



Berkeley Housing Authority

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Item 7C

NEW BUSINESS

March 10, 2022

Office of the Executive Director

To: Honorable Chair and Members of the Berkeley Housing Authority Board
From: Rachel Gonzales-Levine, Acting Executive Director
Subject: Monthly Report

Covid-19 Updates

Again for March, there have been no additional pandemic-related interim adjustments since November. The average increase for the 157 Covid-19 related adjustments that were processed has remained at \$568 per household per month.

Staff has been asked to turn in a copy of vaccine card to the HR Dept.

Increase in Payment Standard to 120% of the FMR

As reported during the Feb. 10 Board meeting, HUD has approved an expedited waiver for an increase of Payment Standard to 120% of the 2022 FMRs, through Dec. 2021. Management staff met to discuss the proper timing of implementation: new contracts will have an effective date of 3/1/2022, while existing contracts will have an effective date of 7/1/22. The Landlord Newsletter (Attachment 1) provides detailed information shared with current landlords about this increase, including that BHA can only approve the rent meeting the highest rent comp. in the Rent Reasonableness test, or in rent comps. provided by landlords.

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs)

- As of the writing of this report, BHA now has received 37 referrals of the 51 EHVs awarded, from the County Homelessness Program.
- Of those 37 referrals, 29 have been processed by staff for intake, and have participated in a Briefing, also now in receipt of their vouchers.
- 6 formerly homeless clients are now leased up in Berkeley utilizing their EHV.
- The remaining 8 referrals are in some stage of being reviewed by staff, and once paperwork is complete/background checks cleared, BHA will schedule these applicants for a Briefing.
- The County still is gathering documentation for the remaining 14 EHV referrals for BHA.

During the Feb. Board meeting, the Board expressed a desire to hear details on housing searches from the homeless advocates who are in charge of identifying units for EH Voucher holders. During the most recent twice monthly collaboration meeting, staff posed this question to those homeless advocates who work for various local agencies including Berkeley Food and Housing Project and Abode Services.

The homeless housing advocates indicated it takes approximately on average 3-5 attempts before identifying a willing landlord and successful lease up. One housing advocate indicates that she does a housing search independently, finds a potentially willing landlord, then handles the lease up process mostly remotely; another advocate shared the difficulty with presentation of a homeless person who has not had a chance to shower or change clothes, in other words hygiene is a factor, in other cases clear addiction or mental health issues.

Another advocate indicated that her strategy is to have a homeless person spend one-night stay in a hotel room prior to a landlord interview so they can clean up the day before. She also provides donated change of clothes, and interview preparation. BHA suggested that we would be willing, if funds were a factor, to help support this type of programming, if it indeed leads to more successful leaseups.

For those who are presently housed through another program, they want to move or find another housing as soon as they received the EHV voucher. A suggestion came up to convince the client to utilize the EHV voucher in their current housing unit. Portability is always an option if they wish to move.

In terms of landlord refusal to accept an EHV for several currently housed formerly homeless persons, advocates shared that landlords have already learned the quirks and eccentricities of some of their tenants; one person started a fire in two different properties; others have had mental health crises or threatened other tenants or property managers, or caused extensive damage inside a unit.

The fact is that this group of individuals come to the voucher program with an array of challenges; the housing advocates are doing everything possible including some creative mechanisms to attempt to house this population. In truth, if there were opportunity to make suggestions on improvements to the EHV program, at the top of my list would be to re-implement the Moderate Rehab SRO program, which provides extensive on-site services to those coming off the streets, readying them for independence, and the possibility of a voucher—while working in much the same way as the voucher program, with residents paying 30% of their adjusted income towards rent.

All of this said, other local PHA's are equally as challenged: while BHA has 12% of our EHV's leased up, the total County lease up rate currently is 6%.

