




**Berkeley Housing Authority**

1901 Fairview St., Berkeley, CA 94703  
Telephone: (510) 981 5470 Fax: (510) 981 5480

Office of the Executive Director

Item 5

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: February 13, 2014  
To: Honorable Chairperson and  
Members of the Berkeley Housing Authority Board  
From: Tia M. Ingram, Executive Director   
Subject: Status of Berkeley Housing Authority Operations

This report summarizes the highlights of our current activities:

**ADMINISTRATIVE/HUD**

I. FY 2014 Annual Recertification/Inspection Reporting

HUD continues to report problems with the software, and delays in updating data normally reported on a monthly basis; data for data for the period ending January 31<sup>st</sup> is not available.

II. 2014 Annual Plan/5-Year Plan

This year marks the first Annual Plan submission as a Section 8 only authority. The change is significant in that we are only required to review and revise the Administrative Plan (S8 discretionary policies); we will not have to revise the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy, nor will we have to develop a Capital Improvement plan (both apply exclusively to the Public Housing program). We will attempt to establish a Resident Advisory Board comprised of S8 program participants.

With this Administrative Plan we are focused on (a) updates to comply with new HUD rules, and (b) clarification of policies defined by staff and/or participants as unclear or ambiguous in its intent. An overriding theme will be a plan with policies that eliminate factors that create an artificial reality of normal rental obligations. For example, we will be refining our policies with regard to calculating annual income, especially for households with seasonal employment. The change will allow us to factor in anticipated changes in income over the 12 month period, and determine the blended family rent for the year. This will eliminate the need to process multiple certifications in a single year. We will also explore options for addressing concerns raised by owners with regard to unit inspections and rent increases.

The agency is also due to submit our 5-Year Plan to HUD, simultaneous with the Annual Plan.

### III. HUD Other

- a. Memorandum of Understanding. The last outstanding deliverable on the MOU with HUD (Low Income Public Housing Program (LIPH)) is completion of the disposition project. As required, we submitted the quarterly report due on January 15<sup>th</sup>; we look forward to one final report – advising the completion of the disposition project, and close out of the LIPH program.
- b. Use of Proceeds. We had two requests to HUD to approve use of proceeds for S8 operations. The first request – to use proceeds to cover operating deficits in the S8 program was approved on Dec. 22, 2010; the second request – to use proceeds to cover the investment associated with the relocation of the office was approved on Jan. 15, 2014.
- c. Tenant Protection Vouchers. We advised you previously that HUD had awarded Strawberry Creek Lodge 34 “enhanced” Tenant Protection vouchers due to the property’s expired HUD Section 202 funding, and that the award would result in an increase in BHA’s allocation of vouchers of same amount. Note: the allocation of 34 may be reduced, as 2 households are already subsidized; and 5 have died or moved away in the intervening months since identified by SCL as in need of a Tenant Protection Voucher. We continue to await receipt of an amended Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) from HUD – the official award to BHA of an additional 34 vouchers - as a result of the award to the Strawberry Creek Lodge project. (Further details on the project below and later in the agenda.)

## OPERATIONS

1. Office Move. Staff continues to settle into the new office. The last outstanding task is installation of the filing system (hardware) – and placement of the 2,000+ active and terminated files. The move budget did not include an allocation for decorations (plants, pictures, etc); individual staff members have added nice touches their space, and we are engaging staff in creative ways to add warmth to the lobby and common areas. We are postponing the open house until March – when the filing system should be fully implemented, the boxes, crates and library carts are removed, and decorations are in place.
2. Commissioner. We are once again in search of a new Commissioner. With great regret we accepted the January 29<sup>th</sup> resignation of Commissioner Richelieu Hemphill. Commissioner Hemphill served the Board during a time where we grappled with several complex issues involving the disposition project; his insightful comments and questions contributed significantly to the project.
3. Staff Development. Two training opportunities are being offered for staff:
  - a. Darkness to Light: this is a program available via the Berkeley Downtown YMCA, and brought to us by Vice-Chair Cox. The program (training) is about preventing child sexual abuse. Survivors from all cultures and economic classes share their stories – but in a positive way – how they moved past it. It also addresses the incredible changes we have already made in our country and that our abuse is down because of the preventative measures we have put in place. This information can be very beneficial as our staff interacts with clients with certain needs, and not all have reliable or comprehensive support systems.

