Table of Contents

CHAPTER 21
PROGRAM STAFFING

21.1   CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Annual Contributions Contracts (ACCs) require PHAs to administer the housing choice voucher program in accordance with the ACC, federal program regulations and HUD directives. To comply with these requirements, the PHAs must hire adequate staff to administer the program. This chapter discusses some of the issues PHAs face as they make decisions about staffing levels and organizational structure. This chapter does not reflect regulatory guidance, except to point out the requirement for the PHA to administer the program in accordance with regulations. The chapter provides general guidance using the experience of a number of PHAs.

PHAs come in all sizes and from many different organizational environments. Housing choice voucher programs at the local level range from fewer than 25 units to more than 70,000 units. About two-thirds of the approximately 2,500 PHAs administering housing choice voucher programs currently have fewer than 250 units.

PHAs may be independent public corporations, a department or division within city or county government, part of a larger department of local government (e.g., a Housing and Community Development Department), state agencies operating in the whole or a part of a state, or regional organizations. Some PHAs contract with another PHA, a non-profit agency, or a private firm to operate all or some functions of their programs. Many state PHAs use local non-profit agencies or PHAs to operate a part of their overall programs. As a result of program size and organizational differences, there is great variation in the administration, staffing, and delivery of housing choice voucher services.

No specific industry standards exist to provide guidance regarding the appropriate staffing level to administer a housing choice voucher program. Wide variations in organizational structure, distribution of work, and job design make it difficult to draw workload comparisons from agency to agency. This chapter will describe program administrative policies that have a direct impact on the level of work required to administer a program and discuss various methods of organizing work, including some sample organizational charts from several PHAs. A chart comparing staffing at several PHAs and indicating the number of clients per full-time employee has also been included. However, it is important to note that a comparison of PHA policies (that would enable the reader to draw an accurate comparison of workload to staff) was not made at the time the chart was developed. PHAs should use this chapter to gain insight into factors influencing staffing levels, but these materials are not designed to suggest a single approach to organization or what the appropriate staffing level is for a particular program.

21.2   KEY FACTORS AFFECTING STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Program Growth

Small housing choice voucher programs need only a few employees. Larger programs require more staff to administer assistance to additional families. The administrative fees earned provide income to support staff.

As a program grows, both workload and income increase. Typically, existing staff absorbs as much work as possible, and ensures enough families are under lease to generate the income to pay more salaries. Then, the PHA hires more staff.

However, a PHA that continually requires existing staff to lease-up additional families in order to increase income so that more staff can then be hired to maintain those families is likely to fall below its utilization goals. Current staff will only be able to absorb a certain amount of work and it is likely that employees will choose to perform tasks that have specific deadline requirements, such as annual reexaminations, rather than performing work that does not have a program-defined deadline (applicant intake and briefing). Once behind in leasing, it is often impossible to catch up without additional staff.

Program growth and increasing revenues require front-end investment in leasing. Well-managed PHAs understand that a significant amount of work is required to lease units and increase program revenues, and they are willing to invest in staff to perform required intake and leasing activities.

In early growth stages, organizations frequently increase the number of employees with their existing models of work distribution and job design (e.g., the "generalist" model, described below). Typically, as programs expand further, more function specialization occurs, including an increase in the number of supervisory positions. As growth continues, managing the completion of work activities becomes more and more difficult because a wide variety of work activities is completed by a greater number of staff. The challenge of growth is to balance the resources devoted to program growth against those devoted to maintenance, and make specialization and management investments at appropriate stages of development.

Job Design: Generalist versus Specialist

With few staff to carry out all program requirements in a small program, it is necessary that employees be "generalists," performing a wide variety of required program administrative activities. For example, one position may be responsible for maintaining the waiting list, certifying eligibility, briefing applicants, inspecting units, approving rents, preparing contract documents, performing annual and interim reexaminations, terminating participant assistance, and reviewing monthly payments. This is a very broad span of responsibility and control. As a job design, generalization has advantages and disadvantages. A generalist handles all program functions for the client. This enables the employee to develop a relationship with the client and to understand problems that may occur during the family's participation in the program. Some employees prefer the generalist approach because it provides a sense of

ownership of each case. However, a generalist must be able to manage the performance of a wide variety of tasks, monitoring and meeting a variety of deadlines. Sometimes generalization, because of the significant time management requirements to accomplish required tasks, makes the job "too stressful" or "too complicated," resulting in missed deadlines and inadequate client service.

The generalist approach works best with highly skilled staff who can learn more program tasks and manage a more complex workload. However, it takes longer for a PHA to train new staff to perform all of these tasks adequately, and it may be harder to provide backup during vacations and when staff turnover occurs. Some organizations have had improved employee satisfaction when the staff is more specialized and has expertise and ownership in a functional area. Increasing the amount of specialization focuses responsibility, limits the range of knowledge required by most staff members, and reduces the training required for a person to be able to complete the assigned tasks. With good written guidance and supervision, PHAs using a highly specialized functional approach may also be able to operate with slightly less skilled staff performing a more limited range of functions. However, to be feasible, specialization does require a certain program size.