Port-out Questionnaire

The Board expressed an interest in learning about reasons why BHA program participants choose to port out of Berkeley's jurisdiction utilizing their Housing Choice Voucher. Staff has started gathering a "Portability Supplemental Questionnaire" (Attachment 2), to obtain this information. A sampling of the responses thus far:

- Desire to live closer to family or work (majority of respondents)
- Berkeley is too expensive (moving to Sacramento)
- Felt unsafe (moving to San Ramon)
- Port out jurisdictions in addition to those listed above: So. Nevada Housing Authority; Marin County; Pittsburg; Oakland.

Dashboard

Berkeley Housing Authority
50058 Reporting

		Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22
A	Utilization (Leased/Total Units)	1585/1975	1521/1975	1488/1975	1483/1975	1490/1975	1477/1975
	In Units (%)	80.25%	77.01%	75.34%	75.09%	75.44%	74.78%
	In Dollars (%)	96.20%	95.10%	94.80%	94.40%	93.90%	93.50%
A.1	Tenant Based %	77.61%	74.66%	73.19%	72.58%	72.58%	72.39%
	(Leased/Total Units)	1265/1630	1217/1630	1193/1630	1183/1630	1183/1630	1180/1630
	Voucher issued	4		8		3	5
	New Admissions	1	2	1	1		
	Voucher expired prior to leasing						
	Voucher Ported prior to leasing						
	Vouchers searching	11	7	14	13	16	21
A.2	Project Based%	87.87%	87.87%	87.54%	88.20%	90.49%	86.56%
	(Units)	268/305	268/305	267/305	269/305	276/305	264/305
A.3	VASH (%)	65.00%	65.00%	70.00%	77.50%	77.50%	82.50%
	(Leased/Total Units)	29/40	29/40	28/40	31/40	31/40	33/40
	Voucher issued	1					
	New Admissions	0	0	1	2	2	
	Voucher expired prior to leasing	1	0				
	Voucher Ported prior to leasing						
	Vouchers searching	8	8	7	5	3	3
B	Mainstream (%)	67.03%	68.13%	62.64%	68.13%	72.53%	75.82%
	(Leased/Total Units)	61/91	62/91	57/91	62/91	66/91	69/91
	Voucher issued	3		4	2	2	2
	New Admissions	1	4	1	6	4	1
	Voucher expired prior to leasing	2				2	
	Voucher Ported prior to leasing						
	Vouchers searching	20	16	19	15	11	12
C	EHV (%)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.96%	5.88%	7.84%
	(Leased/Total Units)	0/51	0/51	0/51	1/51	3/51	4/51
	Voucher issued			7	9	7	
	New Admissions				1	2	1
	Voucher expired prior to leasing						
	Voucher Ported prior to leasing						
	Vouchers searching			7	15	20	19
D	Terminations	72	12	11	8	5	8
E	Success Rate	55%	55%	53%	53%	56%	51%

F	New Landlords/Unit		2	3	2	5	3	3
G	Mod Rehab %		85.71%	85.71%	83.67%	82.65%	82.65%	81.63%
	(Units)		84/98	84/98	82/98	81/98	81/98	80/98
H	Project Move Up		9/10	9/10	10/10	10/10	10/10	2/10
I	FSS		37 (23 enrolled, 3 graduated, 11 pending)	37 (23 enrolled, 3 graduated, 11 pending)	37 (23 enrolled, 3 graduated, 11 pending)	37 (23 enrolled, 3 graduated, 11 pending)	37 (23 enrolled, 3 graduated, 11 pending)	37 (23 enrolled, 3 graduated, 11 pending)
J	Port Ins (BHA Currently Absorbing)		10	6	2	2	2	2
	Port Outs (Managed by other PHAs)		0	0	2	3	1	2
K	Late/Missing Annual Recert		74	28	28	23	21	28
L	Late HQS		666	711	711	765	815	729
M	Rent Increases - Received		6	7	8	30	8	5
	Rent Increases - Processed		6	7	8	30	8	5
N	Re-exams - Processed		164	180	216	159	173	
O	# of disabled in program		881	897	904	912	911	910
	# of elderly in program		680	684	687	688	695	695
	# of families in program		397	399	401	403	406	403
	# of eman. yth in prog		14	14	14	15	15	15
	# of HOPWA in program		10	10	10	10	10	10
P	# of Families on WL		603	597	587	579	567	567

