

Progress Report on Five-Year Plan

The City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment Division has worked toward achieving the goals outlined in the Five-Year Plan. Staff and Council/Public Housing Authority Commission have embraced the challenging steps involved in working toward promoting affordable housing, creating opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and the availability of an affordable living environment free from discrimination.

Progress towards each goal in the five-year plan ending 2018

Goal One: Assist the availability of affordable, decent, safe and affordable housing.

Since the late 1990s and through the early 2000s the City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment Division applied for Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) when the opportunity arose. While the opportunities to increase our voucher count have not existed in a long time, the Housing Division has managed to utilize close to 100 percent of the vouchers HUD has allocated to Chandler during this period. In an economic environment that has presented our programs with uncertainties in HUD funding, the Housing Choice Voucher program families served has been fairly steady. The Housing Choice Voucher program budget is consistently managed to assure that Chandler has the best chance to utilize all 486 vouchers.

The vacancy rate for Public Housing continued to remain steady, with only approximately a 0.72% vacancy rate over the preceding annual term between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017. Significant improvement in the vacancy rate is difficult to achieve, due to the migratory nature of the low-income population that we serve. Staff continues to monitor this area daily to turn units around and fill vacancies as quickly as possible. This year, staff has improved unit turnaround times, resulting in the vacancy rate reduced by half from 1.43% of the previous term.

Over the past five-years, the City of Chandler acquired three (3) 2-bedroom unit condos and recently completed construction on a rental duplex as part of our non-federally subsidized homes. The three condos are in HOA communities and the duplex is near downtown Chandler. The additional affordable housing stock will be rented at below market rents that will be affordable to families that make between 50%-80% of area medium income. They are currently providing a new nonfederal income stream for our Division.

The Housing Division also owns two Townhomes that were acquired with HOME funds. The two and three bedroom units will supply additional affordable housing for families that earn less than 80% of area medium income for 15 years.

We are a high performing Housing Authority in the Low Rent Public Housing Program and have been for the past 5 years.

Resident Advisory Board

As per federal requirements, the Housing Division established a Resident Advisory Board (RAB) comprised of both Public Housing residents and HCV Program participants to review the Annual PHA Plan and provide comments to program policies. Staff received written comments from an HCV participant regarding landlord outreach to recruit additional landlords for the HCV Program. The comments were reviewed and staff agreed with outreach efforts that were noted and will continue to pursue HCV Program efforts to draw interest to the HCV Program from multi-family property owners and property managers as well as private landlords.

Goal Two: Improve community quality of life and economic vitality.

At the time of the publication of this report, the City of Chandler, Housing and Redevelopment Division was recognized as a High Performing Housing Authority with a PHAS score of 93 in Public Housing.

In the previous five-years, ending FY 2014, the City of Chandler invested considerable time and resources in training staff to become knowledgeable in the new methods necessary to promote a good work environment for employees that will ultimately benefit the customer. The Authority continues to upgrade our housing software systems and will purchase an on-line application module for our HCV and public housing programs. In addition, our Web Page is currently being upgraded. An in-house landlord outreach program, as well as the subscription use and links to “Go Section8.com” are tools that have been a significant asset to staff, the public and other housing entities.

The Housing Authority operates in a fiscally prudent manner. The City of Chandler general fund contributes \$135,000 in annual ongoing funding, to support and help shore up the HUD Public Housing shortfall in subsidy. Our current Public Housing reserve is over one million dollars. These actions have helped to stabilize our maintenance and administrative financial picture. Staff has also been successful in getting and implementing CDBG grants for both the Capital Program and the Housing Youth program. These grant funds augment and improve both our housing stock and service offerings for our Public Housing Youth Program.

Management staff is keeping an eye towards diversifying financial interests in our HUD portfolio. Tax Credit projects may play a role in transforming the Housing Authority’s revenue stream in the future.

Staff will continue to work towards expanding the availability and improving the overall quality of the affordable housing stock by continuing to modernize public housing and supporting efforts to improve the overall quality of the general housing stock. In 2016, the Housing Authority was successful in keeping our elderly Kingston Arms Apartments designated for the elderly. We also continue to upgrade fencing and landscaping at our sites, which adds both to security and curb appeal of our housing products.

Chandler has expanded the housing programs stock through the creation of housing location maps, landlord outreach, and by consistently monitoring the payment standard for the Housing Choice Voucher program. In 2017, our Housing Division adjusted the payment standards to adjust for the recent increases in our local market rents.