When it becomes difficult to monitor and manage productivity, many organizations move to a system of specialization in various work activities. Specialization offers greater control over consistent application of administrative policies and monitoring completion of program requirements. When jobs are specialized, employees are each responsible for performing a smaller variety of tasks (usually for a greater number of clients). Monitoring the performance of these tasks is easier in a job-specialized environment, because work status information can be obtained from fewer sources. In addition, specialization reduces the span of responsibility of front-line staff. Staff often welcomes this reduction as simplification of the job, and may feel great ownership of its part of program activities.

Specialization also has some disadvantages. With several specialists handling different functions for the same family, some PHAs claim that there is inadequate overall program service to the client. No one person understands the family circumstances fully. In addition, when there is no one employee singularly responsible for all necessary activities, specialization provides an opportunity for activities to "fall through the cracks." An effective specialized housing choice voucher program must have a thorough monitoring system to assure that all necessary functions are carried out as required.

Examples of Job Specialization

Below is a listing of typical specialized housing voucher program positions. Individual PHAs may have fewer specialized positions, with a wider range of functions in each job description, or more specialized positions with narrower ranges of responsibility than those listed below:

- *Waiting list specialist.* This person is typically responsible for the following tasks: accepting applications for a waiting list, performing any preliminary eligibility determinations (e.g., determining whether the applicant owes money to the PHA), recording the application either manually or on an automated waiting list, selecting names from the waiting list when

assistance is available, updating the waiting list, removing applicant names from the waiting list, and sending any necessary correspondence to applicants.

- *Intake specialist.* This person typically performs the following tasks related to bringing each applicant into the program: conducting background checks for drug and violent criminal activity, conducting the eligibility interview, verifying income information to determine eligibility and the amount of assistance, briefing families, issuing vouchers, processing requests for tenancy approval, determining rent reasonableness, negotiating rents, and processing the HAP contract.

- *Occupancy specialist.* For many PHAs, the occupancy specialist position includes some or all of the tasks of the intake specialist. Sometimes this person takes the case at the briefing, and others at the time of the submission of request for tenancy approval. Sometimes, this person has no responsibility until a HAP contract is signed And therefore, there is no involvement until a reexamination or move by the family. This person almost always conducts interim and annual reexaminations, rent increase processing, and family moves (i.e., unit transfers). Sometimes this person also does all move processing, including rent reasonableness determination. For some PHAs, there is further specialization within this position. Some larger PHAs separate move processing from regular reexamination and case management activities.

- *Inspector.* This person conducts unit inspections, records results, notifies owners of results, and determines when to initiate rent abatements or to terminate HAP contracts because of HQS violations. At some PHAs, the inspectors schedule their own inspections; at others a clerk, occupancy specialist, or a scheduling specialist performs this function. Some PHAs have specialization within the types of inspections. For example, separate staff perform new unit and complaint inspections and other staff members perform annual inspections. For many PHAs the inspectors are responsible for completing rent reasonableness determinations and maintaining the rent reasonableness database.

- *Inspection schedulers.* This person schedules inspections for PHA inspectors, focusing on efficient routing, allocating the appropriate amount of time for each inspection, and meeting any inspection schedules. This person also schedules reinspections of failed units.

- *Rent specialist or market analyst.* This person performs rent reasonableness determinations and maintains a database (paper records or an automated system) of information on unassisted unit rents in the community. This database should contain information on all factors considered in rent reasonableness determinations. This person receives information on the unit proposed to be leased in the housing choice voucher program (or for which the owner is requesting a rent increase), selects comparable units from the database, and determines and documents that the rent is reasonable.

- *Outreach specialist.* An outreach specialist is charged with improving the PHA's relationship with the landlord community and encouraging new landlords to rent units to housing choice voucher families. This person will attend meetings of landlords, may join local property owner associations and speak before a variety of local civic organizations. The outreach specialist may produce a landlord newsletter, hold periodic landlord briefings and take responsibility to establish and coordinate a landlord advisory group.

Caseloads

Particularly for occupancy and inspection staff, PHAs often assign staff members a number of cases or transactions to be performed annually, monthly, or daily. It is very difficult to benchmark caseloads because of the differences in the functions from one PHA to another, and because the caseloads depend upon the quality of the housing stock, type of program tenants, geographic area of the program, success rates of the tenants, age of the waiting list, and the policies of the PHA.

Generally, programs with the occupancy specialist function have caseloads ranging from 400 to 600 clients, depending on a number of factors. Most important are the functions assigned to the staff members, the extent to which the automated systems assist in document and letter production, the quality of the monitoring systems, the amount of clerical support, program requirements for tenants to report interim changes, program turnover, and the number of participant moves.

