



## Federal Appropriations' Impact on HACSC's Section 8 Voucher Program

The \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill approved by Congress will fund the government and its programs through the end of September 2016. This provides just enough funding to cover the cost of the housing vouchers currently in use. We'll know exactly how much funding we will receive when the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) releases final numbers in March - we conservatively estimate that HACSC will have at least 97% of eligible funding available for its Section 8 voucher program. This is welcome news for more than 14,000 families in Santa Clara County who rely on the federally-funded housing assistance they receive through HACSC. More than 90% of the federal funding our agency receives directly assists these households with their monthly rent.

We're also pleased to report that the same spending bill ordered HUD to extend all current Moving to Work (MTW) agency agreements until 2028, with the same terms and conditions. The strength of the MTW program is that it gives local housing authorities the flexibility to make strategic program and policy changes to meet specific affordable housing needs in their local communities. As one of the nation's 39 MTW agencies, HACSC would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our community partners for providing crucial support and linkages through this innovative and highly successful program.

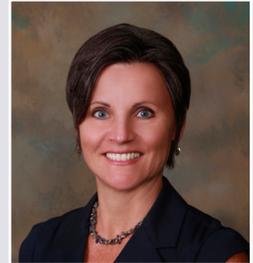
## HACSC Conditionally Awards 517 Project-Based Vouchers to Selected Developers

Last year, HACSC's Board approved the release of up to 1,000 additional Section 8 project-based vouchers (PBVs) and 200 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program PBVs to help fund new construction of affordable housing and serve more low-income families. *(See the related story in this newsletter about HACSC actively seeking landlords willing to rent to homeless veterans with VASH vouchers.)*

Through a competitive process, HACSC has conditionally awarded vouchers to support nine development proposals totaling 517 PBVs: 443 are regular Section 8 PBVs (241 of those vouchers are designated for 100% permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and their families) and 74 are VASH program PBVs designated for housing homeless veterans. These housing providers are committed to providing housing plus services and a sustainable housing model that helps families avoid homelessness and remain housed.

Congratulations to the developers of the selected proposals: Allied Housing, Charities Housing, EAH Housing, First Community Housing, MidPen Housing and Palo Alto Housing Corp. We would also like to thank our request for proposal (RFP) panel participants including representatives from the City of San José, the Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing, and the VA Palo Alto Healthcare System. Full PBV awards are contingent upon projects meeting all of the requirements of the RFP. HACSC plans to award the remaining vouchers before the end of the year.

Attached to specific housing units, PBVs help ensure that affordable housing is available to eligible families, even when the rental housing market is tight. Moreover, PBVs provide developers with a steady stream of rental income that can be leveraged to bridge funding gaps and enable construction and/or rehabilitation of additional affordable housing units.



## Harasz Appointed Executive Director

HACSC's Board has appointed Katherine Harasz Executive Director. Harasz has been serving as the agency's Interim Executive Director since July 2015. "Following a nationwide search, we are not only confident in our choice but also delighted to be working with Katherine, who is deeply committed to the agency's mission of keeping families housed," says Board Chairwoman Kathy Espinoza-Howard. "She is uniquely qualified to continue managing the agency while advocating at local and national levels on behalf of Silicon Valley's low-income families."

Harasz brings more than 25 years of administrative and legal expertise to her position as director of the nation's tenth largest public housing authority. She joined HACSC's leadership team in 2012 as Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel. Harasz was previously Deputy County Counsel at the County of Santa Clara and Associate Counsel with the City of San José Redevelopment Agency. Harasz serves on the boards of the National Leased Housing Association, NOVA Workforce Development, Destination: Home and the Continuum of Care Program for the County.



**In celebration of Super Bowl 50, volunteers build new playground** - Thanks to a grant from the nonprofit KaBOOM! with additional funding from HACSC partners LifeSTEPS and Blossom River Associates, 200 people from Disney, ESPN, the NFL, LifeSTEPS, HACSC, KaBOOM! and the San José community recently transformed an outdated and under-used playground at Blossom River Apartments into a kid-designed play space, all in less than eight hours!

*The appearances of San Francisco 49ers players including Andrew Tiller were the icing on the cake for this very special day!*



## HACSC Joins Campaign to End Veteran Homelessness; Increases VASH Voucher Payment Standard to Help Vets Obtain Housing

As part of a comprehensive strategy to house all of the estimated 700 homeless veterans residing in Santa Clara County by 2017, HACSC, the City of San José and the County have joined forces to match veterans with housing units through the “All the Way Home” campaign.

In addition to resources that the City, County and HACSC currently allocate for solving homelessness, the City and County have identified new money to specifically address the problem of veteran homelessness. The City has committed more than \$3.8 million to date and recommendations for additional veteran programs are being considered. The County authorized an additional \$1.5 million a year in housing and services for homeless veterans.

HACSC now has \$7.4 million in federal funds available each year through Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program vouchers. But despite having 853 total VASH vouchers and coordinating with the VA Palo Alto Healthcare System to accelerate lease-up, homeless veterans with vouchers in hand are often put in direct competition with renters who have superior credit, income or rental history. As a result, homeless veterans - who are among the most vulnerable populations we serve - just can’t afford those few vacant units they are able to locate. As of January 1, only 63% of HACSC’s 853 VASH vouchers are being used and more than 284 homeless veterans, with vouchers in hand, are looking for housing.

In an effort to give homeless veterans a more competitive edge, HUD gave HACSC special permission to increase HACSC’s VASH voucher payment standard to 120% of HUD’s fair market rent. Now that our VASH vouchers have a higher monthly housing assistance payment rate, HACSC is hopeful that more landlords and property owners will be willing to rent to our homeless veterans.



If you are a landlord interested in learning more about how you can help end veteran homelessness in our community, please contact Dora Foppiano at 408-993-3065 or [dora.foppiano@hacsc.org](mailto:dora.foppiano@hacsc.org).

## 2016 Voucher Payment Standard Increase Brings More Rent Relief

In an effort to help close the gap between federal rental housing assistance and skyrocketing rents in Silicon Valley, last year HACSC’s Board raised the maximum monthly rental housing assistance (*voucher payment standard*) for Section 8 program participants to 110% of HUD’s fair market rents - a move that will bring rent relief to about 5,670 families. Now more relief is on the way: HACSC has applied HUD-issued 2016 fair market rents to the housing assistance payment formula, *giving all participant families an average monthly assistance increase of \$200 per bedroom size*. This latest voucher payment standard increase was effective February 1st for new voucher holders and current program participants who are planning to move; it will be effective at the next rent certification for all other Section 8 program participants. It is expected to take up to three years to implement the increased voucher payment standard to all program participants.



HACSC is the largest provider of affordable housing assistance in Santa Clara County, helping make rental housing safe and affordable for low-income families through Section 8 voucher programs and below-market rental properties. Designated a Moving to Work agency, HACSC assists approximately 17,000 households.

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