

Community Development Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of October 14, 2015

Subject: Adoption of Payment Standards for Metro HRA Rent Assistance Programs

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt amounts listed below as Payment Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher and other rent assistance programs effective November 1, 2015.

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Several general questions about the HRA programs and policies were asked and answered.

Council Member Cunningham asked where voucher holders are living and about the distribution of vouchers within the community and metro area as a whole and requested to see a map of distribution. Staff responded that there is tracking of where voucher holders live and movement over time. A distribution map will be provided as follow up.

Council Member Dorfman asked how much flexibility there is in adopting payment standards. Staff responded the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires standards are set between 90% and 110% of Fair Market Rents issued annually by HUD.

Council member Dorfman asked about the connection between the Housing Policy Plan (HPP) and this action. Staff responded the allocation of affordable housing need in the HPP reflects the “need” for additional affordable housing opportunities as communities grow as projected in their household growth forecasts. Voucher holders travel with a voucher from unit to unit, community to community.

Council member Cunningham asked how this impacts the number of people served. Staff responded that although increases in payment standards generally decrease the number of families that can be served, this is not the case at this time. The HRA has subsidy reserves built up from previous years that it will utilize to maintain the current number of families being served.

Council Member Munt asked if the exception standards help families move to areas of opportunity. Staff reported the number of families living in exception rent communities have increased and the Council’s new Mobility Counseling Program will also aid in this effort.

Motion passed unanimously.

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: October 5, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of October 14, 2015

Subject: Adoption of Payment Standards for Metro HRA Rent Assistance Programs

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 adopt amounts listed below as Payment Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher and other rent assistance programs effective November 1, 2015.

Background

The Metropolitan Council must annually review and adopt Payment Standards to be used in the administration of the Housing Choice Voucher and other rent assistance programs. Payment Standards must be set at amounts that ensure a sufficient supply of modestly designed, privately owned rental housing is available to program participants.

Payment standards are limited by the Fair Market Rents (FMRs) published annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). By federal regulation, the Metropolitan Council is provided the flexibility to establish Payment Standards between 90% and 110% of the published FMRs. This provides the HRA the flexibility to set rent limits that are competitive in all rental markets within the HRA's large operating jurisdiction.

Rationale

New FMRs are published annually effective October 1st. FMR limits increased by 1% this year. In addition to the rental market knowledge of Metro HRA staff, market data is purchased quarterly and annually from GVA Marquette and HousingLink. As a result of data analysis and the review of current participant rents, increased rent limits for all bedroom sizes are recommended with the exception of the zero bedroom basic standard which will remain the same.

Metro HRA's service area includes nearly 100 communities. Payment standards must be high enough to ensure program participants have access to units in all parts of the region but low enough to ensure service to as many families as possible with the funding provided. Higher payment standards result in higher subsidy costs per family and higher overall program costs. The Metro HRA has adopted exception payment standards for a number of higher cost communities to ensure participants have access to rental units in these higher cost areas. This results in higher payment standards in twelve communities (Chanhassen, Chaska, Eden Prairie, Edina, Excelsior, Golden Valley, Hopkins, Maple Grove, Minnetonka, Roseville, Shoreview and St. Anthony).

The chart below shows the new FMRs effective October 1, 2015, the current basic and exception payment standards and the recommended basic and exception payment standards:

Bedroom Size	2015 Fair Market Rent		Current Basic Payment Standards	Recommended Basic Payment Standards		Current Exception Payment Standards	Recommended Exception Payment Standards
0BR	\$648		\$651	\$651		\$675	\$700
1BR	\$804		\$830	\$850		\$875	\$880
2BR	\$1015		\$1000	\$1025		\$1090	\$1115
3BR	\$1427		\$1355	\$1430		\$1475	\$1550
4BR	\$1673		\$1575	\$1675		\$1700	\$1825
5BR	\$1924		\$1810	\$1925		\$1950	\$2100
6BR	\$2175		\$2050	\$2175		\$2200	\$2350

Funding

Funding for the Housing Choice Voucher, Continuum of Care and Housing Opportunities for People with Aids programs is provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through congressional appropriations. Funding for the Minnesota Housing Trust Fund Programs (Bridges and Rental Assistance for Anoka County) is provided by Minnesota Housing Finance Agency through State appropriations. Increases in the Fair Market Rents and payment standards, which increase the cost of rent subsidies, do not result in program funding increases for the current year. It is the responsibility of each housing authority to manage the number of families it can afford to assist within funding provided.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to this action.