

# Office of Public and Indian Housing

## Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Forum

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Tuesday, June 19, 2007 ■ 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM ■ Grand Hyatt Washington—Wilson Roosevelt Room

### Discussion Highlights

- The Goal from the Housing Choice Voucher Program Forum is to re-create a program that is SIMPLE, TRANSPARENT, and PREDICTABLE.
- HUD staff opened the forum with discussion on why everyone was invited.
- Why are we here?
  - Communication—Provide additional information needed to tell HUD how to make the program better.
  - Input—Think outside of the box even if it means changing some of the current regulations.
- As practitioners, PHA staff was asked if they could provide input on making and/or changing rules/regulations, what would they do in order to have a better ran program that was more efficient.
- HUD is in the beginning stages of revising Section 92 regulations—this is an opportunity for PHAs to provide input on this revision and may help make their jobs easier.
- HUD stressed that we will not get into any regulatory or statutory issues.
- PHAs were asked, what do you not like the most about rent calculation? (Is 30% of adjusted income the right number, should it be changed)?
  - PHAs responses:
    - Utilize gross income instead of net
    - Gross would work or utilize 40% of adjusted income
    - Projecting income is a challenge, utilize prior year income.
    - Allow flexibility, let PHAs determine if 30% or 40% adjusted income is better for their program
- PHAs were asked, what if we did not use income to calculate rent?
  - PHA response:
    - MTW sites have had the flexibility in rent calculations and suggested that data be provided on best practices.
    - The 30% or 40% of adjusted income should be kept
    - Give the PHA the opportunity to determine how they would structure rent calculations. What may work for one PHA, may not work for the other. The current regulation is a one size fits all.
- PHAs were asked, how many PHAs would considered term limits?
  - PHAs response:
    - The majority thought they would consider

- It would depend on the local needs-some areas could do it, while others felt they could not.
- PHAs we asked, how about flexibility in the HAP allocation for the FSS program?
  - PHAs response:
    - Maybe a percentage similar to Capital Funds
    - Perhaps give funding for housing payments and then administrations monies
    - Question was raised: Why have separate funding streams?
- PHAs were asked, should minimum rent be raised?
  - PHA response:
    - Yes, a real minimum rent without giving utility checks and no exemptions.
- PHAs were asked, is the FSS Program a core mission of PHAs?
  - PHAs responses:
    - No, but it should be
    - Yes

#### Communication:

- HUD has not done any training and there seems to be a black hole between Headquarters and the industry.
- Field Offices should be more responsive.
- FO staff are often not informed and as a result, they can not adequately address the PHA's concerns
- HCV Program will start to utilize the web more to communicate with PHAs.

#### How to improve Communication?

- Web cast
- Video Conferences
- Newsletter
- Train HUD staff to be more responsive to questions in order to ensure accurate information is available to all PHAs
- Post all PHA funding on HUD website
- Send notices out to HUD staff and the Industry simultaneously
- Prepare/encourage HUD staff to be more open minded to suggestions/proposals from PHAs and utilize waivers

#### How to structure communication activities?

- Regional training sessions or forums
- Host activities at least quarterly
- Choose hot topics and/or major issues

#### SEMAP and/or evaluations must include at least of the four following elements:

- Utilization of funds
- Housing Quality Standards (HQS)
- Timely and accurate submission of reports
- Clean Audit

Suggestions for reorganizing SEMAP:

- Eliminate all self certification
- Utilize a combination of PHAS and CDBG evaluation criteria
- HQS oversight (Example 24 hr emergency calls)

Question: How can HUD get PHAs to utilize funding resources:

- PHAs need a snap shot of how much of the allocation/utilization will be
- PHAs need some assurance that there is some stability in funding

Question: What incentives would PHAs like to receive?

Responses:

- Allocations of additional vouchers
- Program flexibility
- Provide additional incentives for those agencies who have hard to serve populations
- Take vouchers from PHAs who are not fully utilizing them and give to those PHAs with full utilization.