

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
HOUSING AUTHORITY

TO: HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMISSIONERS
FROM: REBECCA LANE, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
MANAGER
SUBJECT: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
UPDATE TO HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN FOR THE ADDITION OF EMERGENCY
HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM POLICIES

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Department of Housing and Community Services that the Housing Authority, by resolution, adopt the addition of Chapter 19 – Emergency Housing Vouchers to the Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Administrative Plan is the major policy document guiding the ongoing administration of the federally regulated Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Where allowed under law, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) permits local jurisdictions to establish policies pertaining to the program. Revisions to the Administrative Plan must be adopted by the Housing Authority. The proposed change to the Administrative Plan will add Chapter 19 – Emergency Housing Vouchers to incorporate the initial program requirements for the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program, which was authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Housing and Community Services (HCS) administers the HCV program for the City of Santa Rosa Housing Authority (Housing Authority). The HCV program, formerly known as Section 8, is a federally funded rental assistance program for qualifying extremely low and very low-income households. The HCV program also includes special purpose vouchers for certain eligible jurisdictions, such as the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program which provides assistance to Veterans in jurisdictions where there is a high rate of homelessness among Veterans and where the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) operates clinical case management

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services. Special purpose vouchers are targeted to specific populations and generally funded separately from the HCVs in a Housing Authority's Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) with HUD.

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) into law, which provided over \$1.9 trillion in relief to address the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, public health, State and local governments, individuals, and businesses. Section 3202 of the ARP appropriated \$5 billion for new Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs), the renewal of those EHVs, and fees for the cost of administering and supporting the leasing of EHVs.

On May 5, 2021 HUD issued Public and Indian Housing (PIH) Notice 2021-15, which described HUD's process for allocating approximately 70,000 EHVs to eligible Housing Authorities and set forth the operating requirements for the Housing Authorities that were invited to participate and administer the EHV program.

Eligibility for the EHVs is limited to individuals and families who are (1) homeless; (2) at risk of homelessness; (3) fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking; or (4) recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability. Participating Housing Authorities must partner with the local Continuum of Care (CoC) or other homeless or victim services providers to assist qualifying families through a direct referral process.

PRIOR HOUSING AUTHORITY REVIEW

On June 21, 2021 the Housing Authority heard a Staff Briefing about the EHV program.

On July 19, 2021 the Housing Authority appropriated \$2,542,392 of EHV funds that were allocated to the City of Santa Rosa under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

ANALYSIS

Housing Authorities were notified on May 10, 2021 of their eligibility to participate in the EHV program. The first funds were allocated to participating Housing Authorities effective July 1, 2021. Housing Authorities were required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local CoC by July 31, 2021.

Both the City of Santa Rosa Housing Authority and the Sonoma County Housing Authority received an allocation of EHVs and entered into separate but substantially similar MOUs with the Sonoma County Continuum of Care. The eligible target population, service provision and referral process is the same under each MOU to allow for consistency in the program throughout the county. The MOU between the City of Santa Rosa Housing Authority and the Sonoma County Continuum of Care is included as Attachment 2 in this report.

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The adoption of the Administrative Plan policies for the EHV program is required under PIH Notice 2021-15. Except as described in the new *Chapter 19 – Emergency Housing Vouchers* and as required under federal statute and HUD requirements, the general requirements of the HCV program will apply to EHV's.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed changes to the Administrative Plan do not have a fiscal impact on the HCV program; the funding is already available under the ACC with HUD.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed action to update the policies in the Administrative Plan is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and 15378 in that there is no possibility that the implementation of this action may have significant effects on the environment, and no further environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan Chapter 19: Emergency Housing Vouchers
- Attachment 2 – Emergency Housing Voucher Memorandum of Understanding with the Sonoma County Continuum of Care
- Resolution

CONTACT

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