



Boards of Commissioners Update

August 2020

Boards of Commissioners Update – August 2020

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BOARD UPDATE

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1331 Fulton Mall

Fresno, California 93721

TTY (800) 735-2929

www.fresnohousing.org

TO: Boards of Commissioners

Fresno Housing Authority

DATE: August 14, 2020

AUTHOR: Aurora Ibarra

FROM: Preston Prince, CEO/Executive Director

SUBJECT: Update on 2020 Leasing and Housing Assistance Payments for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

Executive Summary

The purpose of this memo is to update the Boards of Commissioners on June Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) and leasing activities, and projections for the remainder of 2020.

Leasing Update

Staff are reviewing applicant files and issuing vouchers remotely. Applicants are viewing the new online video briefings, using informational guides, and meeting with FH Staff for phone briefings, as needed. Extensions on search timelines for families who currently hold a voucher are granted to mitigate some of the challenges families may be experiencing related to COVID-19. The department also continues its landlord outreach strategies to recruit potential landlords who would provide leasing opportunities for our families.

Staff continues to evaluate ways to add efficiencies to the leasing process, including meeting with existing and potential vendors to streamline leasing activities for applicants and FH staff. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and IT departments are also exploring software that will simplify the document-signing process for applicants.

With the availability of CARES Act funding for the HCV program, staff are strategizing on eligible uses of funds to increase and facilitate leasing during the pandemic. Some strategies explored include landlord incentives, housing navigation, and housing retention services.

City HCV

HAP expenditures for the month of June are projected to be \$4,225,072 with a HAP utilization rate for the month of June of 98.1%. The overall projected HAP utilization rate is 97.7%, which would earn the Agency maximum points for leasing under SEMAP. As part of COVID waivers granted to PHAs across the nation, HUD informed our agency that we could use 2019 SEMAP score for the 2020 reporting year (which was High Performer) due to pandemic related delays

and we elected to do so. Staff continues to use the SEMAP scoring factors as a guide to self-monitor program performance.

Current voucher utilization for the month of June is 99.1% with an overall projected voucher utilization for CY 2020 of 98.1%.

County HCV

HAP expenditures for the month of June are projected to be \$3,270,350 with a HAP utilization rate for the month of June of 99.4%. The overall projected HAP utilization rate is 98.5%, which would earn the Agency maximum points for leasing under SEMAP. HUD informed our agency that we could use 2019 SEMAP score for the 2020 reporting year (which was High Performer) due to pandemic related delays and we agreed to do so. Staff continues to use the SEMAP scoring factors as a guiding tool to self-monitor program performance.

Current voucher utilization for the month of June is 97.5% with an overall projected voucher utilization for CY 2020 of 97.0%.

HCV Leasing and Spending Projection

CA006 Two-Year Voucher Forecasting Summary

8/13/2020

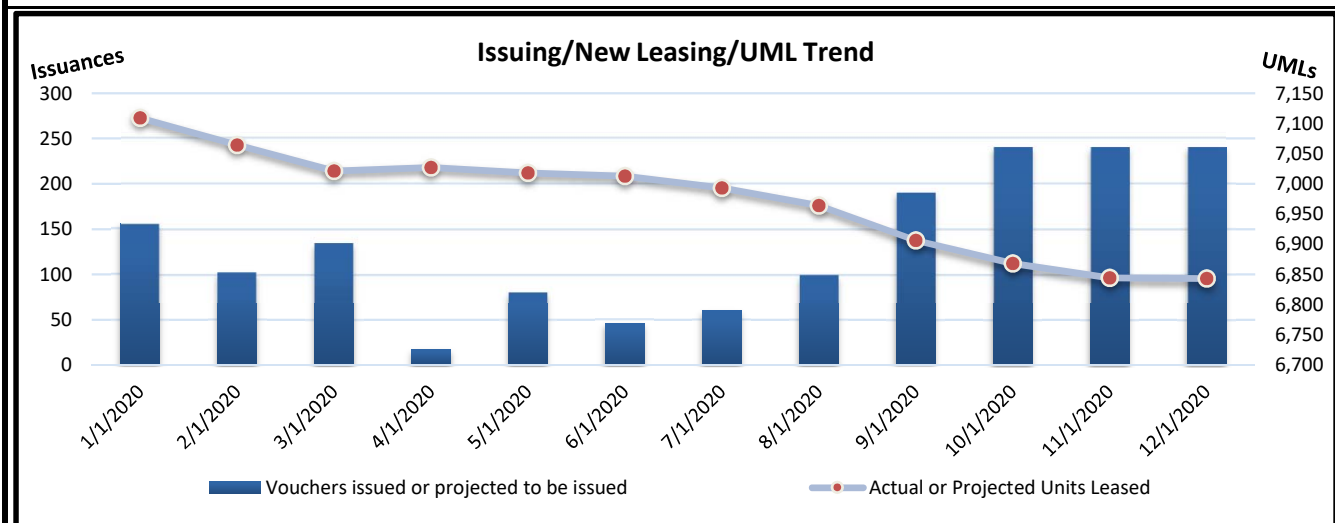
Prepared for: City Board of Commissioners

Prepared by: Housing Choice Department

Using the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Two-Year Tool, which allows a user to examine a PHA's voucher program under a variety of leasing, per-unit cost (PUC), and other key program scenarios, the attached tool estimates the program to end the current year with \$759,778, or 2% of budget authority. This scenario relies upon the following key variables:

