRMATIVELY ADVANCE FAIR HOUSING IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PLAN

The purpose of this addendum is to outline reasonable steps King County Housing Authority will take to Affirmatively Advance Fair Housing in its HCV FSS program and maintain records of those steps and their impacts.

Source for Description of Major Impediments to Affirmatively Advancing Fair Housing in King County:

King County Consolidated Plan: The current King County Consolidated Plan applies from 2005 – 2009 and defines Impediments to Fair Housing. The Consolidated Plan is a document written by representatives of the King County Consortium, an organization made up of 35 small cities and the unincorporated areas of King County. The Plan has extensive input from a wide range of additional stakeholders including agencies, advocates, community-based organizations, local and state government staff, and members of the public, including low income individuals.

Impediments to Fair Housing Defined: Three major impediments to Fair Housing are identified in the Consolidated Plan:

- (1). Housing Discrimination Impediments – rental market discrimination; discriminatory financing and discriminatory zoning issues and practices.
- (2). Administrative Practice Impediments – access to Fair Housing rights information; confusion about where to go for help with Fair Housing; local jurisdiction capacity for Fair Housing enforcement mechanisms; and lack of monitoring for sub-recipients – entities awarded funds for projects.
- (3). Inadequate supply of affordable housing for the lowest income levels.

Summary of Actions Taken by King County Housing Authority to Affirmatively Advance Fair Housing:

- (1). **To reduce Housing Discrimination Impediments,** King County Housing Authority has instituted the following actions:
 - (a). **Modifying Selection Preferences:** KCHA has modified selection preferences for Public Housing, Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Assistance programs by reducing the documentation needed to qualify. Tenant selection preferences have been redefined to move more homeless families into public housing and a “set aside” preference for families who successfully graduate from transitional housing has been created.

In an effort to ensure limited resources remain targeted to those extremely low-income households in the County who are most in need, KCHA revised policies to allow denial of a local preference on the Section 8 waiting list to applicants who currently reside in public housing or receive non-temporary government rental assistance. The Authority also adopted policies to remove applicants from the wait list who cannot document qualification for a local preference.

Finally, in FY 2008, partnering with King County’s behavioral health system and the United Way, KCHA launched the South King County Housing First program for chronically homeless households. The program provides a stable housing environment with wraparound services to address, reduce, and eliminate barriers, such as mental health issues and poor rental history, to those participants that are most likely to feel the effects of discrimination.

- (b). **Language Assistance:** Communicating with clients with limited English proficiency (LEP) currently involves providing critical documents in 9 languages. KCHA is currently developing an action plan for improving communications for LEP residents and applicants and provides free LEP resident access to Language Link. To assist in putting together the Language assistance plan, the Housing Authority hired a consultant to gather and formulate the critical information. As part of his research he found that KCHA had 468 requests for language services in 2007, 271 were interpretations and 197 were for written translations.
- (c). **Reasonable Accommodations:** Reasonable accommodations are available for applicants and residents through the 504 program. An average of over 1,100 ADA requests are processed each year.
- (d). **Staff Training and Tenant Education:** KCHA is providing staff training, active outreach and education to landlords throughout King County to increase the numbers of participating landlords, interventions with landlords to address concerns, and tenant education about Fair Housing rights and filing complaints. Notices are placed at every KCHA office.
- (e). **Monitoring Impacts of Discrimination on our programs:** KCHA continues to monitor the Public Housing, site-based, regional and Sound Families programs and will use its MTW authority where needed to address problem areas. Existing policies and current inventory is reviewed to ensure those with disabilities have equal access to housing programs and services. Design guidelines and unit configuration are also reviewed so that families who require handicapped-accessible units or accommodations have an opportunity to find affordable housing that meets their needs.

(2). **To reduce Administrative Impediments to Fair Housing:**

- (a). **Referrals to Local Resources:** KCHA staff is aware of local resources which can assist tenants to deal with discrimination in housing. At their initial housing orientation each participant is provided with information on the basics of discrimination and how the Housing Authority can assist in filing claims with HUD and the Office of Fair Housing.
- (b). **Access to Applications and Other Forms:** Applications can be accessed on-line through our website 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and at site-based offices throughout the County.
- (c). **Transfer Policies:** To give current participants more freedom to move within our programs, KCHA has created site-based waiting lists as well as an "open-door" transfer program.

(3). **To increase affordable housing opportunities and reduce concentrations of poverty:**

- (a). **Deconcentration and supply:** KCHA is working to deconcentrate Public Housing through its HOPE VI project in White Center which is redeveloping 565 units of housing built in the 1940's into a community of over 900 mixed income households. In addition, KCHA has adopted new project-basing rules developed under MTW to make this program more accessible to non-profit developers and owners in high income neighborhoods. Also under the Section 8 voucher program, KCHA has expanded housing opportunity for participants by decoupling the Payment Standard from the Fair Market Rent, allowing rents to be driven by current market conditions rather than by data that is traditionally 8-12 months old. This change also allowed the Housing Authority to create individual Payment Standards for special needs clients, significantly streamlining the standard HUD process. King County Housing Authority also continues to purchase apartment developments, including "expiring use" properties as well as mobile home parks, throughout the community in an effort to maintain affordable housing in areas where rental costs are on the rise. KCHA aggressively seeks additional opportunities through HUD NOFA's to increase the number of subsidized units in the County.

