

Community Development Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 27, 2014

Subject: Authorization Renewal for Metro HRA Special Programs Administration

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize continued administration of rental assistance programs serving special populations as outlined below and authorize the Regional Administrator, the Community Development Director, the Director of Housing and Livable Communities and the HRA Manager, as appropriate, to submit applications and execute grant agreements for continued participation and funding.

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Several general questions about the HRA programs were asked and answered. Motion passed unanimously.

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: Monday, August 18, 2014

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 27, 2014

Subject: Authorization Renewal for Metro HRA Special Programs Administration

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Code of Federal Regulations Title 24, Parts 574, 582, 982 and 983; Minnesota Statutes sections 462A.2097, 462A.201 and 473.195

Staff Prepared/Presented: Terri Smith, HRA Manager

Division/Department: Community Development / Metro HRA

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize continued administration of rental assistance programs serving special populations as outlined below and authorize the Regional Administrator, the Community Development Director, the Director of Housing and Livable Communities and the HRA Manager, as appropriate, to submit applications and execute grant agreements for continued participation and funding.

Background

The Council's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Metro HRA) administers rental assistance programs for very low and extremely low-income families in the region, currently serving nearly 6,700 families. The Metro HRA is the largest administrator of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program in the State of Minnesota and has administered the Section 8 program since the mid-1970s. The Section 8 program is a federally funded, tenant-based rental assistance program wherein a participant rents a unit in the private rental market. The participant pays approximately 30% of their income towards rent and utilities and the Metro HRA pays the remaining rental amount directly to the landlord. The Metro HRA is currently serving over 6,000 families with Section 8 rental assistance.

The Metro HRA administers four (4) other tenant-based rental assistance programs that serve special populations such as disabled and homeless persons. These rent assistance programs are administered similarly to the Section 8 program. The Council originally approved participation in these special programs between 1993 and 2002, and the Office of General Counsel recommends that periodically the Council be asked to reaffirm their support and agreement with continued administration of these rental assistance programs by the Metro HRA.

Continuum of Care (formerly known as Shelter Plus Care)

The Continuum of Care (CoC) program is a federal program designed to link rental assistance to supportive services for hard-to-serve homeless persons with disabilities. The Metro HRA has administered this program since 1996 in partnership with Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. Recipients choose rental housing in the private market wherein the Metro HRA provides the rent subsidy. The Counties provide required case management to ensure program participants receive the services necessary for successful independent living.

CoC program funding is provided through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through congressional appropriations. Program participants come as direct referrals from the county mental health divisions. The CoC program has been successful for many years and currently serves 363 participants.

Housing Assistance for Persons with Aids (HOPWA)

The Metro HRA has administered the Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program since 1996 in the seven (7) county metro area. The HOPWA program provides stable housing for very low-income persons who are HIV-positive. The program is administered in partnership with the Minnesota Aids Project. The Metro HRA provides the rent subsidy and MAP provides referrals and support services to program participants.

The HOPWA program is federally funded through congressional appropriations. The City of Minneapolis is the Grantee for this program and Metro HRA is the Subrecipient. The program currently serves 53 households.

Bridges

The Metro HRA, in partnership with Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, has administered the Bridges Program since 1993. The Bridges Program provides a tenant-based housing subsidy for persons with mental illness. Recipients choose rental housing from the private market wherein the Metro HRA provides the rent subsidy. The county mental health divisions provide support services designed to enable recipients to successfully maintain an independent living environment.

The Bridges program is funded through a biennial competitive application process through MN Housing. The program currently serves 169 families.

Rental Assistance for Anoka County (RAAC)

The RAAC program is funded through MN Housing's Housing Trust fund biennial competitive application process. The Metro HRA has administered the rental subsidy component of the RAAC program since 2002, in partnership with the Anoka County. The RAAC program provides rental assistance to Anoka County families receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) funds. Program participants must be compliant with their MFIP employment and self-sufficiency obligations. The program promotes the attainment of economic self-sufficiency through the provision of the rent subsidy. Eligible families receive a maximum monthly rental subsidy of \$400.

RAAC currently serves 50 families.

Rationale

The Metro HRA has developed positive working relationships with partnering agencies to provide housing to vulnerable, hard-to-house and homeless populations working towards independence and self-sufficiency. The Council's Office of the General Counsel recommends that staff seek affirmation by the Council of continued participation in these programs. These programs have been successful for many years and staff recommends continued administration.

Funding

Program and administrative funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through congressional appropriations and by MN Housing through competitive application processes.

Known Support / Opposition

Not applicable.