Success Rate	Attrition Rate	Time from Issuance to HAP Effective Date	
(How many issued vouchers will go to HAP)	(What percent of participants annually leave)	(How fast do successful issuances lease up)	
55%	7.8%	Leased in	Percent
		0-30 Days	8%
2020 PUC		31-60 Days	25%
(Average monthly cost of a voucher - 2020)		61-90 Days	20%
\$605		91-120 Days	16%
		121-150 Days	31%

Please see the below graph, which shows issued vouchers and associated leasing, as well as the total program UMLs, which takes into account program attrition:



The City Program had no HAP offset this year. Additionally, the higher of this year's leased units (98.1%) or dollars (97.7%) is 98.1%, indicating full leasing indicator points in SEMAP. This estimate has been adjusted for VASH.

CA006 Summary

HAP expenditures for June are projected to be \$4,225,072 with a monthly HAP utilization rate of 98.1%. Current voucher utilization for the month of June was 99.1% with an overall projected voucher utilization rate for CY 2020 of 98.1%. These utilization rates have been adjusted for VASH.

HCV Leasing and Spending Projection

CA028 Two-Year Voucher Forecasting Summary

8/13/2020

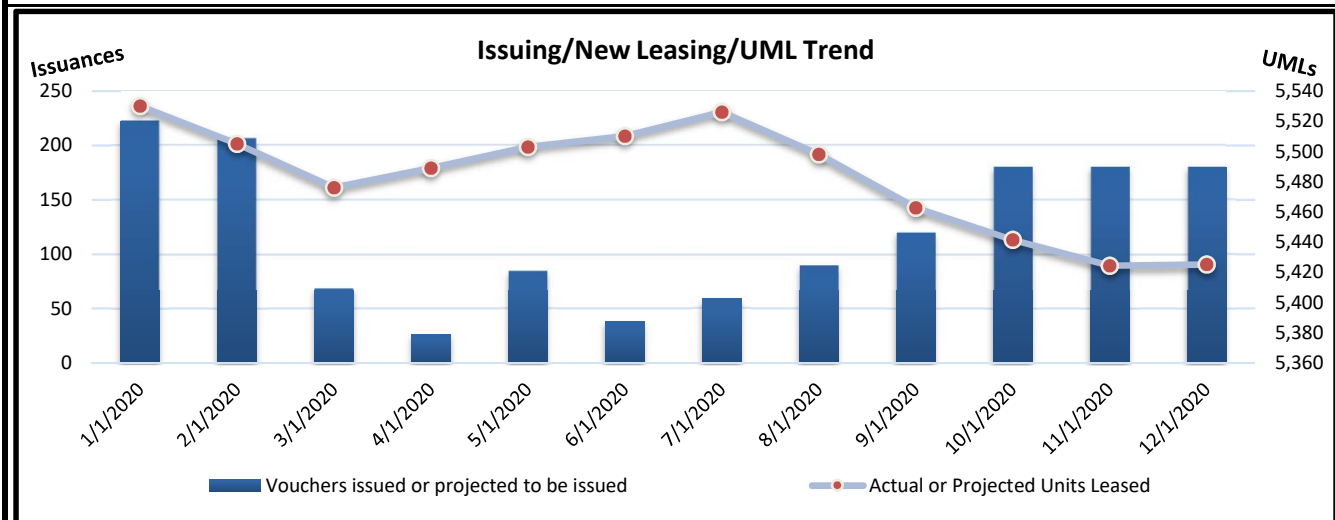
Prepared for: County Board of Commissioners

Prepared by: Housing Choice Department

Using the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Two-Year Tool, which allows a user to examine a PHA's voucher program under a variety of leasing, per-unit cost (PUC), and other key program scenarios, the attached tool estimates the program to end the current year with \$439,896, or 1% of budget authority. This scenario relies upon the following key variables:

Success Rate	Attrition Rate	Time from Issuance to HAP Effective Date	
(How many issued vouchers will go to HAP)	(What percent of participants annually leave)	(How fast do successful issuances lease up)	
55%	7.3%	Leased in	Percent
		0-30 Days	8%
2020 PUC		31-60 Days	25%
(Average monthly cost of a voucher - 2020)		61-90 Days	20%
\$591		91-120 Days	16%
		121-150 Days	31%

Please see the below graph, which shows issued vouchers and associated leasing, as well as the total program UMLs, which takes into account program attrition:



The County Program had no HAP offset this year. Additionally, the higher of this year's leased units (97.0%) or dollars (98.5%) is 98.5%, indicating full leasing indicator points in SEMAP. This is an estimate.

CA028 Summary

HAP expenditures for June are projected to be \$3,270,350 with a monthly HAP utilization rate of 99.4%. Current voucher utilization for the month of June was 97.5% with an overall projected voucher utilization rate for CY 2020 of 97%.

BOARD UPDATE

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TO: Boards of Commissioners

Fresno Housing Authority

DATE: August 14, 2020

AUTHOR: Emily De La Guerra

FROM: Preston Prince, CEO/Executive Director

SUBJECT: Fresno Housing Operating Budget as of June 30, 2020

Executive Summary

The purpose of this update is to present an overview of the financial operating results for the Fresno Housing Authority as of June 30, 2020. The attached financial report shows the consolidation of all Agency operational budgets combined into seven divisions. Projections have been incorporated into the year-to-date budget to account for the timing of cash flows and known variable expenses. These adjustments were based on historical trends and the most current information available.