- (b). **Homeownership:** Using a Resident Opportunity Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) grant and MTW flexibility, KCHA has helped Public Housing residents become homeowners. Exceeding the program target, 36 households purchased homes under the program with 66% utilizing KCHA down payment assistance grants of up to \$15,000.
- (c). **Plan to End Homelessness:** KCHA is an active participant in King County's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. KCHA uses this plan as a tool in identifying unmet housing needs and aligning KCHA resources with other funders to address those needs. KCHA will continue to expand our role in the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County by identifying new strategies to assist populations not served by traditional, mainstream subsidy programs. Building on the successful Housing First pilot, we are expanding the provider-based program to assist up to 150 households who are chronically homeless or transitioning out of King County's mental health system and developing an initiative to house homeless youth.

REASONABLE STEPS KING COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY WILL TAKE TO AFFIRMATIVELY ADVANCE FAIR HOUSING SPECIFIC TO THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM INCLUDING RECORDS MAINTENANCE AND REPORTING PROGRAM IMPACTS:

- (1). **Advertising positions:** As with all positions, KCHA will advertise widely in the community for the HCV Coordinator position. Notice of the position will be sent as follows:
 - (a). Advertising sections of Craigslist in two counties; the Seattle Times Internet Classified Listings, NW Asian Weekly, NW Colors, NWJOBS, and AHMA.
 - (b). Fax flyers to Workforce offices in Auburn, Bellevue, Lynnwood, North Seattle, Rainier Avenue and Bremerton.
 - (c). Post listings in all KCHA offices and facilities.
 - (d). Post at exhibits at career fairs, especially those focusing on veterans.
 - (e). Fax information to colleges, universities, community service agencies, unions, other housing authorities, King County and the Port of Seattle.
- (2). **Marketing the Program:** The HCV FSS Program is marketed to all eligible persons through the following methods:
 - (a). A letter of invitation to participate in the program is sent to a random sample of Section 8 voucher holders. Those interested in the program complete the enclosed form and return it to the FSS Coordinator. The letter is sent as needed for continued optimum enrollment.
 - (b). The FSS Coordinator attends Section 8 housing briefings to acquaint new residents with the FSS program.
 - (c). The FSS Coordinator works with Federal, State and county workforce programs to accept referrals.
 - (d). The FSS Program accepts referrals from State Department of Social and Health Services WorkFirst Program.
 - (e). The FSS Program accepts referrals from YWCA, Hopelink and other Multi-Service Centers and transitional housing programs.
 - (f). The FSS Program encourages persons with disabilities and persons with LEP to apply.

In addition to the above information, King County Housing Authority responded to the Federal Register publication, dated January 22, 2007 by commissioning a study related to developing a Language Assistance Plan and Policy. A consultant report with recommendations was issued on April 12, 2008 and is currently under review by staff with an ultimate goal of recommending a Language Assistance Plan and Policy to the Board of Commissioners for their approval.

- (3). Making Buildings Accessible and Making Applications and Service Delivery Accessible to Persons with Disabilities.**

 - (a). Translated materials are available at the KCHA website.
 - (b). Interpreters are available at community meetings to facilitate communications.
 - (c). Software to enhance English understanding is available at Neighborhood Network sites.
 - (d). Administrative offices are accessible.

- (4). Providing Fair Housing counseling and referrals to Fair Housing agencies:**

 - (a). The FSS Coordinator refers clients to Catholic Community Services Legal Action Center and the Tenant’s Union of Washington State.
 - (b). The FSS Coordinator distributes a brochure titled “Section 8 Tenant Rights and Responsibilities” to all program participants.

- (5). Informing participants of how to file a Fair Housing complaint**

 - (a). The FSS Coordinator refers clients to Catholic Community Services Legal Action Center and Tenant’s Union of Washington State.
 - (b). The FSS Coordinator distributes a brochure titled “Section 8 Tenant Rights and Responsibilities” to concerned program participants. Guidelines for filing a Fair Housing complaint are provided at the briefing meeting.
 - (c). The FSS Coordinator distributes other supportive materials from Tenant’s Union.
 - (d). The FSS Coordinator provides the toll-free number for the Housing Discrimination Hotline: 1-800-669-9777.

- (6). Recruiting landlords and service providers in areas that expand housing choice to program participants.**

 - (a). The FSS Coordinator works with local homeownership programs – HomeSite, Martin Luther King Housing, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, IDA Accounts, YWCA, King County Housing Authority-funded workshops, Habitat for Humanity, Solid Ground, International District Housing Alliance, Carter Funding, El Centro de La Raza, Washington Housing Opportunities Center, and Parkview Services to be sure their services are available to participants.
 - (b). The FSS Coordinator refers to other housing programs for housing mobility.

Record-keeping regarding race, ethnicity, familial status and disability status of program participants is kept by the King County Housing Authority’s Section 8 program. Outputs, outcomes or impacts of the six activities listed above can be recorded by the HCV FSS Coordinator in the course of their work.