



Seattle Housing Authority

Moving to Work

2019 Annual Plan Summary

August 31, 2018

Our 20th year in the Moving to Work (MTW) program

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) is one of 39 housing authorities across the country participating in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Moving to Work (MTW) program, which allows the agency to test innovative methods to improve housing services and to better meet local needs. Each year the agency adopts a plan that describes activities planned for the following year.

As a participant in MTW, Seattle Housing Authority proposes and implements alternatives to certain federal regulations, which are spelled out in an agreement between HUD and the agency. The MTW program has three primary goals:

- Reduce costs and improve cost effectiveness
- Provide incentives to families to become economically self-sufficient
- Increase housing choices for low-income families

Contents of the Annual MTW Plan

In the Annual MTW Plan, Seattle Housing Authority provides projections for 2019 regarding the number of households served, waiting lists, total affordable housing units and vouchers, and sources and uses of funding, as well as summarizing plans for capital improvements. The plan also proposes new MTW activities and provides updates on existing MTW strategies.

Proposed New MTW Activities

Seattle Housing Authority is proposing four new MTW activities for 2019. The new activities would allow SHA to own mixed-finance projects, disregard student financial aid as income in rent calculation, provide incentives for positive tenant departures and housing stability, and streamline local timelines and processes to improve leasing success.

Disregard of student financial aid as income: Under current Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) policy, financial aid does not count toward income unless the amount received is above the cost of tuition. This does not align with the policy in public housing, which never counts student financial assistance as income when determining rent. SHA is proposing with this new activity that student financial assistance is not counted as income when determining rent for both HCV and public housing. We believe that this activity will have multiple positive impacts, including supporting households who wish to pursue education and saving time for both staff and participants who would no longer need to obtain and document this information in order to calculate the amount of student financial assistance to be included or excluded for the rent calculation.

Incentives for positive tenant departures and housing stability: SHA is piloting an activity that would provide financial incentives to promote housing stability and support public housing households successfully vacating a public housing unit. Households would be eligible to receive a financial incentive if they leave their unit in a clean and orderly fashion consistent with SHA unit standards. SHA plans to initially pilot a \$300 incentive to households successfully meeting these conditions, but the incentive amount, structure, and eligibility criteria may evolve based on pilot results. SHA believes this incentive may have

multiple positive impacts, including reducing repair charges for departing households and decreasing both costs and turnaround time for SHA in bringing units back to standard condition for leasing to new households.

Streamlined local timelines and processes for improved leasing success: HUD requirements limit the length of time and procedures for new and continuing voucher households searching for a unit, including the length of time that families can be absent from a unit. In Seattle's extremely competitive rental market, households often need more time and flexibility to be successful. This proposed MTW activity would allow SHA to adopt local timelines and processes for new and moving with continued assistance (MWCA) voucher households, including the ability for SHA to remove the time limitation to allow families who are moving with continued assistance and are not leased up in a unit to continue looking for a new unit before their voucher expires.

Public Housing Authority ownership of mixed finance projects: This proposed MTW activity would allow SHA to own mixed-finance projects, which would streamline the process when SHA exits mixed-finance agreements. This would waive current federal regulations that state that housing authorities cannot own mixed-finance projects and save both time and money for SHA in refinancing mixed-finance developments. Rather than a two-part approval process, SHA would be able to request HUD approval to dissolve the partnership and terminate the project lease without the additional requirement to make a modified mixed-finance and Section 30 application. The properties would remain affordable housing and there would be no change in status for public housing units or any other units.

Opportunities to comment

Seattle Housing Authority is accepting comments on the draft MTW Annual Plan through September 30, 2018. For more complete descriptions of the proposed new activities and updates to existing activities, please see the draft Annual Plan in its entirety at www.seattlehousing.org or through any of the contact methods listed below. Any amendments to the plan that occur during the public comment period will be posted on the website.

Public hearing

A public hearing will be held on September 24, 2018 at 10:00 am at the Central Office, located at 190 Queen Anne Ave. N. The agency will present the draft plan and annual budget and take testimony from the public, followed by a general question and answer period. Language interpretation and disability accommodations are available when requested in advance (206-615-3576).

Resident advisory groups

The Joint Policy Advisory Committee (JPAC), made up of resident representatives who advise the agency on various issues, will discuss plan activities and the budget at their meeting on September 5. The Seattle Senior Housing Program (SSHP) Advisory Committee will discuss plan activities and the budget at their meeting on September 21.

Other means for public comment

Comments may also be submitted to:

Phone: (206) 615-3576

Email: mtw@seattlehousing.org

Mail: Policy Office, PO Box 19028, Seattle, WA 98109