The 2020 Operating Budget was approved by the Boards of Commissioners in December 2019 with total revenues of \$44.7 million and total operating expenses of \$41.9 million. As of June, total revenues are \$19.6 million, which is \$2.1 million less than anticipated. However, total operating expenses are \$2.4 million less than budgeted at \$18.3 million through June. This puts net operating income at \$1.3 million, which is \$263 thousand better than budgeted. As of June, the Agency has utilized \$577 thousand in unrestricted reserves, which is \$152 thousand worse than budgeted at this point in the year. The variance in June's unrestricted net income is mainly due to the delayed receipt of Developer Fees, which will be received in July and August.

OPERATING BUDGET

TOTAL INCOME

TOTAL EXPENSES

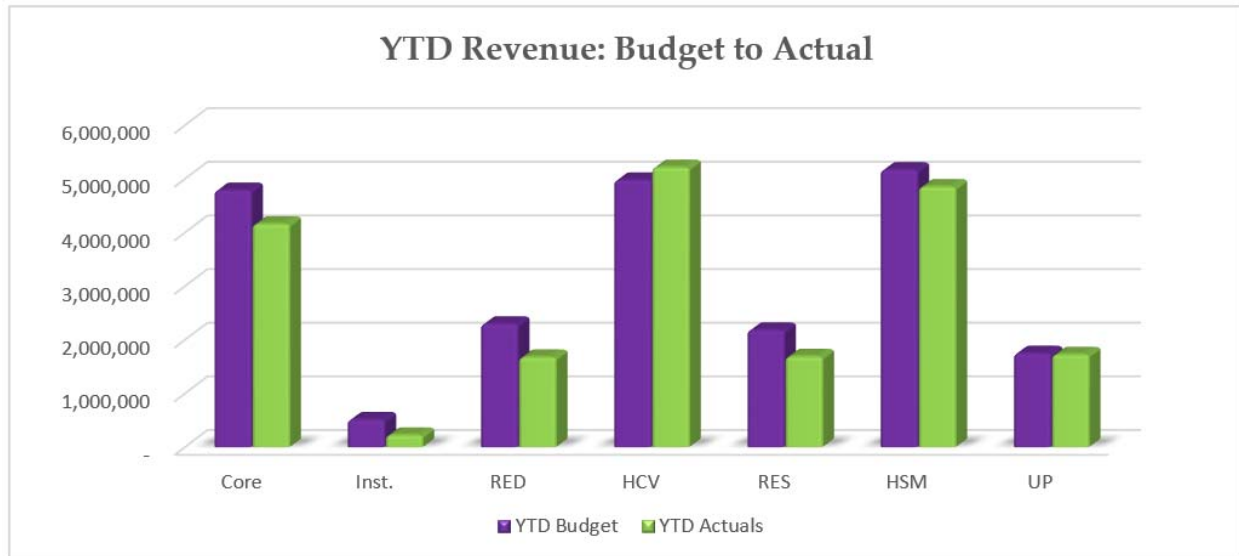
NET OPERATING INCOME

TOTAL NON-OPERATING EXPENSES

NET INCOME

UNRESTRICTED NET INCOME

Fresno Housing Authority			
Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	
44,702,882	21,687,668	19,562,866	
41,945,895	20,692,020	18,303,833	
2,756,987	995,648	1,259,033	
1,951,123	975,562	944,637	
805,864	20,087	314,396	
(14,874)	(425,672)	(577,188)	



Core - Administrative Services departments including Accounting, Executive, Human Resources and Asset Management

Inst. - Instrumentalities: Wholly-owned subsidiaries of the Agency, including HRFC, HSIC, and Silvercrest

RED - Real Estate Development: Real Estate Development and Construction Management departments

HCV - Housing Choice Voucher programs

RES - Resident Empowerment Services: Resident Services and Homeless programs

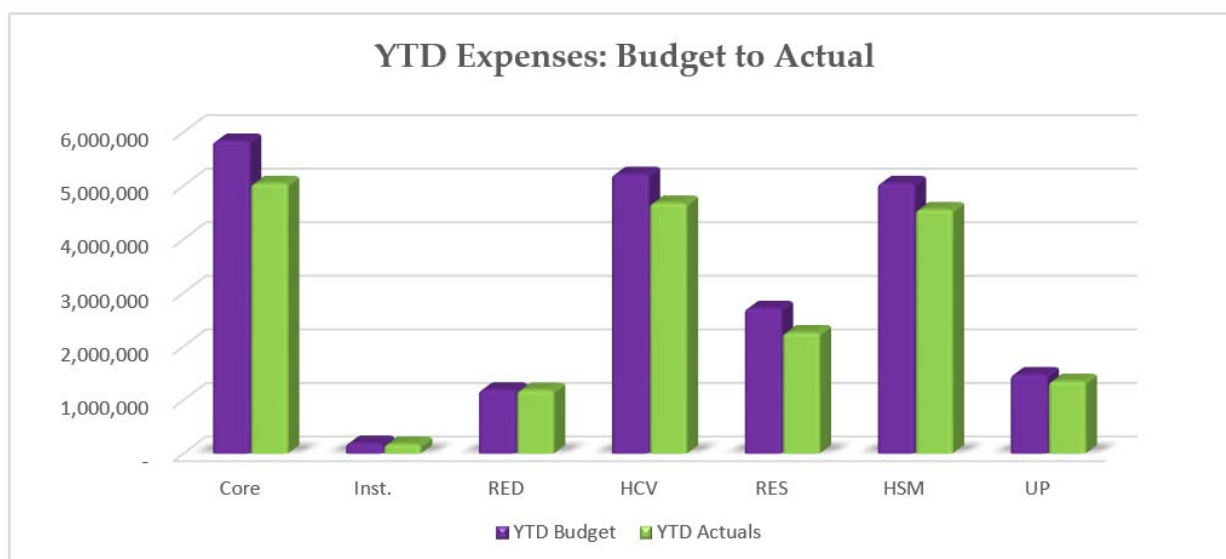
HSM - Housing Management: Restricted, subsidized properties including all public housing, farm labor and migrant properties