- b. Mental Health: this training will be administered by a representative of the City's Mental Health Department. The intent is to educate staff on the services offered by the City, available in the community, and to offer tips on dealing with some of our more challenged disabled clients.
3. S8 Leasing/Available Unit Listing. We continue to focus efforts on owner retention/expansion as a means of increasing the supply of units available to households with S8 rental assistance. Our weekly available unit listing report offered few opportunities last year, averaging 8-12 units. I am pleased to report a significant increase – likely due largely to the October 2014 increase in Fair Market Rents (FMRs), and BHA Payment Standards; the report from February 6 includes one 1-bedroom unit; fourteen 2-bedroom units; and six 3-bedroom units.
4. S8 Project-based Vouchers. As shared previously, administration of a “project based” voucher program is optional, with no additional funding or assistance from HUD. Notwithstanding the fact that there was no round of awards in January or February 2014, considerable staff effort has been/will be required to administer this component of our S8 program:
  - a. Strawberry Creek Lodge. Staff has been engaged in meetings, telephone conversations, and email exchanges in response to needs from the property sponsors. In addition, staff has provided the required notice to the 32 households that the project sponsor advised were ineligible to receive Tenant Protection Voucher assistance. By HUD regulation, PHA must afford these households an opportunity to have the calculation/determination reviewed by PHA staff.

Staff has begun the process of determining eligibility for the 28 households that will receive the Tenant Protection Voucher rental assistance. The goal is to complete the process by the end of the month, so that assistance can begin March 1<sup>st</sup>. This represents a win-win-win situation: the senior households continue to benefit from an affordable rent; the property benefits from continued cash flow; and BHA increases lease-up and begins earning Administrative Fee.

- b. Berkeley 75, LP. We have initiated the process of reaching out to applicants on the 3 and 4 bedroom Project Based wait list to determine (a) eligibility for admission to the S8 program, and (b) interest in a unit at the to-be rehabilitated development. We typically provide referrals to the leasing agent at a 4 (applicants) to 1 (vacancy) ratio; thus considerable effort will be required to provide the approximately 70 potential households. BHA will begin earning admin fee (\$69 per month) only after the units are rehabilitated, units are inspected, a Master HAP contract signed, and a PBS8 assisted tenancy is initiated.
    - c. Re-leasing Activity. BHA performs a function as leasing agent in the Project Based voucher program. We are diligent in managing our wait list, and we recently completed an update. Thus, more current contact information for applicants is provided to Property Managers with a vacancy in one of the project-based units they are filling. The applicant population in general tends to be “mobile” as they move residences at a relatively high pace. We experienced a recent uptick over the past few months, averaging 3-4 vacancies per month (combined, all projects). We have performed as required, but not granted requests from projects for additional (extra) applicants they can *hold* – pending the next vacancy.

5. Community Relations

- a. Human Welfare and Community Action Commission (HWCAC). The HWCAC has been discussing two housing programs administered by BHA: the Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Program (Mod Rehab) and the Section 8 Voucher program, and requested that the Executive Director attend a commission meeting. Ms. Ingram is an invited guest for the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- b. Berkeley Unified School District. We have scheduled a meeting with Dr. Donald Evans, BUSD Superintendent to welcome him to his position, and discuss ways we can collaborate to better serve the housing and educational needs of our mutual clients.
- c. Southwest Berkeley Development Corporation. At the request of President George Pearson, a meeting was scheduled to discuss the public housing disposition project, and other concerns about affordable housing in Berkeley. Unfortunately, Mr. Pearson had an emergency, and the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting has been rescheduled to February 12.

**AUTHORITY OWNED HOUSING**

As of the date of this writing (February 6<sup>th</sup>), we anticipate concluding the transfer of the 75 BHA owned rental units to The Related Company of CA/Berkeley 75, and completion of the disposition process effective February 14, 2014.

As we approach this milestone, and reflect on the past five years we are pleased to have had the opportunity to service our residents. While we lacked funds to invest in upgrades of the properties, we are very proud of the level of service and attention we gave to establishing relationships with our residents, responding to their maintenance needs, and celebrating the life changes they experienced. Much of our success is due to the efforts of David Solis, Property Manager who is commended for his efforts on behalf of BHA and more important, our residents.

**CONTACT PERSON**

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
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Oral Report.