Even PHAs with equal annual caseloads for their occupancy staff may have workloads that vary considerably on a seasonal basis. This can result when PHAs change reexamination dates when tenants move; in many locations, moves occur unevenly during the year (e.g., more moves at the end and beginning of school and few moves in winter). The timing of intake and lease-up for new allocations, particularly for opt-outs, preservation, and public housing relocation programs, where new families are enrolled in the housing choice voucher program in a short period of time also affects this. Some PHAs assign special client populations to particular staff members. This might include participants in the unification program, the family self-sufficiency program, the welfare-to-work program, or other special program populations that require additional effort on behalf of the families or coordination with other social service agencies. In addition, the way that cases are assigned among occupancy specialists may result in caseloads that are even as a whole, but highly unbalanced from month to month for any particular specialist and between occupancy specialists in any single month. Exhibit 21-1, *Comparison of Actual Monthly Reexamination Due to the Monthly Mean Number Due,* provides an illustration of how total reexamination workload may vary from month to month.

Other Factors in Assignment of Work

Many PHAs combine some functions that are similar for both housing choice voucher and public housing programs (and perhaps other local-assisted housing programs). This occurs most commonly in waiting list management, initial intake, and housing inspections. Some PHAs contract out selected program functions, such as inspection and preparation of HAP checks.

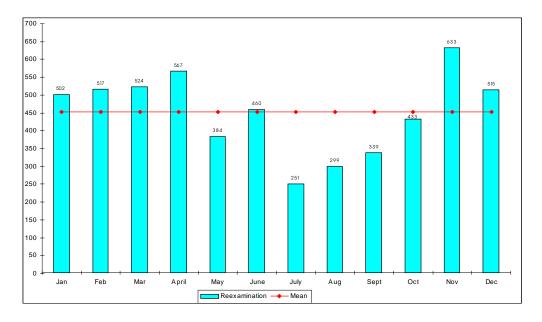**Geographic Size of the Jurisdiction**

There are two primary considerations related to the geographic size of the program jurisdiction: inspections productivity and the accessibility of the administrative offices.

Inspections Productivity

Inspectors traveling greater distances between units reduces the number of inspections completed in a day and increases the number of inspectors needed.

EXHIBIT 21-1

COMPARISON OF ACTUAL MONTHLY REEXAMINATIONS DUE
TO THE MONTHLY MEAN NUMBER DUE
FOR SAMPLE 5500 UNIT HOUSING AUTHORITY'S
HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
(MONTHLY MEAN = 452)

Assigning unit inspections based upon proximity is the most efficient use of inspector time. Minimizing the distance between inspections reduces travel time as much as possible.

PHAs may use several methods to reduce the impact of travel time on productivity. Assigning inspectors to geographic areas reduces travel time by limiting the furthest possible distance between units. Many PHAs also will assign inspectors to geographic territories so that they become familiar with the area and are more easily able to find the shortest distance between units. Another method of reducing inspector travel time in programs serving a large geographic area is to select units which are as tightly circumscribed as possible for inspection in a single day. Even when this is done, travel time to and from the daily group of units to be inspected can be significant.

Accessibility of Administrative Offices

PHAs in very large geographic jurisdictions might need to establish branch or remote office locations to effectively serve clients. If clients typically do not have their own transportation and public transportation is unavailable or difficult to use, it may be necessary to provide services closer to the client. While this may result in additional expense for office space and a need for more staff, the benefits in increased leasing, retention of program participants, and customer satisfaction may be greater than the expense.

Some PHAs establish temporary or periodic offices in which reexamination or application-taking sessions can be held. Public housing community rooms, or churches in neighborhoods close to

many housing choice voucher participants are inexpensive (or free) options for providing services nearer to a PHA's clients.

Administrative Policies

Although many housing choice voucher program activities are mandated by regulations, PHAs are also permitted discretion in many areas of program administration. These discretionary policies may have a significant effect on staffing requirements. The additional time required by specific policies is not indicative of poor program management. PHAs may, for good reason, decide that policies requiring additional staff time are necessary and desirable. It is critical that the PHA understand the cost and workload effects of its program policies and adopt policies and procedures that increase the workload only when it helps achieve PHA program goals. A number of discretionary policy issues that can result in additional staff workload, depending on how they are addressed, are discussed below.

Interim Reexamination Policies

PHAs are required to perform interim reexaminations for families reporting a reduction in income or changes in household composition, but are allowed discretion to decide whether increases in income must be reported between annual reexaminations. Required reporting of income increases is generally accompanied by a PHA policy to recompute income and family rent to owner. Additional work is required to receive and review reports of increased income and to process reexaminations. The PHA policy may be written to:

1. Require that family report all increases in income and that all changes be processed;
2. Require that families report all changes, but only process changes above a specified dollar threshold ; or
3. Require reporting of only certain changes, all of which are then processed.

Many PHAs attempt to minimize the number of families reporting increases in income to reduce their workload and staffing requirements. Others attempt to focus their resources on those most likely to have large changes (i.e., those who at their most recent reexamination reported little or no income or those who have previously requested an interim reexamination to reduce their rent contribution.) Still other PHAs require that only certain types of increases in income be reported.