UP - Unrestricted Properties: Agency-owned non-subsidized properties, including Dayton, Woodside, El Cortez and San Ramon

Overall, year-to-date revenue is \$19.6 million, or 10% less than the year-to-date budget, largely due to a reduction in Admin & Management Fee Income in Core, Grant Income in RES and minor delays in developer fee revenues.

- **Core:** Admin & Management Fee Income is less than budgeted due to a reduction in allocation revenue earned from IT services. Fees for those services are collected from Agency properties and programs and the revenue is booked in Core. As of June, expenses related to IT Services have been less than budgeted, therefore, less revenue has been collected and the net effect on the overall budget is neutral.
- **RED:** \$171 thousand in developer fees for Orange Cove RAD and Mendota RAD were received in June. Staff anticipates the developer fees for 541 @ South Tower/Cedar Heights, Fenix @ Lowell, Memorial Village, Oak Grove Commons and Magnolia Commons will be received in July and August.
- **RES:** HUD Grant Income is less than budgeted, however, the net effect on the overall budget is neutral as most of these grants operate on a reimbursement basis.

Agency Expenses



Core - Administrative Services departments including Accounting, Executive, Human Resources and Asset Management

Inst. - Instrumentalities: Wholly-owned subsidiaries of the Agency, including HRFC, HSIC, and Silvercrest

RED - Real Estate Development: Real Estate Development and Construction Management departments

HCV - Housing Choice Voucher programs

RES - Resident Empowerment Services: Resident Services and Homeless programs

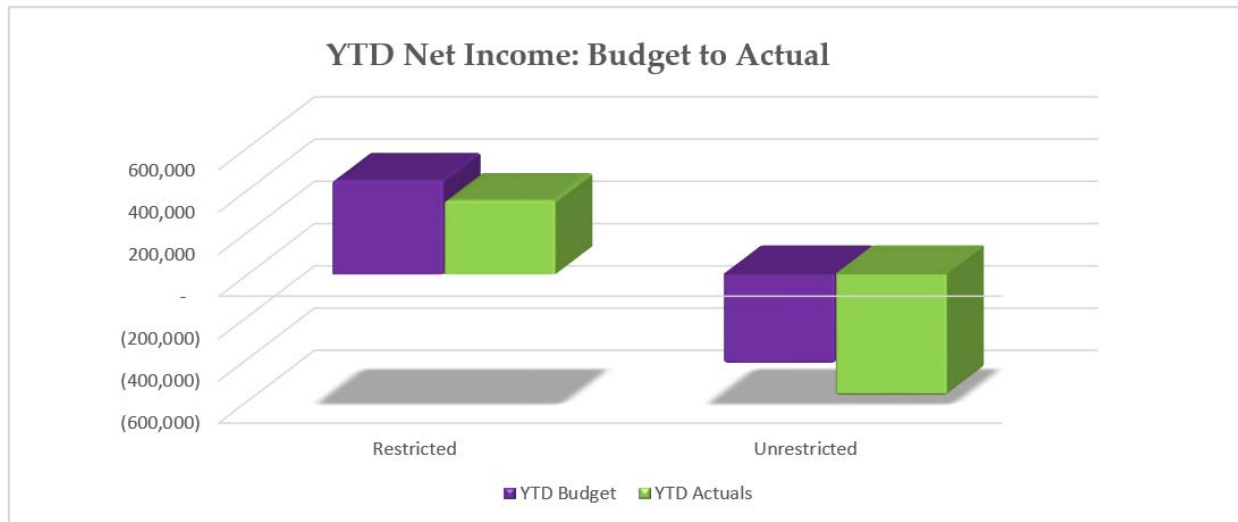
HSM - Housing Management: Restricted, subsidized properties including all public housing, farm labor and migrant properties

UP - Unrestricted Properties: Agency-owned non-subsidized properties, including Dayton, Woodside, El Cortez and San Ramon

Overall, year-to-date operating expenses are \$18.3 million and non-operating expenses are \$944 thousand, which together are about 11% lower than budgeted.

- **Agency-wide:** Payroll Expenses are approximately \$810 thousand (8%) lower than anticipated.
- **Agency-wide:** Administrative Expenses are approximately \$836 thousand (14%) lower than budgeted across the Agency. As the year progresses, IT Services, Professional & Consulting Fees and Administrative Contract costs will increase as planned projects begin and expenses are incurred.
- **RES:** Tenant Services Expenses are lower than budgeted at this point in the year. These represent tenant rent payments within homeless service and rental assistance grants. If these dollars remain unspent, they can roll over into the next grant period.

