

Summary of FY 2024 proposed activities and amendments to approved activities:

Proposed FY 2024 MTW Annual Plan activities:

1. *Time-Limited Workforce Development Vouchers*

RHA believes that everyone, including youth and young adults, need stable housing, supportive services, and access to connections that will place them on the path to long-term success. In FY 2024, RHA proposes to assist Washoe County's younger population who have successfully completed a community-based education or life-skills program and are at risk of long-term housing instability. To do this, RHA will allow at least 15 tenant-based vouchers to be earmarked to house youth who want to achieve self-sufficiency. Currently, this population is largely unassisted by the agency's traditional housing programs and due to waitlist preferences in place, are very unlikely to receive a traditional voucher. Through this activity, RHA proposes to expand the services already provided to these youth with a structured, goal-oriented program that provides ongoing self-sufficiency support.

RHA's Workforce Development program is the cornerstone of the success of this activity. Consequently, direct referrals for Workforce Development Vouchers will be accepted from established non-profit partnering agencies specifically for these Workforce Development Vouchers. RHA's Workforce Development staff will accept the initial referral from the partnering agency and assist during the entire process from referral, admission, tenancy, and finally, self-sufficiency as they transition off housing assistance. As such, each applicant housed under this activity will receive a time-limited voucher of eight years and be required to participate in RHA's Workforce Development program.

2. *Local Project Based Voucher Program*

Throughout RHA's participation in MTW, the agency has proposed and implemented several activities directly related to PBVs. These activities allow for the assignment of PBVs to agency owned/controlled properties for ongoing partnerships, PBVs for privately owned properties, and the ability to assign PBVs to agency owned properties without going through a competitive process. This activity serves to combine all of RHA's current PBV activities into one Local Project Based Voucher Program. In doing so, identified program elements will remain in place or expanded upon.

Furthermore, in FY 2024, RHA is proposing to amend the following MTW activities:

- *Simplify rent calculations and increase the minimum rent*

In FY 2014, RHA raised the minimum rent from \$50 to \$75 not only to save significant HCV and PH operating subsidy but provide an incentive for participants to seek employment due to the higher participant contribution to rent. As of January 1, 2023, RHA has 212 households within its PH and HCV programs who are paying a minimum rent of \$75, 46% of these households pay a tenant rent of \$0.

In FY 2024, RHA proposes to raise the minimum rent to \$100. This increase will affect 240 households of which 12% will continue to pay a tenant rent of \$0. On average, affected households will experience a rent increase of \$17/month in the HCV program and \$15/month in the PH program.

As no group of residents will be exempt from the minimum rent, individuals who already have hardship exemptions will continue to be granted that exemption. Individuals who request an exemption may be granted one, based on RHA's standard hardship policy for an exception to minimum rent.

- *Landlord Incentive Program*

Based on information received from landlords through a survey which noted barriers to their continued participation in the HCV program, RHA implemented a Landlord Incentive Program in FY 2018 that was expanded upon in FY 2020. The program allows landlords to receive their contracted HAP payment through the end of the month for units occupied by HCV participants vacating under the following conditions: (1) deceased tenant, (2) eviction, (3) skip, (4) a family responsibility violation, or (5) excessive damage to the unit that is beyond normal wear and tear.

In FY 2024, RHA will begin to provide the actual HAP amount through the end of the month as well as one additional month of full contract rent to landlords automatically regardless of the actual move-out date of the participant. Landlords can utilize the additional month of contracted rent toward damages incurred within the unit or as compensation for a vacancy loss.

To ensure landlords can maintain equal housing opportunities and follow their existing procedures, RHA does not require landlords to rent to another voucher holder to qualify for the Landlord Incentive Program. However, in FY 2024 RHA will utilize single fund flexibility to expand the Landlord Incentive Program and provide landlords with a \$500 re-lease bonus and a \$1,000 referral bonus. Based on this expansion, current HCV landlords who sign a HAP contract to lease the same unit to another HCV program participant, will automatically receive a \$500 re-lease bonus. In addition, current landlords who refer a new landlord to the HCV program will be eligible for an automatic referral bonus. To qualify for the referral bonus, the new landlord must be one who has never leased to one of RHA's HCV program participants before.

To engage and retain current and future HCV landlords, RHA began reviewing various software companies who specialize in landlord relationships. In the coming year, RHA may use single fund flexibility to purchase software that will centralize

landlord relationships, reduce housing search times, and expand housing opportunities.

- *Redetermination of rent reasonableness as a result of a change in contract rent*
Based on the local rental market, RHA began waiving the requirement for a rent reasonableness determination in FY 2019 if the new requested rent amount represents a change of 10% or less. This policy change is anticipated to assist in retaining landlords who continue to lease to HCV participants in this challenging rental market and alleviate the amount of time required of staff to process requests.

During FY 2022, RHA processed 1,202 rent change requests of which 909 or 76% sought a change of 10% or less. Rent reasonableness determinations are still made by RHA staff on a regular basis. Staff continue to complete a rent reasonableness determination when a unit is placed under a HAP contract for the first time, when an owner requests a contract rent change of more than 10%, or at any other time RHA deems necessary.

In FY 2024, RHA proposes to allow for automatic approval of a CRI without a rent reasonableness redetermination if the requested rent change amount does not exceed RHA's payment standards.