Restrictions on Participant Ability to Move

Program rules permit PHAs to restrict participant family moves to one per year. If a PHA does not adopt this allowed rule, and its client population is very mobile, there will be a higher number of family moves, increasing work for staff who conduct briefings, execute new HAP contracts, and perform inspections. Also, many PHAs exercise their option to require that all applicants not living in the PHA's jurisdiction at the time of their application initially lease in that PHA's jurisdiction (e.g., they deny immediate portability). This increases the amount of processing and may result in lower success rates for the families.

Length and Age of Waiting List

Generally, the longer the time between the date of application and selection from the waiting list, the less likely the family is to respond and attend an interview. PHAs with very old waiting lists often require more staff for the intake function because of the low and often uneven attendance rate at interviews. Families who have waited a very long time may often find other solutions to their housing needs, or their family circumstances may have changed since their initial application. Many PHAs have taken steps to control the size of their waiting lists to avoid long delays between application date and selection and to reduce the workloads from drop-outs. A few PHAs establish a new, fresh waiting list each year or so.

Preferences

Staff must work additional time to properly administer a waiting list with preferences. Preferences must be verified, and if verification is not possible, additional correspondence with the applicant is necessary. PHAs must exercise care to assure that an automated waiting list system orders applicants in accordance with the preference policy. PHAs who use a manual system for maintaining a waiting list will spend significant amounts of time to order applicants on the waiting list. The more complicated the preference system, the more staff time is required to determine the order of applicant selection.

In addition, preferences and special funding applications (e.g., welfare-to-work and family unification) target the program to subsets of the eligible families who are applying for the program. These preferences may be for groups that require more staff time to process, particularly special needs groups who may require more time, and coordination with other care providers, and may involve lower success rates. Targeting housing choice voucher program assistance and obtaining special funding for targeted populations are important and appropriate actions for PHAs to take in meeting local needs, but they do have an effect on staffing and costs.

Portability

Receiving PHAs may choose whether to absorb a family into their own programs, or to administer the assistance on behalf of the initial PHA. Administration on behalf of the initial PHA requires that billing to the initial PHA be monitored, information regarding the family be submitted at least annually, and that the administrative fees earned be shared. While the additional work that is required to administer assistance on behalf of another PHA is not great, the shared administrative fee reduces program income. It is generally better for the receiving PHA to absorb the family into its program when possible.

Some PHAs have made arrangements with other PHAs in their areas to reduce the amount of portability processing. For example, PHAs in a county could agree to follow their own clients into the other PHA's jurisdiction (rather than employ portability), but the receiving PHA will do the rent reasonableness determination and HQS inspection for a set fee.

Tolling (Suspension of Search time)

Tolling means that at the time a family with a voucher submits a request for tenancy approval, the PHA stops the clock on the search time while determining whether the unit can be approved. For example, if the PHA takes 15 days to determine that the unit cannot be approved for assistance, then the expiration date of the voucher will be extended by 15 days. Tolling requires additional monitoring of expiration dates by the PHA and notification to families of extended expiration dates. Unless state court decisions require tolling, a willingness to grant term extensions will be more cost-effective.

Walk-in and Telephone Policy

Many PHAs attempt to reduce unscheduled demands on staff time by restricting the circumstances under which families or owners may walk into the office and see staff, and by limiting the circumstances under which families and owners are able or encouraged to call the PHA. This is done through improved communications systems and clear expectations established with these client groups. Many PHAs use this approach to achieve *greater* levels of customer service to their client populations by restricting special client attention to those clients who truly require it. Designing this type of system requires thoughtfulness to ensure reasonable coverage of the client needs, including those with disabilities, those without telephones and non-English speaking families. The number of unscheduled activities in the workload clearly affects the number of staff required to administer the program.

Local Housing Market and Program Clientele

In addition to the effect of administrative policies on program staffing and income, a number of other factors impact staffing requirements. External factors that may affect staffing include:

Success Rates of Families Searching for Housing

Each family who receives a voucher to search for housing requires an expenditure of staff time to be determined eligible and briefed. Families who are unsuccessful in finding units return an unused voucher to the PHA, which must then issue it to another family. The PHA will recoup none of the cost of processing the unsuccessful family, because administrative fees are paid only for units leased. The higher the success rates of searching families, the lower the overall cost of administering the program. Determining the reasons why families are unsuccessful, and attempting to resolve those issues is a more effective use of PHA funding than simply issuing large numbers of vouchers in anticipation of a lower number of successful families.

Quality of Housing Stock

An overall poor quality of housing stock available to be leased in the program is likely to result in more frequent failures of HQS inspections. Each unit that initially fails an inspection requires a reinspection prior to leasing or continuation of assistance. More frequent fails and reinspection will require more PHA inspections staff.

Owner Actions

Some units are not prepared for occupancy in advance of the HQS inspection. It is not uncommon for owners to use initial HQS inspections as a "punch list" inspection to inform them of the necessary repairs for HQS. This owner strategy increases the numbers of required inspections and staff.

Another owner behavior that can increase PHA cost of administering the program is to be a "no show" for the inspection appointment. This takes valuable inspector time, and prevents performance of other inspections—increasing PHA administrative cost and staffing requirements.