Agency Net Income



- Unrestricted net income is approximately \$151 thousand lower than budgeted as of June 2020, mainly due to the delayed receipt of Developer Fees. These fees will be received in July and August 2020.
- Restricted net income is approximately \$446 thousand higher than budgeted due to increased public housing operating subsidy revenue, lower maintenance expenses within the Housing Management Division and lower payroll expenses within the Housing Choice Voucher program.

Fresno Housing Authority
Financial Results as of June 30, 2020

	Core			Inst.			RED			HCV			RES			HSM			UP			Fresno Housing Authority			YTD \$ Variance	YTD % Variance
	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals		
OPERATING BUDGET																										
INCOME																										
NET TENANT INCOME	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,074,032	2,537,016	2,648,773	2,761,359	1,380,680	1,379,691	7,835,391	3,917,696	4,028,464	110,769	3%
INTEREST INCOME	90,000	45,000	28,150	800,000	400,000	203,538	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	890,000	445,000	231,688	(213,312)	-48%
OTHER INCOME	950,000	475,000	209,302	150,000	75,000	12,790	20,000	10,000	236,931	800	400	2,499	899,432	449,716	451,028	349,887	174,944	14,490	52,980	26,490	10,056	2,423,099	1,211,550	937,096	(274,454)	-23%
ADMIN & MANAGEMENT FEE INCOME	8,539,951	4,269,976	3,924,362	80,000	40,000	11,117	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,619,951	4,309,976	3,935,479	(374,497)	-9%
DEVELOPER FEE INCOME	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,903,245	2,287,850	1,442,363	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,903,245	2,287,850	1,442,363	(845,487)	-37%
HUD GRANT INCOME	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,909,331	4,954,666	5,195,362	3,384,006	1,692,003	751,404	4,314,643	2,157,322	1,899,203	-	-	-	17,607,980	8,803,990	7,845,969	(958,021)	-11%
OTHER GRANT INCOME	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50,000	25,000	21,449	83,025	41,513	488,378	604,464	302,232	293,671	685,727	342,864	338,309	1,423,216	711,608	1,141,807	430,199	60%
TOTAL INCOME	9,579,951	4,789,976	4,161,814	1,030,000	515,000	227,445	5,923,245	2,297,850	1,679,294	9,960,131	4,980,066	5,219,310	4,366,463	2,183,232	1,690,810	10,343,026	5,171,513	4,856,137	3,500,066	1,750,033	1,728,056	44,702,882	21,687,668	19,562,866	(2,124,802)	-10%
EXPENSES																										
PAYROLL EXPENSES	7,457,856	3,625,665	3,281,505	-	-	-	1,669,232	811,504	929,889	6,145,105	2,987,466	2,661,857	1,938,018	942,175	815,477	2,555,927	1,242,574	1,132,127	523,102	254,308	233,116	20,289,240	9,863,692	9,053,971	(809,721)	-8%
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	3,697,510	1,848,755	1,429,245	382,150	191,075	168,080	739,892	369,946	241,358	4,367,866	2,183,933	1,979,346	751,088	375,544	395,305	1,874,533	937,267	875,524	339,366	169,683	151,676	12,152,405	6,076,203	5,240,534	(835,669)	-14%
TENANT SERVICES EXPENSES	50,504	25,252	28,250	-	-	-	5,000	2,500	-	-	-	-	2,775,198	1,387,599	1,038,355	331,772	165,886	78,663	6,450	3,225	560	3,168,924	1,584,462	1,145,828	(438,634)	-28%
UTILITY EXPENSES	172,145	86,073	77,916	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,707,150	853,575	786,498	413,027	206,514	232,610	2,292,322	1,146,161	1,097,024	(49,137)	-4%
MAINTENANCE EXPENSES	459,118	229,559	210,654	-	-	4,790	5,000	2,500	10,682	81,969	40,985	33,263	10,020	5,010	8,737	2,168,196	1,084,098	868,324	731,468	365,734	300,782	3,455,771	1,727,886	1,437,232	(290,653)	-17%
TAXES & INSURANCE EXPENSES	40,364	20,182	17,529	8,900	4,450	3,749	6,200	3,100	527	7,353	3,677	3,687	-	-	1,073	402,276	201,138	249,496	122,140	61,070	53,183	587,233	293,617	329,244	35,627	12%
TOTAL EXPENSES	11,877,497	5,835,486	5,045,099	391,050	195,525	176,619	2,425,324	1,189,550	1,182,456	10,602,293	5,216,060	4,678,153	5,474,324	2,710,328	2,258,947	9,039,854	4,484,537	3,990,632	2,135,553	1,060,534	971,927	41,945,895	20,692,020	18,303,833	(2,388,186)	-12%
NET OPERATING INCOME	(2,297,546)	(1,045,510)	(883,285)	638,950	319,475	50,826	3,497,921	1,108,300	496,838	(642,162)	(235,995)	541,157	(1,107,861)	(527,096)	(568,137)	1,303,172	686,976	865,505	1,364,513	689,499	756,129	2,756,987	995,648	1,259,033	263,384	26%
NON-OPERATING EXPENSES																										
TOTAL NON-OPERATING EXPENSES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	794,876	397,438	402,650	431,150	215,575	136,331	1,226,026	613,013	538,981	(74,032)	-12%
TOTAL FINANCING EXPENSES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	326,508	163,254	163,254	398,589	199,295	242,402	725,097	362,549	405,656	43,107	12%
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS & OPERATING TRANSFERS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
TOTAL NON-OPERATING EXPENSES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,121,384	560,692	565,904	829,739	414,870	378,733	1,951,123	975,562	944,637	(30,925)	-3%
NET INCOME	(2,297,546)	(1,045,510)	(883,285)	638,950	319,475	50,826	3,497,921	1,108,300	496,838	(642,162)	(235,995)	541,157	(1,107,861)	(527,096)	(568,137)	181,788	126,284	299,601	534,774	274,630	377,396	805,864	20,087	314,396	294,309	1465%
UNRESTRICTED NET INCOME	(2,297,546)	(1,045,510)	(883,285)				3,497,921	1,108,300	496,838	(642,162)	(235,995)	-	(1,107,861)	(527,096)	(568,137)				534,774	274,630	377,396	(14,874)	(425,672)	(577,188)	(151,516)	-36%

