

Board Approves FY 2019 Operating Budget; Agency in Sound Fiscal Condition

Last month our Board Chair Jennifer Loving and I traveled to Washington, D.C. While the federal budget for fiscal 2019 is the hot topic there, the affordable housing crisis continues escalating nationwide: There are more rent burdened households than ever before. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, it's incumbent on local governments to respond to this crisis. Thankfully here in Santa Clara County, we have great local partnerships already working on everything from housing policy to more funding opportunities.

Our agency's fiscal year began July 1 with the Board's adoption of a balanced FY 2019 operating budget. This operating budget is based on the projection of federal funds we anticipate receiving from our Moving to Work (MTW) contract with HUD, other federal grants, and local funds that we anticipate earning from the agency's real estate development, preservation and asset management activities.

Though the federal 2017 tax reform package has caused the value of tax credits (*a primary tool for affordable housing development*) to plummet, a federal budget compromise resulted in one of HUD's highest Section 8 funding levels in years. We conservatively calculate eligible funds for FY 2019 and project sufficient funds for all 16,418 current voucher holders (*as of August 2018*) as well as 593 families with shopping vouchers who are looking for housing. While HUD's funding is robust, unfortunately we still see a material difference between the funding HUD provides per household and the amount we need to pay to meet the rental market. This means we will be able to serve fewer families than HUD projects through Section 8, but through project-based vouchers (PBVs) as well as our development program, we hope to make up this funding shortfall with other local affordable housing alternatives.

Our agency continues its commitment to making available as many additional PBVs as HUD regulations and funding availability allow; we have 318 additional PBVs already assigned throughout the County to developments receiving Measure A bond funds.

Housing Authority staff is studying the agency's capacity to ramp up our own affordable housing production operations; we currently have eight projects representing about 600 new units and 150 rehabilitated units in our development pipeline over a five-year horizon.

In addition, last month HUD approved our **annual MTW Plan for FY 2019** (*July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019*). Among our new activities are continuing bonus payments for new landlords agreeing to rent to our Section 8 voucher holders; providing a "graduation" bonus payment to formerly-assisted families that aims to ease their transition into the unsubsidized housing market; and further streamlining our Section 8 lease-up process.

We'll continue to monitor the political outlook while carefully calibrating our program expenditures to allow for a cushion should budget discussions in Washington result in a funding reduction. As always, thank you for your partnership in keeping families housed.

Katherine Harasz
Executive Director

Strive Program Awards \$29,000 in Scholarships

We're pleased to announce that our 2018 **Strive scholarship program** has awarded a combined \$29,000 in educational scholarships to 29 deserving students (\$1,000 each). The Strive program provides financial assistance to Section 8 tenants or tenants of rental properties affiliated with SCCHA in support of their pursuit of post-secondary education. Included in this year's Strive funds was a U.S. Bank donation of \$3,000. Since the Strive program's inception in 2015, the agency has awarded a total of \$156,000 to 209 students.

We continue to be inspired by our Strive awardees who overwhelmingly pursue careers that will enable them to positively impact society. Several students are the first in their families to complete high school and pursue higher education, and many are balancing the responsibilities of parenting and maintaining a household with the demands of school. About a third of this year's recipients are studying STEM (*science, technology, engineering and mathematics*) fields, with 29 percent targeting a career in medicine. Other major fields of study include law, social sciences, humanities and business.

SCCHA is finally on the Twitter scene! Follow us at @SCC_HousingAuth for the latest updates on #affordablehousing in #SanJose and #SantaClaraCounty!

All the Way Home Houses 1,122 Veterans

The community-wide “All the Way Home” campaign began in 2015 with the goal of housing all of Santa Clara County’s homeless veterans. Almost three years later, 1,122 veterans are no longer homeless because of the collective work of the City of San José, Santa Clara County, nonprofit Destination:Home, Housing Authority, a dedicated consortium of service providers and more than 600 landlords willing to rent to our veterans.

SCCHA has \$7.5 million available annually through the federal Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program – about 1,047 total vouchers – to help veteran families pay rent. Included in that total are an additional 115 VASH vouchers awarded to SCCHA in April.

Our agency will continue to apply for more VASH vouchers. These vouchers are critical to helping veterans compete in our extremely competitive rental market and, when project-based, the veteran has the benefit of an apartment to go with their voucher – not something we take for granted in this rental market. At the same time, we need more landlords to house our vets. While we have 866 veterans currently under lease, there are 74 veterans who are shopping for a home to rent.

To this end, the County and Destination:Home established a fund to provide a variety of incentives, compensation and security for landlords renting to All the Way Home program participants. These can include providing an initial unit bonus up to \$1,500, providing up to \$1,000 (or one-half’s month’s rent) toward re-renting vacancy gaps, and paying security deposits.

Our new video, “All the Way Home – Ending Veteran Homelessness,” highlights our collective work to ensure that every veteran makes the transition to housing.

Community Resource Fair August 25

SCCHA is holding its annual Community Resource Fair on Saturday, August 25, from 10:00am to 2:00pm at the James McEntee Sr. Plaza, 70 W. Hedding St. in San José. This is an opportunity for residents to learn more about our County’s programs and services designed to assist low-income families. Areas of focus include housing, job training, education, legal aid, finances, health and nutrition. Live music, a free raffle and snacks will be provided! Parking is free. For more information please email Libby.Schroeder@scchousingauthority.org. The fair is being co-sponsored by SCCHA and Santa Clara County Supervisor Cortese’s office.

Meet Our Staff: Training and Outreach Team



Left to right: Liezl Cruz-Hou, Training and Outreach Developer; Maria Rodriguez, Training and Outreach Developer; Vanessa Espindola, Training and Outreach Coordinator; Libby Schroeder, Training and Outreach Supervisor; and Michelle Jaramillo, Training and Outreach Developer.

We’re pleased to introduce SCCHA’s Training and Outreach team! As the name implies, this team of five is responsible for training new Housing Department employees as well as ongoing training for seasoned staff. In addition, they work to build and maintain positive relationships with our residents, landlords and community-based organizations through ongoing training, communications and events. With 86 years of combined experience, this team provides a warm and welcoming entry into SCCHA’s programs. They hold twice-weekly tenant orientation for new Section 8 program families plus monthly “housing search” workshops for voucher holders still shopping for units. New and ongoing owners may attend owners’ workshops up to six times a year (about 5,900 owners participate in SCCHA’s Section 8 program). Community resource fairs like the one featured in this newsletter host agencies and nonprofits that provide resources and assistance to low-income residents. All of this work is under the umbrella of “MTW University,” a training curriculum that strives to ensure that SCCHA staff, Section 8 program applicants, participants and community stakeholders are provided with opportunities to gain a better understanding of the Section 8 program, agency policies and processes.