If a PHA is able to persuade owners that their actions may result in slower service, and promote change in owner behaviors, then pass and completion rates of inspections may improve, allowing the PHA to be more efficient. This may result in a need for fewer staff, and improvement of service to owners at the same time.

Applicant Actions

Applicants who do not appear for eligibility interviews, or delay the process of income verification or issuance of a voucher, require additional PHA monitoring and action. Second notices to families to attend interviews or provide income information may be necessary. Some of these applicants will be determined ineligible, requiring the PHA to begin the process of eligibility determination for another applicant.

Applicants who cooperate with the eligibility process but fail to attend a briefing and receive a housing choice voucher, or those who receive their voucher but do not expend adequate effort in their search have required a significant amount of PHA investment without results. PHAs must be aware of these rates of "fall out" for applicants, and attempt to address the problem. Making applicants more successful is an important way to reduce the cost of administering the program by reducing the work required to place a family under lease.

Some applicants will make unit selection that may result in additional complaint inspections during the year, or in staff time spent counseling the client and owner after lease-up regarding matters of tenancy. Families in marginal units or poor neighborhoods and that have problematic owners are more likely to move at the end of the initial lease term, requiring additional effort by PHA staff. More thorough initial counseling regarding unit choice may be a PHA technique to reduce poor unit choice and subsequent moving for these families.

When PHAs wish to take actions to improve efficiency or reduce costs, the solution may be a combination of the following: additional staffing, a reassignment of workloads, improved use of systems and automation, or better specification, supervision, and measurement of performance. Improving individual staff performance is an important part of improving overall PHA performance and efficiency.

Special Program Allocations

In recent years, many special program allocations to PHAs have been targeted to specific populations. Often, these allocations carry requirements for working with other organizations or agencies to select eligible program applicants. Examples of these special program allocations include:

- Family self-sufficiency;
- Mainstream program for the disabled;
- Family unification program;
- Public housing demolition, disposition, or vacancy consolidation;
- Assistance to families in units for which HUD terminates a project-based HAP contract; or
- Welfare-to-work voucher program.

Administration of these special allocations requires that PHAs develop systems to accept applicant referrals for eligibility. PHAs must also partner with other agencies to provide any necessary counseling or referral services, or the PHA must perform these functions. It is common for these families to take longer to be processed and leased-up than others from the waiting list. Some groups also may have lower success rates. In some cases, these families may also require more follow-up assistance and involve more unscheduled contacts than other program participants.
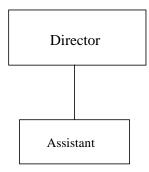
21.3   PROGRAM SIZE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Exhibits 21-2 through 21-6 illustrate sample PHA organizational structures for housing choice voucher programs of increasing size. Figure 21-2, *Very Small Housing Choice Voucher Program Organization Chart,* illustrates a very small program of about 50 – 75 units with 1.5 – 2.0 full time equivalent staff. The program manager and the assistant are directly involved in daily processing activities.

Exhibit 21-3, Small Housing Choice Voucher Program Organization Chart, illustrates a small program of about 250 units with four full-time equivalent staff. The clerk/secretary takes applications and does some other processing. The housing specialist does eligibility, briefing, lease-up, and ongoing case management. The inspector does all inspections, including most of the inspection scheduling, and rent reasonableness determinations. The director is the back-up person for all processing and does quality control, and perhaps some regular processing.

EXHIBIT 21-2
VERY SMALL HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
ORGANIZATION CHART

50 – 75 Units

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        ┌─────────────┐
        │   Director  │
        └──────┬──────┘
               │
        ┌──────┴──────┐
        │  Assistant  │
        └─────────────┘
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Note:
Administrative services (finance, personnel) may be provided by parent organization or Department of government, or the HCV may provide their own administrative.

EXHIBIT 21-3
SMALL HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
ORGANIZATION CHART