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www.fresnohousing.org

TO: Boards of Commissioners
Fresno Housing Authority
FROM: Preston Prince
CEO/Executive Director

DATE: August 14, 2020

AUTHOR: Angie Nguyen,
Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Pilot

Executive Summary

The purpose of this memo is to update the Board of Commissioners on the progress of the 2019-2020 Strategic Goals regarding Mobility and the creation of a mobility team. Staff from the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), Resident Empowerment, and Research, Evaluation, & Analysis Lab (REAL) departments have been working collaboratively to evaluate operational workflows, increase efficiencies and develop a cohesive path that connects families to education, information and/or services.

A mobility coordinator has been meeting with families to better understand their housing needs, whether the family chooses to remain in their current neighborhood or chooses to seek housing in higher-opportunity, low-poverty neighborhoods. The mobility coordinator also works in close collaboration with staff engaged in landlord outreach to assist families with locating units in high-opportunity areas and areas with moderately priced rental units.

The data is captured by the mobility coordinator as she engages with families in the move process. The data will help evaluate whether families who utilize services experience a shorter time-to-lease, have better lease-up success rates or face better success with staying in place than families who do not use services. Data will also reveal which services are most utilized, or if families will stay leased longer.

The Agency has also been in communication and exploring options to contract services to help with creating a structure-based Mobility program focusing on best practices, technical assistance, research and evaluation

CGI Federal

The Mobility team began working with CGI Federal to design a mobility counseling program for the housing choice voucher program. CGI Federal would assist in designing the program through several phases; 1) Current Condition Analysis – Agency Operations/Current Practices; 2) Development of

Mobility Program Parameters- Defining Policies and Procedures; 3) Implementation – Strategy Plan. Efforts were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, there have been discussions to resume by mid-August.

Opportunity Insights

In 2018, OI partnered with Seattle and King County Public Housing Authorities to test a new program designed to reduce the barriers that families face in moving to higher opportunity neighborhoods. The program provided housing search assistance, connections to landlords, and financial support to voucher recipients. OI measured the program's impact using a randomized evaluation and found that they dramatically increased the number of families who moved to high-opportunity areas. Opportunity Insights (OI) is expanding CMTO evaluation to Dallas, Pittsburgh and Fresno. Fresno Housing has joined the next cohort in the Creating Moves to Opportunity (CMTO) project, a collaboration between academic researchers and public housing authorities

The Fresno CMTO partnership is intended as a multi-year collaboration that would include three phases: 1) Planning, design, and resource development for program services; 2) Implementation of services through a randomized design; and 3) Data collection and analysis of service engagement, move outcomes and other indicators.

The CMTOs sites represent a wide range of geographies and local demographics, which will support learning about how strategies work in different communities and inform the scaling of CMTO service approaches at a national level.

HCV Mobility Demonstration

HUD has published a notice in the Federal Register for the Implementation of the Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration. A total of \$50 million is available to PHAs, up to \$10 million for new vouchers for families with children and \$40 million for mobility related services. According to HUD, the competitive application will roughly award 5-10 PHAs, with individual awards totaling no less than \$4 million and no more than \$10 million. The demonstration will be implemented over a six-year period serving a minimum of 1,950 families. Families participating in the demonstration will be randomly assigned to a control group or one of two treatment groups; one group receiving full mobility services and the second group receiving HCV program business-as-usual services. Families participating in the demonstration will be a combination of primarily existing voucher holders (min. 1,800), and new admissions (min. 150). PHAs awarded for the demonstration must develop a Regional Housing Mobility Plan (RHMP) and implement the following;

- Agree to make regular turnover vouchers available for new admissions. HUD estimates approximately half the number of the Mobility Demonstration Vouchers awarded.
- Establish a waitlist preference for families having at least one child 13 years and under and living in a census tract with poverty rate of 30% or higher.
- Adopt payment standards adequate for attracting landlords in high-opportunity areas.
- Participate in HUD sponsored program evaluation.

Application is due October 13th, HUD expects to make award announcement in December 2020. A board resolution for the approval of the submission of the HCV Mobility Demonstration application is required, if the agency chooses to apply.

