

## **Solano County Housing Authority Move-To-Work Plan**

### **Solano County Housing Authority's Move-to-Work Plan Vision**

The Solano County Housing Authority (SCHA) exists to serve our community's housing needs using all resources available. Participation in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Moving-to-Work (MTW) demonstration would provide SCHA with the ability to make best use of existing program funds to assist the City of Dixon, City of Rio Vista and the unincorporated areas of Solano County's very low- and low-income residents to obtain safe, decent, and affordable housing. Participation in the MTW demonstration will support SCHA's goal to provide affordable housing opportunities through creative partnerships with public and private collaborators. Participation in the MTW demonstration will also expand SCHA's ability to provide participants with opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency through the Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

SCHA will be able to utilize the benefits of the Moving-to-Work (MTW) to meet the three statutory objectives of the MTW Demonstration Program in the following ways:

- **Cost Effectiveness** – Reduce overall administrative costs by streamlining administrative activities associated with conducting annual recertifications and verification of participant assets.
- **Self-Sufficiency** – Expand current partnerships and develop new public and private partnerships that will help families to move toward self-sufficiency
- **Housing Choice** - Increase housing choice for program participants by increasing initial rent burden limits and creating a landlord incentive program that encourages owner participation in the Section 8 program.

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SCHA is seeking HUD designation as an MTW agency because flexibility in the use of administrative and housing assistance payment funding along with implementation of currently available MTW waivers will provide SCHA with the tools necessary to meet the goals of the agency and the MTW Demonstration program.

SCHA will carry out the MTW program in conformity with title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and will affirmatively further fair housing by examining their programs or proposed programs, identifying any impediments to fair housing choice within those program, addressing those impediments in a reasonable fashion in view of the resources available and working with local jurisdictions to implement any of the jurisdiction's initiatives to affirmatively further fair housing that require SCHA's involvement and by maintaining records reflecting these analyses and actions.

### **Plan for Future Community/Resident Engagement**

To facilitate public and participant interaction, SCHA will conduct at least one (1) public meeting and one (1) public hearing at different stages of the program year. Together, they will address housing needs, development of proposed activities, and review of current MTW program activity implementation and performance. The public meeting and hearing will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, and with accommodation for person with disabilities, upon request.

SCHA will notify the public of these meetings in the following possible ways:

- Notices provided directly to SCHA program participants and Landlords;
- On the SCHA webpage;

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- A local newspaper of general circulation; and/or
- Directly to interested parties (a list of persons and community groups interested in receiving such notices will be maintained by SCHA office).

SCHA will make the MTW Plan available in an accessible format to persons with disabilities, upon request, at the SCHA office during regular business hours. If non-English speaking persons request assistance to participate in a public meeting or hearing, SCHA will retain appropriate assistance to allow such persons to participate. Generally, assistance will consist of a staff member who is fluent in Spanish and English. However, if assistance is required in other languages, SCHA will take reasonable steps to determine what type of assistance will be provided. Comments and suggestions from program participants and the public are welcome at all times. All comments received in writing, or orally prior to or during the public meeting or hearing, will be considered when preparing the final MTW Plan. Written comments will receive a written response, where practicable. Copies of the MTW Plan will be made available at the SCHA office. If the SCHA office is closed or unable to provide copies of the drafts, copies can alternatively be provided online or provided by request to SCHA office staff.

### **Solano County Housing Authority Operating and Inventory Information**

SCHA operates an HCV only program and is authorized to lease 290 units. SCHA's HCV program includes 20 HUD-Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) tenant based vouchers. SCHA opened its HCV waitlist online for one week in September 2019 and received over 6,000 applications. In December 2019, SCHA was awarded 10 Mainstream Program vouchers. In April 2020, through the CARES Act, SCHA received an additional allocation of 3 Mainstream Program vouchers. In September 2020, SCHA submitted a Notice of Intent for additional HUD-VASH vouchers.

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SCHA currently administers 255 units (88% lease up rate). SCHA's assists approximately 173 (68%) disabled and/or elderly families and a total of 242 (95%) very low income families. SCHA does not anticipate any changes to the demographics of the households it serves.

Rental market conditions (high rental cost, low vacancies exacerbated by local natural disasters) make it difficult for SCHA participants to find rental units in the SCHA's jurisdiction prior to voucher term ending. During the upcoming program year, SCHA plans to make up to 60 vouchers available for project based vouchers to increase the affordable housing stock in SCHA's jurisdiction.