250 UNITS

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              ┌─────────────┐
              │   Director   │
              └──────┬───────┘
                     │───────────────┐
                     │        ┌───────────────┐
                     │        │ Clerk/Secretary│
                     │        └───────────────┘
          ┌──────────┴──────────┐
   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐
   │ Housing Specialist│   │  Inspector  │
   └─────────────────┘   └─────────────┘
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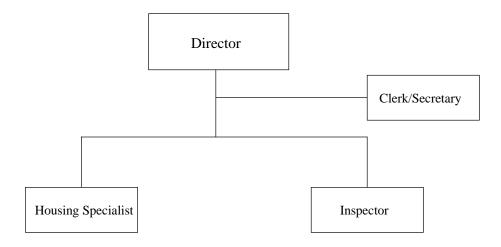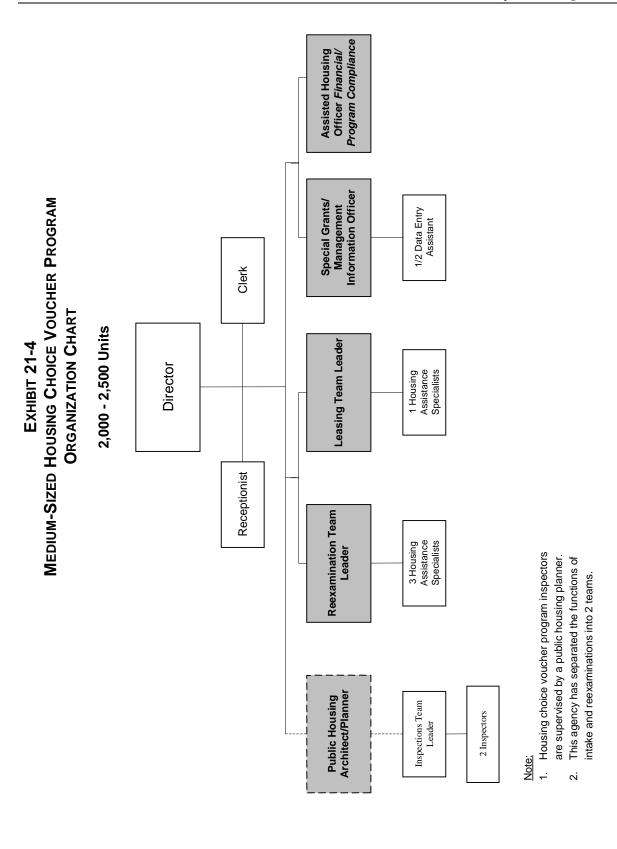
Note:
Administrative services (finance, personnel) may be provided by parent organization or department of government, or the HCV unit may provide its own administrative.
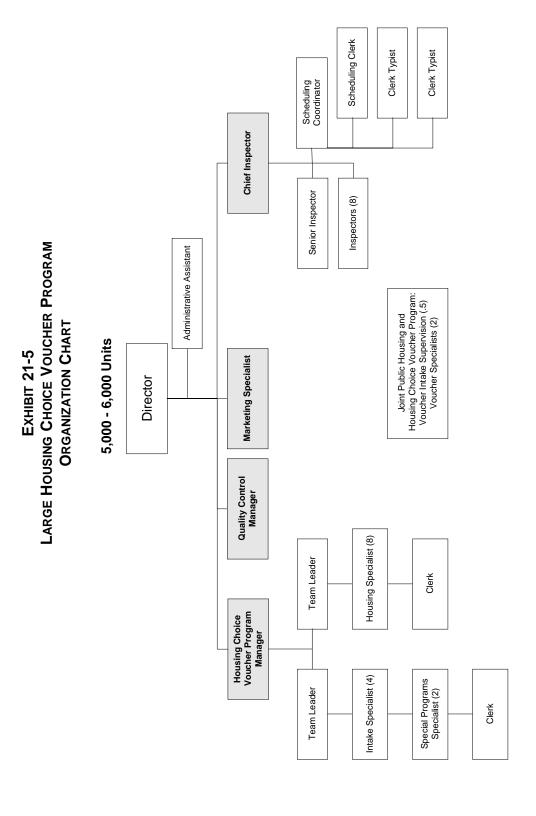
Exhibit 21-4, *Medium-Sized Housing Choice Voucher Program Organization Chart,* describes the structure of a medium-sized program with approximately 15 full-time equivalent staff and 2,000 – 2,500 units. More staff is involved in supervision and the director is involved in direct processing only on a supervisory level. In addition to increased supervisory positions, there is greater specialization. This example shows the inspectors being part of a unit that also completes public housing functions.

Exhibit 21-5, *Large Housing Choice Voucher Program Organization Chart,* describes a large program of 5,000 – 6,000 units with 40 full-time equivalent staff. There is more specialization and there are more supervisory positions, including a separate quality control manager and a marketing specialist. Two teams handle intake and case management, with each team also specializing in some intake and special program components.