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TO: Boards of Commissioners

Fresno Housing Authority

DATE: August 14, 2020

AUTHOR: Emily De La Guerra

FROM: Preston Prince, CEO/Executive Director

SUBJECT: Update on HUD's Expansion of the Moving to Work Program

Executive Summary

The purpose of this memo is to give the Boards of Commissioners an update on the Fresno Housing Authority's application for the Moving to Work (MTW) program, offered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In May 2019, the Boards approved the submission of a Letter of Intent to HUD stating the Agency's desire to obtain MTW status under Cohort #2 of the program expansion. In December 2019, the Agency received notification from HUD that our Letter of Intent was accepted, and based on the materials submitted, the Agency was deemed eligible to participate in the full application process. In August 2020, HUD reached out to eligible PHA's regarding an updated timeline for the full application process for Cohort #2. Once HUD publishes the final MTW Operations Notice, PHA's that were eligible to apply under PIH Notice 2019-04 will be invited to submit their applications. Applicants will have no less than three months from the MTW Operations Notice is published to submit their application. While no definitive dates have been given by HUD, it is anticipated that the MTW Operations Notice will be released before the end of 2020.

Staff will continue to update the Boards of Commissioners as information becomes available.

Background Information

The Moving to Work Demonstration Program began in 1996 and there are currently 39 MTW housing authorities nationwide. In 2016, an MTW Expansion Statute was passed, which requires HUD to increase the MTW Demonstration Program by 100 PHAs over seven years. PHAs must be selected from High Performers in either SEMAP or PHAS, represent geographic diversity across the country, and administer HCV's only, public housing only or both HCV's and public housing.

On March 14, 2019, HUD issued PIH Notice 2019-04, which offered eligible PHA's the opportunity to express interest in admission to the MTW program under Cohort #2, which would test rent reform policies and their impacts on families. Interested PHA's that met the eligibility criteria must have submitted a Letter of Interest package to HUD by June 12, 2019, which both the Housing Authority of the City of Fresno and the Housing Authority of Fresno County did. Those PHAs that meet the eligibility requirements, as determined by HUD, will be invited to submit a full application for Cohort #2. More information on the MTW program can be found in the May 2019 Board Packet.

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TO: Boards of Commissioners

Fresno Housing Authority

FROM: Preston Prince, CEO

SUBJECT: Workforce Development Pilot Update

DATE: August 14, 2020

AUTHOR: Kelli Furtado

Executive Summary

The purpose of this update is to provide the Boards of Commissioners agency progress on 2019-2020 Strategic Goals regarding a workforce development pilot program.

The Resident Empowerment Team launched the workforce development pilot in February 2020, through an agreement with Helping Others Pursue Excellence (HOPE) Builds led by Laneesha Senegal. Due to the unanticipated challenges caused by the pandemic in March 2020, HOPE Builds continues virtual follow-up with interested residents, but has experienced an understandable delay in program delivery. Having had sufficient planning time, HOPE Builds is poised to continue implementing the pilot program in a socially distant and safe environment, and despite the challenges created by the pandemic, has facilitated some early successes.

Outreach and Engagement Efforts

Outreach efforts began in January 2020, including communication via text, social media, email and flyers that were distributed to Fresno Housing (FH) residents – both FH managed properties and Housing Choice Voucher participants - in the 93706 zip code. For the pilot program, this area was selected because of the close proximity of several FH managed properties with community centers, and the ongoing engagement efforts within the California Avenue Neighborhood. In many instances, the HOPE Builds team canvassed various FH properties, nearby community centers and the library in person to generate interest and connect with FH residents. Interested parties were invited to learn more by attending one of three “Meet and Greet” sessions held in the community centers at Legacy Commons, Fairview Heights and Sequoia Courts. A total of 37 individuals (21 verified FH residents) attended during February.

Pilot Program Design

The workforce development pilot program was designed to engage up to 100 FH residents in understanding barriers and goals for high-wage career opportunities

and assist them in achieving career goals. With a shared understanding that “one size fits none” services include barrier identification and reduction, understanding desired program elements, and a skills assessment. Barriers (both real and perceived) and program elements were defined with input from residents. HOPE Builds program services include customized mentoring, career readiness, employment skills, an entrepreneurship track, Section 3 registration, and job training. FH career opportunities for residents are also included as an important part of the program design. Through HOPE Builds, several community based organizations continue to coordinate an array of services for the pilot workforce development program. This inclusive process was designed to result in personal achievement of career goals for residents. For some, this will include barrier removal such as solutions to childcare challenges or obtaining a driver license. For others it might include the enrollment or completion of a training process, a promotion, or a new job.

Early Outcomes

Fourteen residents from the initial outreach efforts expressed continued interest during the pandemic and completed the intake and assessment process. Through early March, HOPE Builds actively supported residents with achieving their goals in person, and later moved to virtual support. In one case the HOPE Builds team “accompanied” a FH resident to a virtual job fair to assist with application, advocate with management, ultimately resulting in the FH resident receiving a job offer.

To date, a total of seven residents have been successful in either an employment search or entrepreneurial endeavor. Five residents have gained full-time, part-time or temporary employment at sites such as Hazmat Construction, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Spruce Medical Billing and Hobby Lobby, with a salary range from \$10-\$15/hour; some including benefits. Unfortunately, in two instances, due to COVID-19, the IRS job opportunities did not materialize. HOPE Builds assisted two residents in growing their own business. One is an online store selling African American sports apparel and masks - <https://african-americanwoman101.com>. This resident was provided \$450 in scholarships for web design and hosting. HOPE Builds assisted another resident to procure a business license for a mobile notary business.

