

## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: Monday, December 15, 2014

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of January 14, 2015

**Subject:** Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan Revision

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Code of Federal Regulations Title 24, Part 982

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Terri Smith, HRA Manager

**Division/Department:** Community Development / HRA

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve an Administrative Plan revision adopting a residency preference for the administration of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

### Background

The Council's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Metro HRA) is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to adopt an Administrative Plan for the HCV Program. HUD requires the governing body to approve the policy document and any revisions. HUD develops regulations for program administration; housing authorities are responsible for establishing discretionary policies. The Administrative Plan outlines the discretionary policies.

The Metro HRA is opening its HCV waiting list in early 2015 for the first time in seven (7) years. The HRA will use an online system to accept applications using a newly implemented software system. This will be the first time the Metro HRA has used a web-based system. There are great efficiencies to be gained through online applications. However, based on the experience of other housing authorities using an on-line process, there is a strong likelihood of receiving a large number of applications from people living outside the 7 county region and from across the country. This is due to the ease of applying and the knowledge of the open waiting list spreading quickly through social media. A random selection will determine placement of 2,000 new applicants added to the waiting list.

HUD permits housing authorities to establish local preferences, giving priority to families that meet certain criteria. A residency preference helps ensure the Metro HRA's limited voucher resources remain focused primarily on residents who live, work or attend school in the region. Specifically, the policy under **Reopening the Waiting List** will state:

- *The PHA will complete a random drawing for waiting list placement, awarding 95% of waiting list placements to applicants who reside, work, have been hired to work or go to school full-time in the 7 county metro area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties). The remaining 5% of waiting list placements will be awarded to any other applicant.*

The written policy under **Selection Method, Local Preferences** will state:

- *Residency Preference*

*The PHA will offer a preference for applicants who reside, work, have been hired to work or go to school full-time in the 7 county metro area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties). Full-time student is defined as a person who is carrying a subject load that is considered full time by an educational institution with a degree or certificate program.*

The percentages (95% and 5% above) were chosen because they reflect the composition of past waiting lists when no online application system was available. This will ensure waiting list access for all applicants but ensures highest priority and targets voucher resources for residents who live, work or attend school in the 7 county region. Voucher holders from other housing authority jurisdictions, within the region and from across the country, have the opportunity to move to Metro HRA's service area if they choose using the portability feature of the program.

### **Rationale**

Federal regulations for the HCV Program allow housing authorities to adopt local preferences approved by the governing board.

### **Funding**

Not applicable.

### **Known Support / Opposition**

No known support or opposition.