Attachment:

1. Landlord Winter 2022 Newsletter
2. Port out Questionnaire



Berkeley Housing Authority

BHA Landlord Newsletter Winter 2022



Payment Standards Update: In our last newsletter, we shared that BHA's Payment Standards were set at 110% of the Fair Market Rents for Calendar Year 2022, which was the highest allowable at the time. However, HUD recognizes that in high cost areas, voucher holders are having a difficult time finding units, and invited housing authorities to apply for a waiver to go up to 120% of the FMRs. We are pleased to share HUD approved our request; for New Lease ups/New Contracts, the 120% Payment Standard will be in effect on March 1, 2022; for Existing Contracts, the 120% Payment Standard will be in effect on July 1, 2022.

The 120% Payment Standard figures *only pertain to leaseups in the Housing Choice Voucher Program ("HCV" also called Tenant-based vouchers)*. The Project-based Section 8 and BMR/Tax Credit units are not eligible for this increase.

Payment Standards for all existing HCV contracts through June 30:

Studios: \$1,691 1 BR: \$2,039 2 BR: \$2,501 3 BR: \$3,306 4 BR: \$3,935

NEW Payment Standards eff. March 1-New Contracts & July 1-Existing Contracts (HCV Only):

Studios: \$1,845 1 BR: \$2,224 2 BR: \$2,728 3 BR: \$3,607 4 BR: \$4,293

We regret that this waiver authority was not provided prior to our establishing new Payment Standards effective Jan. 1 at 110% of the FMR, and hope that for landlords who were granted rent increases thus far, you will understand this was out of our sphere of control. Further, HUD has only approved these rates through the end of the Calendar Year 2022.

Remember that even though the Payment Standards are now set at higher rates than previously, the asking rent, whether for rent increases or new contracts, must pass our Rent Reasonableness (rent comp comparison) test, as required by HUD. If the Rent Comps in our database do not reflect the requested rent, *we will only approve rent equivalent to the highest figure on the Rent Comp. report*—you are also free to provide Rent Comps.

Rent Increases: To request a rent increase, at least 60 days prior to the contract anniversary (generally the lease start date), provide a copy of the 60 day Notice of Intent to Increase Rent, as required by State law, both to your tenant and the Housing Specialist (see below), along with a Unit Characteristics Survey, found on our website at www.cityofberkeley.info/bha. Look under the "For Landlords" section of the website, then click on "Rent Increase Information."

Tax Records/1099's: 1099 Forms were mailed on January 26th. If you did not receive or have corrections on your 2021-1099 MISC, please contact Maggie Yan at wyan@cityofberkeley.info or (5101) 981-5477.

Inspections and Unit Safety Reminders: As we have previously announced, and as required by HUD, BHA Annual Inspections have started up again, effective Jan. 1, 2022. Please be on the lookout for letters from Outsourcetit Inc., indicating your inspection date. Please note that in the meantime, you (and your tenant) have the right to request a Special Inspection at any time, should you have concerns about your unit. Email Krystal Coleman at kcoleman@cityofberkeley.info to schedule a Special Inspection. Please also continue to send RTA forms for new unit move in inspections to Krystal—scan and email or drop box is fine!

For **heating systems** that are non-operable, when it is colder than 60 degrees outside, this will result in an Emergency Fail and reinspection the next day. Some landlords may wish to provide space heaters while awaiting the repair, however, please remind tenants to plug space heaters directly into a properly working outlet only, rather than using extension cords—to avoid fire hazard. In the days leading to a scheduled inspection, is a good time to test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, as these are common fail items.