The remaining residents in the workforce development pilot program continue efforts with the support of HOPE Builds to achieve their career goals.

Next Steps

Moving forward, HOPE Builds and FH continue evaluating the impact that COVID-19 will have on the implementation of the program, and will adjust as necessary. HOPE Builds continues to experience minor restart challenges ranging from ill staff, technology and ordering online tools and has spent recent weeks reorganizing and planning logistics to safely implement the workforce development pilot program, and renewed outreach efforts are expected to begin by the end of August. Unfortunately, classroom sizes will be virtual and those that require in-person training will be smaller to allow for proper social distancing and safety protocols. Therefore, HOPE Builds has estimated that the realistic goal of successfully serving 100 residents by the end of February 2021, will be reduced to 50.

BOARD UPDATE

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TO: Boards of Commissioners

Fresno Housing Authority

DATE: August 14, 2020

AUTHOR: Emily De La Guerra

FROM: Preston Prince, CEO/Executive Director

SUBJECT: Ensuring Back to School Success for Fresno Housing Families

Executive Summary

The purpose of this update is to provide information to the Boards of Commissioners regarding Fresno Housing's efforts to ensure "Back to School" success for our families and children.

Since it was announced that school districts would begin the school year in a virtual learning environment, Fresno Housing (FH) has been considering ways to best support our residents during this time. A cross-departmental team, including members of our Resident Services, Housing Choice Vouchers, Property Management, and Information Technology departments, have been meeting almost daily to coordinate various efforts across the Agency. Based on an analysis of resident needs and school district's back to school plans, staff prioritized their efforts focused on Resident Support, Technology & Connectivity, and Workspace.

Over the past several weeks, the Resident Services and Property Management teams has focused on connecting with families in order to hear their concerns, answer any questions, ensure parents were aware of the school districts changing plans and confirm families had the equipment needed to begin the school year. These efforts were initially focused on rural Fresno County properties that had an earlier school starting date on top of other challenges, including language barriers, limited transportation and internet connectivity issues. The Resident Services team was able to connect with 328 families, which represents a total of 561 children, to ensure they had the information and supplies necessary to being the school year. During these conversation, many families indicated that internet connectivity continued to be an issue, even with the hot spots that were provided by the school districts. Other families stated that quiet workspace was needed because there were several children in the household who would be participating in virtual learning simultaneously. And we had many parents express concerns about their own ability to be there for their children during the day to assist with lessons and homework. This critical information from families led the Agency to prioritize the initiatives discussed below around Student Support, Technology & Connectivity, and Workspace.

Student Support

Providing students with the support they need to be success in the virtual learning environment has been one of Fresno Housing's top priorities over the past several weeks. In our on-going conversations with families and parents, many expressed their concerns about beginning the school year in this new way and being able to support their children with technology and curriculum. To help address some of these concerns, Fresno Housing has been working closely with residents, parents and our partners to think creatively on how to best support children. The Resident Services team has contracted with several partners to provide virtual tutoring for 790 families (1,250 children) across Fresno, Firebaugh and Parlier. FH is also working closely with our partners at Boys & Girls Club to safely reopen their community centers to Fresno Housing families. This would give approximately 900 families (over 1,500 children) access to after-school tutoring and support services. FH is also drafting a contract with California Teaching Fellows to give FH children access to their Call Center for homework help, social/emotional support and technology support during afterschool hours. As the school year begins and we continue to learn more, we will adjust our plans based on the student feedback and needs.

Technology & Connectivity

Grounded in the responses we've received from residents and known connectivity issues across the county, Fresno Housing has focused on ensuring our rural properties have access to internet and equipment. As part of our Get Connected Fresno initiative, in partnership with the California Public Utilities Commission and Comcast, Fresno Housing provides property-wide internet access to the residents at nine sites at no cost to the resident, which equates to free internet for over 1,000 families and 1,300 children. The Fresno Housing IT department has expanded on this initiative by amplifying the internet service at eight additional sites which will be available to over 530 families and 1,000 children. Additionally, the IT team put together five technology kits for the Property Management team to keep at our remote offices across the County, in the event a child is in need of emergency technology supplies. Each of the kits includes three Chromebooks, three hotspots, and several additional mice, extension cords, surge protectors, and headphones. The Resident Service team is also putting together back to school baskets for children which will include lap desks, headphones and other equipment that kids may need to start the year virtually. These baskets will be handed out to children at properties across Fresno County, and to HCV residents at a drive-thru giveaway event at our Central Office.

Workspace

There are over 25 community centers at Fresno Housing properties across Fresno County. These community centers provide critical services to students, like access to computers, internet, utilities, and most importantly, a safe and quiet place to learn during the day. FH staff is currently working with our Property Management team, our Union partners and the County Department of Public Health to determine how we could operate community facilities in a way that protects the health and safety of our residents, partners and employees. Draft protocols are being developed, which will be reviewed by the Department of Public Health. While the offices remain closed and much staff continues to work remotely, leadership is analyzing how to manage and supervise the community space during the day, which could include outside contract resources like Teaching Assistants, Resident Contractors, and/or support from our non-profit partners. Staff will continue to keep the Boards of Commissioners informed as these plans progress.