Exhibit 21-6, *Very Large Housing Choice Voucher Program Organization Chart,* describes a very large program with more than 27,000 units and 202 full-time equivalent staff in housing choice voucher operations. However, this PHA has a number of special programs besides the housing choice voucher (e.g., a separate mobility program and contract administration of Section 8 new construction and substantial rehabilitation projects). If all special programs (including family self-sufficiency and mobility and contract administration) are excluded, there is a 167-person staff directly involved in basic program administration. There are two deputy directors, five managers, and 13 other supervisors on two levels to ensure that no supervisor has too many staff members to supervise. There is an unusual degree of specialization in intake processing, with separate teams dedicated to the waiting list, public housing relocation, and owner opt-outs.
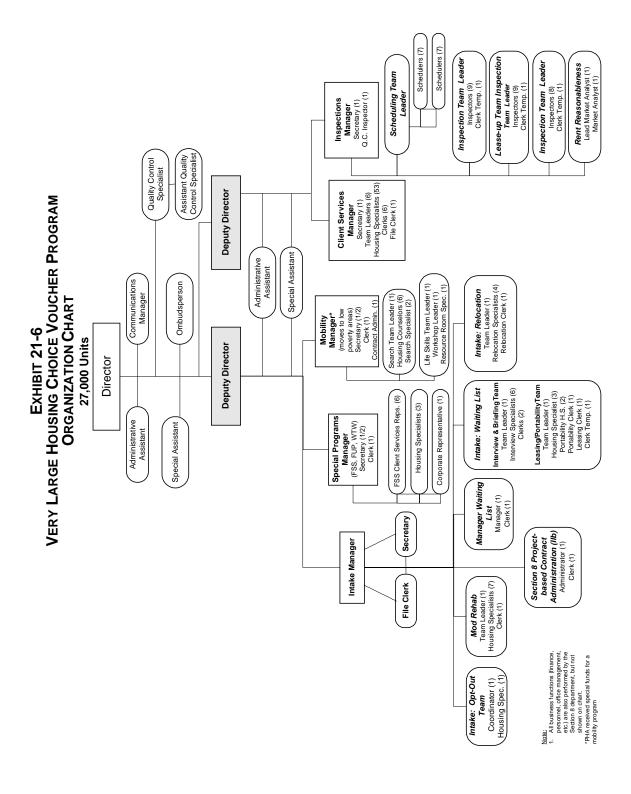
Each of the examples refer to a specific time with a particular program mix. They should not serve as models of the best ways to organize for housing choice voucher program administration. Rather, they are illustrations of different staffing approaches. They show how the number of supervisors and levels of supervision increase as program size increases, and how specialization of job functions typically increases. Part of the increased specialization is due to the difficulty of supervising to ensure consistency among multiple staff teams which each perform a variety of complicated functions.

EXHIBIT 21-4
MEDIUM-SIZED HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
ORGANIZATION CHART

2,000 - 2,500 Units

Director

Clerk

Receptionist

Assisted Housing Officer *Financial/ Program Compliance*

Special Grants/ Management Information Officer

1/2 Data Entry Assistant

Leasing Team Leader

1 Housing Assistance Specialists

Reexamination Team Leader

3 Housing Assistance Specialists

Public Housing Architect/Planner

Inspections Team Leader

2 Inspectors

Note:

1. Housing choice voucher program inspectors are supervised by a public housing planner.

2. This agency has separated the functions of intake and reexaminations into 2 teams.

EXHIBIT 21-5
LARGE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
ORGANIZATION CHART

5,000 - 6,000 Units

Director

Administrative Assistant

Chief Inspector

Scheduling Coordinator

Scheduling Clerk

Clerk Typist

Clerk Typist

Senior Inspector

Inspectors (8)

Marketing Specialist

Quality Control Manager

Housing Choice Voucher Program Manager

Team Leader

Housing Specialist (8)

Clerk

Team Leader

Intake Specialist (4)

Special Programs Specialist (2)

Clerk

Joint Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Program: Voucher Intake Supervision (.5) Voucher Specialists (2)

Note:

1. Personnel & Financial Management & Internal Audit Services provided by other departments in agency.

EXHIBIT 21-6
VERY LARGE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
ORGANIZATION CHART
27,000 Units

Note:
1. All business functions (finance, personnel, office management, etc.) are also performed by the Section 8 department, but not shown on chart.
*PHA received special funds for a mobility program

21.4   OVERALL STAFFING LEVELS

Little research has been conducted to compare staffing of housing choice voucher programs by size. As indicated above, even two programs of the same size may have significantly different workloads because of PHA policies or the quality of the housing stock. The following discussion provides data from a few limited studies.

In 1991 and 1994, a contractor conducted PHA surveys to identify the number of full-time equivalent staff administering rental certificate and voucher programs of various sizes. Rather than attempt to identify caseloads or staff by function, this analysis looked only at the total staff employed directly in administering the program. Table 1, *Staffing Levels by Program Size Based Upon a Survey of PHAs in 1991,* summarizes the data from the 1991 study and Table 2, *Staffing Levels by Program Size Based Upon a Survey of PHAs in 1994,* summarizes the data from the 1994 survey.

TABLE 1
STAFFING LEVELS BY PROGRAM SIZE
BASED UPON A SURVEY OF PHAS IN 1991

Total Number of Section 8 Units	Number of Responding PHAs	Average Number of Units Per Full Time Staff Member
1-49	34	38.7
50-99	41	58.5
100-199	68	80.9
200-499	103	97.9
500-999	42	119.4
1000-1999	21	141.10
2000-4999	18	147.41
5000+	14	112.91
Total	341	92.4

Source: Mail survey conducted in 1991. This included all staff involved in the rental voucher and certificate programs, including FTEs in PHA management, finance, personnel, etc., involved in the rental voucher and certificate programs. While it was prior to PHAs having large special programs, it does include staff involved in the moderate rehabilitation program. This represents approximately a 20 percent response rate among PHAs receiving the questionnaire.