Landlord Incentives! BHA continues to provide financial incentives for the following:

- (1) **Up to \$1,500 in Unit Turnover Program funds:** to cover expenses to ready a vacant unit for lease up in our Housing Choice Voucher Program (note: Project-based, Moderate Rehab, BMR properties, and new luxury developments not eligible to apply). You will be contacted by BHA staff after an RTA (move-in inspection). *Keep your receipts when prepping a unit for a new vacancy!*
- (2) **\$1,750 New Emergency Housing Voucher Program Signing Bonus:** for entering into lease with those at-Risk of Homelessness or Homeless. Also provided: case management services from a local housing advocacy agency connected to each of the homeless households desperately needing a place to call home.
- (3) **\$1,000 Mainstream Voucher Program Signing Bonus:** for landlords willing to house formerly homeless households. The North County Housing Resource Center, operated by Bay Area Community Services (BACS) provides the bonus as well as case management resources.

For more information on these incentives, or with questions about our incentives program, please send an email to: bha@cityofberkeley.info.

Document Dropboxes! Located just outside the front door of our office at 1947 Center Street, and inside the building, to the left of the front doors, are BHA's two document drop boxes for BHA landlords and clients. The drop boxes are checked regularly Mondays through Thursdays. Please use the box when you are not able to email or fax documents to staff. Our fax number is 510-981-5480.

Contacting BHA Staff: please reach out to staff with questions, or to schedule a phone meeting, or contactless appointment.

Staff	Position/Client Last Name Begins with:	Phone: 510-981-	Email: @cityofberkeley.info
Lynda DeShazier	Housing Specialist A, B, C, D, K, L, O	5482	ldeshazier
Tracy Jackson	Housing Specialist E, F, G, H, I, J, M, N	5486	tjackson
Althea Maybon	Housing Specialist Mc, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z	5478	amaybon
Tilda Barnes	Housing Choice Voucher Sup./New Contracts/Ports/Mod Rehab.	5484	tbarnes
Tyra Pumphrey	Receptionist	5470	tpumphrey
Krystal Coleman	Inspections Desk	5490	kcoleman
Celinda Aguilar-Vasquez	Acting Mgmt. Analyst/Exec. Assistant/FSS Coordinator	5483	caguilar-vasquez
Jesy Yturralde	Finance Manager	5488	jyturralde
Jayla Fuentesilla	Office Asst. II/Accounting	5474	bfuentesilla
Maggie Wang	Accountant	5477	ywang
Rachel Gonzales-Levine	Acting Executive Director	5485	rgonzales-levine

BHA will be closed: May 19 (Malcolm X Day); May 30 (Memorial Day); June 20 (Juneteenth); closed every Friday.

 *Property Owners, for partnering with BHA in housing those less fortunate in our community! We couldn't do it without you—and we are grateful!*



Berkeley Housing Authority
PORTABILITY SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

I am moving to (City or County): _____ **# Bedrooms on Voucher:** _____

How long did you use your Voucher to rent a unit in Berkeley:

- () Never leased up in Berkeley () 1 year () 2 to 5 years
 () 5 – 10 years () More than 10 years

I am transferring my Voucher outside of Berkeley because:

[] Primary reasons why I am moving outside of Berkeley _____

Other Reasons (Check all that apply):

- [] I want to live close(r) to () Work () School () Family
- [] Berkeley is too expensive for my family
- [] I need a wheelchair accessible unit
- [] I want to use my voucher in the unit where I currently live
- [] I tried and could not find a unit in Berkeley within the Payment Standard
 () BHA unit listing () Craigs List () _____
- [] I want to participate in a Home Ownership program offered by the receiving Housing Authority
- [] I desire housing with extra amenities (check all that apply):
- [] Gym/Work-Out Room on Site [] Swimming Pool
 [] Club House [] Child Play Area [] Other: _____

Check any that apply: [] The head of household or spouse is Elderly (62 or older)
 [] The head of household or spouse is Disabled
 [] There are children under 18 in my household; how many? ____

Head of Household age: _____

I am employed [] Yes [] No
 I am seeking work [] Yes [] No

**Thank you for sharing this information. Best wishes with your tenancy in the new jurisdiction.
 Berkeley is a great City to live, work, and raise a family. We welcome you back at any time!**