We also work closely with nonprofit homeownership programs and our Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program to create Individual Development Account opportunities and FSS Escrow accounts to provide both financial and education support to prospective new homeowners.

Through the upgrades and exterior improvements made to the public housing units, the tenants have a renewed respect for the developments. Lighting improvements, fencing improvements and new landscaping have increased the overall security and look of each development. Our flat rent program encourages higher income residents to stay or join the public housing program. Our partnership with the Chandler Police Department also provides a direct link to their resources to help screen all tenants and to address and mitigate problems as they arise. The resident council has also become attuned to making suggestions on improving the housing living environment in conjunction with the resident beautification participants.

As of December 31, 2017, Chandler is smoke-free on all public housing sites. In the last annual plan submitted to HUD on April 17, 2017, Chandler's smoke free policy was submitted as required per federal regulation prior to HUD's July 31, 2018 deadline.

The Family Investment Center (FIC) rehabilitation will be completed the end of 2018. Reconfiguration of the space will help enhance service for our youth program.

Goal Three: Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of families and individuals.

The Housing Authority has annually applied for and received a Public Housing/Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator grant since FY 2011. This program strengthens our existing Housing Choice Voucher and Public housing programs and provides additional links to accredited higher education and job training skills. Currently, 120 families participate in the FSS programs.

Most discretionary policies and programs are created to promote self-sufficiency of tenants through a system of comprehensive supportive programs. Staff works to assist housing residents that need assistance by matching resources to promote tenant education and self-sufficiency. Our principle mission is "affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing" in conjunction with meeting HUD rules and policies augmented with preferential local controls. We support this mission through other social service/educational programs, which include the Family Investment Center, Youth Recreation Program, the Capital Improvement Program, and Social Service partnerships with other social service providers.

We have set systems in place to maintain a high voucher utilization rate and plan to work within the HUD guidelines to maximize the utilization of the Housing Choice Voucher program vouchers and/or budget. Maintaining our utilization rate will continue to be a challenge in 2018, as we work to maintain our ability to service those in need with the peculiar demands of managing varying costs within a budget based system of funding. In

2018, the Chandler Housing Division is cautiously optimistic in our outlook for our next HUD budget allocation.

Goal Four: Ensure Equal Opportunity in Housing for all Americans.

In 2015, the Housing Authority purged the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher waiting list for the first time in 2 ½ years. The waiting list for Public Housing remains open and the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list has been closed since it was opened in early January 2016 for a one week period. We anticipate closing the Public Housing waiting list in the near future in an effort to reduce the amount of time between application and lease-up. In 2018, we plan to open the HCV waiting list for a short period of time. When we open waiting lists, the information is published in the Arizona Republic (English) and in a Spanish newspaper. Large portions of our clientele primarily speak Spanish and staff wants to reach out to this community. Many of our forms and publications are available in English and Spanish. The Public Housing waiting list for low-rent housing continues to be a resource for potential residents. As mentioned earlier, Chandler Housing Authority has an elderly designated apartment complex. This assures that the elderly have a living environment that is suitable and sustainable for their specialized needs. In 2008, we expanded our senior housing options by operating a 4-unit scattered site senior program that complements our existing public housing program. The new Scattered Site Senior Housing program caters to a senior population that makes just under the 80% of area median income. This program is based on an annual flat affordable rent that is not subsidized by HUD.

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

In response to the federal requirement for an expansion of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Housing Division implemented revised policies in both the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Public Housing Programs that expanded awareness of rights under the Act. The Housing Division provides awareness and notification to VAWA victims through written information regarding their rights when a family completes a pre-application to be put on a waiting list(s), during the briefing in the packet for new admissions, during the annual reexamination process, at termination or notification of eviction, at denial of assistance or admission, and upon request or when staff suspects a family member may qualify for VAWA. The VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights is an attachment and considered part of the Public Housing lease agreement. The VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights document is available in English and Spanish, as well as other languages upon request.

When a family requests VAWA protections, victim's rights information is provided to connect the family with resources. An emergency transfer policy was put in place for both Public Housing and the HCV Program to provide protections and additional housing opportunities for victims of domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence.

All information related to families requesting VAWA protections is kept confidential and not entered into a database or other format available to staff or the general public. It is the policy of the PHA to maintain the highest level of security possible for all families on the waiting list or participating in housing programs.