

Section 8 Resident Advisory Board (RAB)

MINUTES

Meeting of July 24, 2024

Meeting called to order by Edgar Akopyan at 10:03 a.m.

Staff Introductions:

Peter Zovak - Assistant Director, Arthur Bolbolian- Principal Housing Supervisor, Edgar Akopyan- Senior Housing Analyst, Hermineh Davidian-Senior Housing Advisor, Julieta Sayadyan-Housing Advisor, Briana Chavez-Housing Advisor.

RAB Members Present:

Karine Airapetian, Krisdapor Aristakessian, Nairi Arutyunyan, Laura Avetisyan, Zoya Bagramyan, Mayva Burckley, Edwin T Colson, Sonia Der Krikorian, Nazik Ghazarian, Sarah Grigoryan, Manuchar Gukasyan, Vardkez Haghverdi, Robert Harutyunyan, Patricia Joice, Ashot Kazanian, Rafik Khashadoorian, Filor Mirdjanian, Tigran Ovakimian, Roxana Payan, Karapet Pogolian, Shoghik Yeghiazaryan.

Peter: Entertained a motion to have the minutes approved. RAB members, Ashot Kazanian and Tigran Ovakimian approved the minutes.

Arthur: Thanked everyone for their participation. Explained the purpose of having a Resident Advisory Board and their involvement in reviewing the updated policies in the Administrative Plan.

Discussion:

Edgar: Provided an overview of the meeting held earlier this year to discuss the PHA Annual Plan. Part of the Annual Plan discussion focused on the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016, better known as HOTMA. HOTMA's final rule, initially set for implementation on January 1, 2025, aimed to streamline Section 8 and other Federal programs. He explained that we anticipate an extension of the implementation date by HUD, however, we are moving forward with the policy updates to align with HOTMA's mandates.

Edgar: Discussed the significant changes and policy updates in the draft Administrative Plan.

Provided an update regarding new asset limits for program eligibility. Explained that families who own a home or have net assets exceeding \$100,000 (adjusted for inflation annually) will no longer qualify for benefits.

Outlined changes to how income is reviewed during reexaminations. For Initial and Interim Reexaminations, income will be estimated for the next 12 months. For Annual Reexaminations, income calculations will consider the prior 12 months and account for any changes.

Discussed changes regarding student financial assistance. Title IV Assistance is excluded from annual income calculations. Examples include Pell Grants and Federal Work Study. For Non-Title IV

Assistance, only actual covered costs (tuition, books, and fees) are excluded. Financial assistance exceeding these costs will count as income.

Discussed income exclusions, including nonrecurring income, certain state caregiving payments, and income from training programs.

Explained asset calculations for families with assets over \$50,000 (adjusted for inflation annually). Retirement accounts such as 401Ks and pensions will no longer count as assets.

Outlined changes to the dependent and the elderly/disabled allowances and how they will adjust annually for inflation.

Discussed new thresholds for health, medical, and disability expense deductions which is transitioning from 3% to 10% of annual income over a 24-month period. During the first year, expenses exceeding 5% will be deducted. During the second year, expenses exceeding 7.5% will be deducted. After the second year, expenses exceeding 10% will be deducted.

Families may qualify for hardship exemptions if medical expenses increase, or other hardships arise. Additionally, childcare hardship exemptions are available for families impacted by the loss of deductions or those needing childcare despite being on unemployment.

Outlined new policy for interim reexaminations. Interims will be processed for income decreases of 10% or more. For unearned income, they will be processed for increases of 10% or more. For earned income, they will be processed for increases of 10% or more if a prior interim reduction occurred in the same cycle. No interim reexaminations will be processed within three months of an annual reexamination's effective date.

Discussed the sunset of the Earned Income Disallowance (EID), which will phase out completely by January 1, 2026. Current beneficiaries will retain benefits until that date.

Provided an overview of the Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) implementation which will apply to all tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers. Payment standards will transition to zip code-specific rates, allowing families better access to lower-poverty areas. They will be set between 90% and 110% of the SAFMR for each ZIP code. Families will not experience a reduction in their payment standards due to SAFMR decreases, provided they remain in the same unit.

Edgar: Invited members to comment or ask questions regarding the plan in an open forum.

Member: Complained about the application selection process of the Citrus Crossing Affordable Housing project.

Edgar: Provided a resource for client to contact for assistance.

Member: Asked if a landlord was not in compliance with repairs, how would Section 8 address this?

Edgar: Responded that an inspection would be done to ensure the unit met program standards. If it did not, the PHA would request the owner to make the necessary repairs. If the owner did not comply, the Housing Assistance Payments would be abated until the repairs were made.

Member: Asked if we have an active unit listing for rentals?

Edgar: Responded that unit listings were available at the Housing Front Counter.

Member: Asked how they could access information regarding the Administrative Plan changes?

Edgar: Responded that the information and updates are available on the City's website.

Member: Explained that owners increase their rents and when tenants ask why, they are being told that they are forced to.

Edgar: Responded that there are no laws or ordinances requiring property owners to increase rents. However, the owner may have felt pressured to raise rents to keep up with market rates, fearing they might not be able to catch up later due to rent control restrictions.

Member: Asked if City of Glendale has a rent control in place?

Edgar: Responded that the city of Glendale does not have a rent control ordinance however, the state rent control law is applicable to Glendale.

Member: Asked why some landlords do not want to rent to Section 8 participants?

Edgar: Responded that while some landlords may initially hesitate due to inspection or program administration concerns, most landlords who work with us appreciate the program because it ensures timely rent payments. Additionally, Glendale has an excellent reputation for customer service and that's something owners appreciate as well.

Member: Asked if landlords get any benefits to work with the Section 8 program?

Edgar: Responded that landlords are guaranteed to receive their rents which provides stability.

Edgar: Shared some recent news regarding fraud where a person claiming to be associated with the Section 8 program was taking money from victims in exchange for housing benefits. This was a scam, and the person did not have any ties to the City or the Section 8 program. She was in fact apprehended by law enforcement and was incarcerated. RAB members were encouraged to share this information with friends and family and were advised that no benefits would ever be offered by the City in exchange for money and to be wary of scams.

Member: Asked how to report potential program participant fraud at her building?

Edgar: Provided the information.

Summary: The Resident Advisory Board commented on landlord compliance with repairs and rent increases. Members also asked questions about owner participation in the program, rent control, fraud awareness and benefits for landlords participating in the Section 8 program.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40a.m.