TABLE 2
STAFFING LEVELS BY PROGRAM SIZE
BASED UPON A SURVEY OF PHAS IN 1994

Total Number of Section 8 Units	Number of Responding PHAs	Average Number of Units Per Full Time Staff Member
50-199	3	37
200-499	13	116
500-999	13	115
1000-4999	26	145
5000+	4	162
Total	59	128

Source: Mail survey conducted in 1994.

A smaller survey (Table 2) conducted in 1994 yielded generally higher ratios of units per staff member. This survey attempted to count only staff directly involved in operating the rental certificate and voucher programs, and excluded PHA management, finance, and personnel staff time providing overhead services to the program. The 1991 and 1994 surveys showed that as programs increased in size from 1 to 4,999 units, PHAs were able to achieve growing efficiency in staffing. However, as size increased to above 5,000 units, the 1991 survey showed a decline in efficiency while the 1994 showed further gains.

In 1999, the Ohio Housing Authorities Conference and the Cleveland HUD Office jointly conducted and analyzed surveys sent to all PHAs administering rental certificate and voucher programs in Ohio. More than 70 percent of the PHAs responded. An overall summary of the number of units per full time staff person is provided in Table 3, *Staffing Ratios by Program Size for PHAs in Ohio*. It is interesting that the Ohio study, like the 1991 study, shows efficiency gains as program size grows from small to medium size, but decreasing economies of scale as the program becomes larger.

TABLE 3
STAFFING RATIOS BY PROGRAM SIZE
FOR PHAS IN OHIO
1999

PHA Size	Number of PHAs	Unit to Staff Ratio All Staff
1-200 units	10	109.5
201-500 units	18	134.9
501 – 1000 units	13	149.1
Over 1000 units	13	127.1
All PHAs	76	131.7

Source: Unpublished survey conducted in 1999 by the Ohio Housing Authorities Conference (OHAC) and HUD-Cleveland. About 71 percent of PHAs with rental certificate and voucher programs responded.

Additional comparisons can be made using detailed data collected by a contractor between 1997 and 1999 on the operation of six large certificate and voucher programs ranging in size from 3,700 units to 37,000 units (See Table 4, *Comparison of Staffing for Six Large Section 8 Programs*.) The ratio of program units to staffing levels ranged from 116 units per staff person to 166 units per staff person. The median ratio was 150 units per staff person. It is interesting to note that the lowest ratio PHA had recently increased staff to achieve a substantial lease-up of units (requiring an investment in staff beyond what would have been needed to maintain the same number of units at a steady rate). In this analysis, all staff involved in special programs, moderate rehabilitation, contract administration, FSS, etc. (and the supervision of those functions) were eliminated to achieve a comparable measure of staff involved in basic program management and staffing. Also, for each of these programs, the parent organization provides computer, financial, and human resources support, and other overhead and administrative services.

These tables illustrate the difficulty of comparing programs. And it is important to remember that many factors beyond just program size legitimately affect staffing levels. In addition, sometimes the number of staff is greater when a PHA hires more lower-skilled workers rather than fewer higher-skilled workers. For a number of reasons, two PHAs with the same program size could have significantly different staffing requirements. One PHA has an old waiting list, from which only about 50 percent of those invited show for the interview, and of those only about 60 percent are successful. A second PHA with the same program size and a fresh waiting list usually has 90 percent of invitees show for the interview, and 90 percent of those that show are successful in leasing units under the program. The first PHA might require twice as many staff members to process intake as the second PHA.

TABLE 4
COMPARISON OF STAFFING FOR SIX LARGE SECTION 8 PROGRAMS
(ALL STAFFING FOR FSS AND OTHER SPECIAL PROGRAMS EXCLUDED)

Staff Category	PHA A No. Staff	% of Total	PHA B No. Staff	% of Total	PHA C No. Staff	% of Total	PHA D No. Staff	% of Total	PHA E No. Staff	% of Total	PHA F No. Staff	% of Total	PHA G No. Staff	% of Total
Director	0.75	3.1	1	4	1	2.6	1	2.7	1	1.5	1	0.6	1	0.4
Other Managers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	0.9	1.5	0.6
Ad. Asst./Sec.	1	4.1	0	0	1	2.6	1	2.7	1	1.5	5.5	3.1	9.5	3.8
Ombudsperson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5		1	0.6	3	1.2
Supervisor	4.5	18.6	3	12	3.5	9.1	3	8.1	5.75	8.4	20.5	11.7	25.5	10.2
Technicians	15	61.9	13	52	26.5	68.8	25	67.6	52	75.6	120	68.4	163	64.9
Clerical	3	12.4	8	32	6.5	16.9	7	18.9	9	13	26	14.8	47.5	18.9
Total	**24.3**	**100.1**	**25**	**100**	**38.5**	**100**	**37**	**100**	**69.3**	**100**	**176**	**100**	**251**	**100**
No. of Units	3729		4140		5392		5756		8035		26,475		37,512	
Units Per FTE		154		166		140		156		116		151		150

Source: Quadel Consulting Corporation data from program reviews and interviews with PHAs staff at various sites that attempted to make a careful comparison of basic program operations, excluding moderate rehabilitation, contract administration, and all special programs.