### **Solano County Housing Authority's Plan for Local MTW Program**

#### **Cost Effectiveness**

Reexaminations: SCHA is proposing requiring reexaminations at least every 36 months for families in which at least 90 percent of income is from a fixed source. Of all SCHA participant families, approximately 195 (76%) receive at least 90% of their income from a fixed source. Approximately 150 (77%) of those households are elderly and/or disabled. The reexamination process can be cumbersome for persons who are elderly and/or disabled families that may have sight, hearing, cognitive, and/or mobility, etc. issues, or other families in which at least 90% of their income is from a fixed source. This burden can be removed as these families have few, if any, changes in household income and/or composition from year to year.

Changing required reexaminations for these families from every 12 months to every 36 months will also reduce the administrative burden for SCHA. Each annual takes the SCHA approximately 1.75 hours of staff time. And, taking into account the average amount of HAP SCHA will continue to pay annually due to implementing the new annual reexamination

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schedule, the SCHA will save approximately \$6,795.00 annually in admin and \$4,850.00 in Housing Assistance Payments (HAP).

**Self-Certification of Assets:** SCHA is proposing to increase the value of family assets and anticipated asset income, when applicable. SCHA will accept the family's self-certification from \$5,000 or less to \$50,000 or less. Verifying family net assets takes approximately 0.25 hours per reexamination. There are approximately 11 families with assets that are more than \$5,000 but less than \$50,000. The costs to the SCHA is approximately \$106.00. Anticipated income from these assets are an average of \$8 per family. This saves SCHA approximately \$85.00 in administrative costs. All assets valued over \$50,000 will continue to require third-party verification.

### **Self-Sufficiency**

Funding flexibility and streamlining administrative processes will allow SCHA to expand resources and staff assistance provided to program participants during the housing search process. Activities may include expanded briefing topics/activities such as: warm referrals to rental and/or utility deposit assistance, developing a rental profile, practice completing rental applications, and/or reviewing credit/rental history.

### **Housing Choice**

**Tenant Rent Policies:** SCHA is proposing to modify the 40 percent affordability cap to 50 percent at initial lease-up in order to increase housing choice for low-income households. SCHA anticipates that this will increase low-income families' ability to secure housing in low-poverty concentration and areas of opportunity.

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Landlord Leasing Incentives: By combining the activities available under the Landlord Leasing Incentives category, SCHA is proposing to develop its Landlord Partnership Program (LPP). The LPP will be aimed at expanding rental opportunities for families holding housing choice vouchers by making landlord participation in the program more attractive. The LPP will provide financial incentives to landlords who rent to housing choice voucher participants in the form of vacancy payments, establishment of a damage claims fund, and providing additional lease up incentives to new landlords.

Housing Quality Standards: In conjunction with the LPP, SCHA is proposing conducting pre-qualifying unit inspections for landlords that are willing to participate in the program but have not yet identified an eligible tenant. Conducting pre-qualifying inspections is anticipated to support in recruiting new landlords and units as well as retaining existing units within the portfolio of available housing.

### **Proposed Use of MTW Funds**

SCHA is requesting to use HCV HAP and Administrative Fee funds flexibly as MTW funds. SCHA will use MTW funds in accordance with Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937. SCHA will use MTW funds to implement a block grant approach to budgeting and implement approved MTW activities such as establishing the Landlord Participation Program.

### **Evidence of Significant Solano County Housing Authority Partnerships**

SCHA administers several special voucher programs that require partnerships between SCHA and other public agencies, city/state/local governments, private nonprofits and/or for-profit entities. In 1997, SCHA implemented the Family Self-Sufficiency Program. The SCHA FSS program, in conjunction with public and private agencies in the community, has the objectives of

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developing innovative local strategies to coordinate public and private resources; integrating the HCV program with other public and private benefit programs to assist low-income families to achieve independence from government assistance programs; provide families with stable rental assistance support while participating in FSS to enable them to participate in employment, education and job training programs without undue concern for the welfare and safety of their families; and provide FSS participants with an opportunity to save for the future through the establishment of an interest-bearing escrow account. For the calendar year of 2021, SCHA will receive approximately \$32,000 in FSS grant funds that will be used for a coordinator for the SCHA FSS program. The FSS coordinator will continue to build partnerships that will support participant self-sufficiency.

