

November 22, 2005

Board of Commissioners
Housing Authority of the County of Marin
Marin Civic Center
3501 Marin Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: Amendment of Agency Plan and Section 8 Administrative Plan to Provide a Preference for Supportive Housing Program Participants

RECOMMENDATION: 1. Open the comment period on a proposed amendment to the Agency Plan to provide a waiting list preference for families or individuals who have successfully participated in a supportive housing program for homeless persons with disabilities. 2. Set January 24, 2006 as the public hearing on the proposed amendment.

SUMMARY: Supportive housing enables program participants to live a stable, independent life. This is almost impossible to achieve in the absence of permanent, affordable housing and very difficult for many people with disabilities to achieve without a level of supportive help at the right time.

Eventually, many of the supportive housing individuals no longer need supportive services to maintain housing. However, they are still in need of permanent, safe and affordable housing. To this end staff recommends Board consideration of a preference in our Section 8 program for individuals and families who have completed a supportive housing program for formerly homeless persons with disabilities and who are now able to achieve the goal of independence as long as they have affordable housing. This preference would allow for supportive housing programs to transition their participants to affordable housing and to be able to assist current persons who are homeless in an effort to end chronic homelessness by putting an end to the "revolving door" in and out of homelessness.

Although available to any qualifying person, this preference is critical for the continued success of Marin Housing's Shelter Plus Care Program, a supportive housing program for homeless persons and families with disabilities funded by HUD through Marin's Continuum of Care since 1993. The Shelter Plus Care grant requires a dollar-for-dollar annual services match that has become increasingly difficult to secure as program participants require less and less supportive services. The ideal program design is to allow participants an opportunity to "graduate" into mainstream housing options, such as Section 8 housing. HUD recognizes that, although the Shelter Plus Care Program is considered permanent supportive housing, many people can and should move on to other mainstream housing choices.

Staff has discussed with HUD the language of the proposed preference. HUD indicates that the following is considered in compliance with HUD and Fair Housing regulations:

Families or individuals who have successfully participated in a supportive housing program for homeless persons with disabilities.

The Resident Advisory Board (RAB) will meet on November 17, 2005 to consider the proposed amendment and staff will report their recommendation at your Board's meeting. At the conclusion of the comment period, staff will prepare a report for your Board that summarizes the comments received and staff's recommendations with respect to those comments.

FISCAL IMPACT: Marin Housing's Shelter Plus Care Program is designed to leverage Medi-CAL billable mental health services provided by clinical case managers funded by a \$717,000 contract through Community Mental Health Services (CMHS). This contract could be lost if we can't transition "graduating" participants out of the Shelter Plus Care Program. In addition, if we can't comply with the match requirement we could lose two of our three Shelter Plus Care HUD grants totaling \$772,000.

Very truly yours,

CHRISTINE GOUIG
Executive Director