

Analysis of RAB Survey/Comments

For the third year we determined that for more participation in the planning process we would use an online survey to gather information from the Resident Advisory Board (RAB). As an HCV only agency, we designated all active participants on March 22, 2021 as RAB members. The Housing Director sent letters to each participant explaining the purpose of the RAB and their role in the process. They were invited to participate in an online survey to express opinions about the program. We assured that the survey was user friendly for mobile devices, provided the link on the Housing website and a QR code to facilitate quick, direct access to the survey on smart devices. In addition, participants that were interacting with staff were reminded to participate in the ongoing online survey.

With this method we have increased participation as compared to in person meetings and we are pleased with the response rate from about 2.4% of all participants. Overall, we received 48 responses for the survey, which was open from March 26 through April 26, 2021. In previous years we held individual meetings at complexes located throughout the County and received around 30 comments annually. We plan to expand on the survey method for outreach moving forward. To that end, we included demographic information collection including age group and zip code for the survey taker.

The survey was designed to solicit information about general satisfaction with the program, moving with continued assistance, VAWA, hearing criteria, contingency plans for paying rent if federal funds became unavailable and general information about overpayments, informal hearings, landlord requirements if they are outside the immediate area and inspection failure parameters.

Of the 48 survey respondents:

We received 4.53 stars out of 5 for customer service.

66% were not planning on moving;

83% knew about VAWA protections;

79% understood only one overpayment was allowed under the program;

43% have a contingency plan for rent;

77% were aware of the criteria for requesting a hearing;

65% knew landlords were required to provide local contact information;

90% were aware of the list of 24-hour emergency repair items;

75% acknowledged that not being available for inspections appointments including same day cancellations can lead to termination; and

81% knew the list of tenant-caused inspection fail items.

We also solicited general comments and asked about the reasons for considering a move. The responses from previous years indicated an enhanced interest in moving with continued assistance so we wanted to continue to explore those details further this year to readily assist participants with portability and the moving process.

Of the total 48 survey responses, 47 people provided comments. 68.08% were positive or stated they had no additional comments/concerns; 10.63% thought we should offer more moving support services since the search was difficult due to lack of affordable choices including energy efficiency and handicapped accessibility; 4.25% wanted improved Landlord responsibilities; and 17.04% offered a variety of other comments including praise of staff and noted the unresponsiveness of staff to phone calls. One person commented they did not like online instead of in person requirements (COVID response) and one person commented that they really appreciated that inspections were only required every two years.

The top three reasons provided for considering a move were:

- 1) Maintenance issues/quality of unit at 10.64%;
- 2) Safety of their current neighborhood at 8.51%; and
- 3) Seeking better schools at 4.26%.

We discovered that areas with more support service (medical offices, drug stores, day care facilities), fleeing domestic violence, COVID and Hurricane Sally, changing jobs and the landlord not renewing the lease were not factors for anyone in deciding to move.

All responses were considered and what we learned was the participants had a good understanding of VAWA, the informal hearing criteria, overpayments and HQS inspection requirements. Only 16 respondents expressed an interest in moving. Last year 53% of respondents indicated that they wanted to move as compared to 34% this year.

As we reviewed the general comments, we determined that there was a high percentage of satisfaction. In the area of additional support services respondents want more help moving when a failed inspection requires a move and because of the lack of affordable housing choices. Participants wanted their landlords to improve the overall quality of their properties. This was also true of the comments made by the two participants at the June 16, 2021 Public Hearing. Per COVID restrictions limited seating was available at the Public Hearing. They expressed that they wanted landlords to address issues in the outdoor areas such as more regular grass cutting. They thought EB meetings were too large and therefore intimidating and wanted more affordable housing options available especially in the more rural areas of the County. We discussed the affordable housing options currently available in Century and about them talking to landlords of properties they were interested in renting about participating in

the HCV program, especially since so many landlords, in their opinion, were not collecting rent due to the Covid eviction moratorium.

A total of 46 people responded to the age group and zip code questions. The age groups that participated in the survey this year were:

| | |
|--------------|--------|
| 25 and under | 4.17% |
| 26-40 | 20.83% |
| 41-62 | 47.92% |
| 63+ | 27.08% |

Eleven zip codes were represented by respondents covering the center of the County and all points south. The top three zip codes were 32505 with 26%, covering the central part of the County; 32514 covering the Ferry Pass and Ensley areas at 15% and Warrington 32507 at 13% of respondents. Overall, we were pleased to learn that there was input from all age groups including the elderly which were the second highest age group to respond. We were able to hear from participants in about half of the County, the most populated areas.

Proposed programmatic improvements from the FY 2021-2025, 5 Year plan include a commitment to develop and implement program guidelines for an HCV Homeownership program, establish exception payment standards starting with defining the low poverty areas where these standards could be used, to support more units becoming available in those defined areas . Additionally, we have begun to establish a baseline for quantifying efforts to affirmatively further fair housing.

Based on this annual survey we are committed to expanding the use of technology to further improve the inspections process and continue to educate participants and landlords on process improvements.