Currently, SCHA partners with the Vacaville Housing Counseling Center to provide financial management workshops and counseling as well as First Time Homebuyers education. SCHA also partners with Workforce Development Board of Solano County to provide its Road to Employment program to participants. Continuing these partnerships will contribute to SCHA's goal to expand current partnerships to support participant self-sufficiency.

As required by the FSS program, SCHA participates in the Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) established for the bay area. SCHA also participates in the Workforce Development Board of Solano County's SEC steering committee. Members include social services agencies and public agencies that provide services such as job training and job search assistance as well as representatives from local agencies such as the Solano County Department of Health & Social Services. Participation in these committees links SCHA to private and public agencies that provide services that can assist participants in becoming more self-sufficient.

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In April of this year, SCHA began implementing the Mainstream Voucher Program. SCHA executed Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with Solano County's Coordinated Entry System - Resource Connect Solano and Independent Living Resources (a non-profit serving persons with disabilities) to:

- Coordinate outreach and referral of persons in institutional and other segregated settings who want to move to community-based integrated settings and persons at serious risk of institutionalization, and persons currently experiencing homelessness;
- Assist persons with disabilities to apply to and obtain acceptance in housing programs and find housing; and
- Refer to, coordinate, and/or provide home and community-based services.

Partnership with Resource Connect Solano and Independent Living Resources not only provides participants with the resources they need to become more self-sufficient, these partnerships help SCHA increase housing choice for participants through housing search assistance.

SCHA also administers a Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. SCHA partners with the VA Northern California Health Care System to:

- Refer HUD-VASH applications to the SCHA;
- Provide case management services and supports to HUD-VASH participants; and
- Provide updates on participants' HUD-VASH eligibility to the SCHA on an ongoing basis.

Recently, SCHA worked with the Solano County Administrator's Office and Travis Federal Credit Union (TCU) to submit an application to use a portion of Solano County's Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) (up to approximately \$25,000 annually) to implement a Down Payment Assistance program for SCHA FSS graduates. If approved by the California

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Department of Housing and Community Development, FSS participants would be able to use FSS escrow funds to open a Workforce Initiative Subsidy for Homeownership (WISH) account with TCU that will match their contribution \$4 to \$1. FSS graduates will then be able to pair those funds with PLHA funds to use as down payment assistance to purchase a home either through the SCHAs Homeownership program, or on their own. This program would support SCHAs goal of moving participant families towards self-sufficiency.

### **Significant Dates and Milestones for the PHAs Local MTW Program**

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>08/28/2020 Publication of MTW Operations Notice</b>	
09/14/2020	Public Meeting #1
09/17/2020	Public Meeting #2
09/25/2020	Draft MTW Plan Available for Public Comment
10/27/2020	Public Hearing for Draft MTW Plan
11/17/2020	Board Approval of Final MTW Plan
12/04/2020	Application Submission
02/25/2021	Revised Draft Administrative Plan Available for Public Comment
04/15/2021	Public Hearing on Revised Admin Plan and FY 2021 MTW Activities
04/17/2021	Final Administrative Plan Submitted to HUD
07/01/2021	Start of SCHAs MTW Program Designation
	Activities Implemented:  1.o. Initial rent burden  3.b. Alt Reexam Schedule

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	3.d. Self Cert of Assets  4. a-c. Landlord Incentive Program  5.a. Pre-Qualifying Unit Inspections
<b>FY 2022 MTW Activities Implementation</b>	
09/2021	Public Meeting #1 – Outreach on proposed Year 2 MTW activities
10/2021	Public Meeting #2 - Outreach on proposed Year 2 MTW activities
11/2021	Notify HUD of Intent to PBV
1/2022	Draft Administrative Plan / Annual Plan
2/2022	Make Administrative Plan / Annual Plan available for public comment
04/2022	Hold Public hearing on proposed FY 2022 MTW Activities
07/01/2022	Start of Year 2 of MTW Program Activities
	Activities Implemented:  1.n. Utility Reimbursements  2.a. Payment standards SAFMR  9.e. Alternative PBV Unit Types  10.c. Mandatory FSS Program Enrollment
<b>FY2023 MTW Activities Implementation</b>	
09/2022	Public Meeting #1 – Review of Year1 MTW Activities and Outreach on proposed Year 3 MTW activities
1/2023	Draft Administrative Plan / Annual Plan
2/2023	Make Administrative Plan / Annual Plan available for public comment
04/2023	Hold Public hearing on proposed FY 2022 MTW Activities
07/01/2023	Start of Year 3 of MTW Program Activities

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