

For Housing Authority Meeting of: March 19, 2020

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
HOUSING AUTHORITY

TO: HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMISSIONERS  
FROM: REBECCA LANE, MANAGER, HOUSING  
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF ANNUAL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY  
PLAN

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Department of Housing and Community Services that the Housing Authority, by resolution, adopt the Annual Public Housing Agency Plan (PHA Plan) for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, which includes a planned conversion to an electronic Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List, the continued use of Project-Based Vouchers to create and preserve affordable housing and community outreach and education efforts regarding the state and local ordinances banning source of income discrimination against Housing Choice Voucher program participants in rental housing. The adoption of an Annual PHA Plan is required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for local administration of the Housing Choice Voucher program.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Housing Agency Plan (PHA Plan) is required for Public Housing Agencies administering the Housing Choice Voucher program. The purpose of this item is to review and approve the Annual PHA Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 requires any Housing Authority that administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program and/or any public housing units to adopt PHA Plans with two components: the Five-Year Plan and Annual PHA Plan updates. The City of Santa Rosa Housing Authority submitted a Five-Year Plan in 2019 for Fiscal Years 2019-2024 and is currently reviewing an Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. By regulatory requirement, each PHA Plan must be adopted by a Housing Authority resolution during a public meeting.

PRIOR HOUSING AUTHORITY REVIEW

Not applicable.

## ANALYSIS

The purpose of the Agency Plan is to describe the mission, goals, policies and programs of the Housing Authority. Every fifth year, the Housing Authority submits a more comprehensive version of the PHA Plan. The last Five-Year PHA Plan for the City of Santa Rosa Housing Authority was submitted for Fiscal Years 2019-2024. The Annual PHA Plan includes only any elements of the PHAs Housing Choice Voucher program that have changed since the most recent PHA Plan submission.

A local Resident Advisory Board (RAB) reviews the PHA Plan, and any comments by the RAB on the plan must be included in the PHA Plan submission. Housing Authorities that do not administer a Public Housing program do not have formal resident councils and may establish their own policies to meet the RAB requirement. Per Resolution 1129 dated January 22, 2001, the RAB requirement for the City of Santa Rosa is satisfied by the service of Tenant Commissioners on the Santa Rosa Housing Authority who represent the interests of those served by the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. As the two Tenant Commissioner positions are currently vacant, the Housing Authority will establish the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) when those positions are filled.

Any public comments received on the PHA Plan must also be submitted to HUD in the PHA Plan document. Therefore, the attached PHA Plan is subject to the addition of any RAB or public comments in section B.7 of HUD 50075-HCV. After local adoption, PHA Plans are submitted electronically to HUD.

### *Planned Changes to the Waiting List*

The Annual PHA Plan for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 includes a change to the policies governing admissions to the program by a planned conversion to an electronic Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List. Currently, during the opening of the Waiting List, paper applications are widely distributed throughout the community through public facilities such as libraries, through social service partners and housing providers. The paper applications must be returned by mail for processing by the Housing Authority. Waiting List updates are also completed by mail. Every other year, the Housing Authority mails a form to each applicant on the Waiting List which must be returned to the Housing Authority with an affirmative declaration that the applicant wishes to remain on the Waiting List.

The paper-based process is time-consuming, requiring manual processing of paper applications including data entry and filing. The cost to print, mail and distribute the Waiting List Applications and Waiting List updates is increasing. Most importantly, as the public is increasingly more engaged in online services, a paper-based application system becomes more limited in effectiveness reaching all those who may need the information.

The planned conversion to an electronic Waiting List will preserve the existing Waiting List applicants and their rank numbers on the Waiting List. Future Waiting List openings and updates will be conducted online using a secure system, and paper applications will continue to be made available as an accommodation for those who request it. Assistance in completing the electronic form will also be available.

In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, the Department of Housing and Community Services will conduct extensive community outreach regarding the proposed changes to the Waiting List process and return to the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners with the proposed changes to the Administrative Plan policies governing the administration of the Waiting List.

#### *Project-Based Vouchers*

The Housing Authority is currently administering 135 Project-Based Vouchers over five sites, with an additional 65 HUD-VASH Project-Based units currently under an Agreement to enter into a Housing Assistance Payments (AHAP) Contract. Forty-five more Project-Based Voucher units have recently been approved by the Housing Authority and are undergoing the necessary reviews prior to execution of the AHAP. The Housing Authority does not currently have any pending applications for Project-Based Vouchers.

The Housing Authority will continue to make Project-Based Vouchers available as a resource to leverage the development of new affordable housing units, provided that vouchers are available, the statutory cap on the percentage of Project-Based Voucher units within a Housing Choice Voucher program is not exceeded and the program's objective to create and preserve affordable housing is achieved.

#### *Fair Housing Activities*

During Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the Santa Rosa City Council enacted a local ordinance banning housing discrimination based on source of income, including Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and other rent subsidies. Santa Rosa City Code Chapter 10-46 makes it unlawful to refuse to rent, to impose any restriction in the terms and conditions of a rental housing transaction, to refuse or restrict facilities or services or to make, publish advertise or disseminate any statement which includes a preference, limitation or discrimination based wholly or in part on source of income. The ordinance also makes it unlawful to use a financial or income standard for rental housing that fails to account for rental payments that will be made by other individuals or organizations under a rental assistance program, including but not limited to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program.

In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, the Department of Housing and Community Services will continue to engage and educate the rental housing community, including property owners, managers and tenants and advocates about the local ordinance to affirmatively further fair housing.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on Housing Authority funds. The PHA Plan is a required element of the Housing Choice Voucher program already administered by the Santa Rosa Housing Authority.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

COUNCIL/BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Annual PHA Plan for Fiscal Year 2020-2021
- Resolution

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