

## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: August 2, 2021

**Subject:** Public Housing Agency Plan Discussion

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

**Policy/Legal Reference:** 24 CFR Part 982 & 983

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Stephanie Paulson, Assistant Director, Housing and Redevelopment Authority (651) 602-1584

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

### Proposed Action

None. Information and discussion only.

### Background

The Metropolitan Council is required to adopt a written Administrative Plan that establishes local policies for administration of the Housing Choice Voucher program through the Council's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Metro HRA). The Administrative Plan is the Metro HRA's main policy document that becomes an attachment to the PHA Annual Plan which is open for public comment ([2020 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan \(metrocouncil.org\)](https://www.metrocouncil.org/2020-Housing-Choice-Voucher-Administrative-Plan)).

The purpose of this information item is to have discussion and receive Committee feedback on the main Administrative Plan revisions for the upcoming year, 2022. The primary revisions include:

- Expansion of targeted funding programs including Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) and Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)
- Revisions to the Project Based Vouchers offer and award criteria

### **Foster Youth to Independence (FYI)**

The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) allocation will provide voucher assistance to youth with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement. Families applying for FYI must be referred by a Public Child Welfare Agency. Youth are considered eligible if they are between the ages of 18-24 years old, left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days; and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless [PIH 2020-28].

### **Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)**

The Metro HRA was awarded 218 Emergency Housing Vouchers as a part of the American Rescue Plan. These new vouchers will serve people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence or at high risk of housing instability [PIH 2021-15]. The Metro HRA will partner with the three local Continuums of Care (Hennepin County, Ramsey County and Suburban Metro Area Continuum of Care – SMAC) to accept referrals as required by the federal award.

### **Project Based Voucher (PBV) Offer and Award Criteria**

The Council's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Metro HRA) administers 6,872 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV). Most of these vouchers are tenant-based and move from place to place with the tenant. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allows housing authorities the discretion to Project Base up to twenty percent (20%) of their vouchers.

On average, the Metro HRA has approximately 750 vouchers turnover each year (62 per month). Balancing the use of the limited turnover vouchers is incredibly difficult. These vouchers need to serve the following groups: Waiting list applicants, PBV unit movers and initial PBV vacancies, special purpose vouchers and absorbing vouchers from other housing authorities. The Metro HRA has awarded 970 PBV units (13% of total vouchers) in 55 separate projects to date located throughout Anoka, Carver, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington Counties.

The Metro HRA offers and awards PBVs according to the criteria established in the Administrative Plan. Council staff recommend revisions in how the Council awards Project Based Vouchers. The proposed revisions described below are intended to add clarity to the Metro HRA's process in offering and awarding PBVs. Specific redlining of revisions can be found on page 17-6 of the [PHA Plan online](#).

- The Metro HRA will consider voucher utilization, current turnover rates, funding/budget, and balancing PBV and waitlist admissions when making the annual determination to offer PBVs. There is no guarantee PBVs will be offered and awarded annually.
- The PHA will prioritize PBV projects in its own operating area prior to considering projects outside of the jurisdiction. The PHA's operating area includes Anoka and Carver counties and suburban Hennepin and Ramsey counties excluding the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul, Bloomington, Plymouth, Richfield, and St. Louis Park.

If the PHA chooses to offer PBVs, they will be offered and awarded in the following ways:

- Advertise the availability of PBVs through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, following the regulations contained in 24 CFR 983.51 (b) and (c) regarding solicitation and selection of proposals.
- Offer and award PBVs through an RFP process in conjunction with Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency's (MHFA) annual RFP.
- The Metro HRA will take no action until after MHFA has made its funding award determinations. If MHFA does not approve the other financing requested to make the project financially feasible, the Metro HRA will not consider the request for PBVs, and a developer will need to reapply for PBVs at a later date when PBVs are again offered.

### **Rationale**

The Foster Youth to Independence and Emergency Housing Vouchers align with the Metro HRA's commitment to serving the region's most vulnerable populations. The revisions to the Project Based Voucher award process offers further clarity and better aligns with Council priorities and current goals.

### **Thrive Lens Analysis**

The suggested revisions support the Thrive outcomes of equity, livability, and prosperity by increasing the housing choices available to low-income families across the region. Families that have stable housing in a community of their choice are better able to thrive and flourish.

### **Funding**

N/A

### **Known Support / Opposition**

None.