

Report to the Section 8 Success Rate Task Force

October 13, 2010

At the third meeting of the Section 8 Success Rate Task Force in July 2009, the Housing Authority of Portland had the assignment to report on the results of several activities the agency was implementing to improve the success rate for applicants who had received vouchers and were looking for a place to rent. The activities, which had been discussed and recommended by the task force, were:

- A Landlord Guarantee Fund that provides landlords with compensation for damages above normal wear and tear in a tenant's first two years of residency
- A voluntary tenant education program (Rent Well) that helps prospective renters overcome barriers
- Housing placement assistance from the HAP team dedicated to lease-up activities

Significant Increase in Success Rate

The new programs were implemented over four pulls from the tenant-based Section 8 waiting list that occurred between October 2009 and January 2010. The agency is pleased to report that the combined success rate – the number of households assigned vouchers that used them – from these pulls was nearly 91%, an increase of as much as 15% over the success rates in recent years.

WAITING LIST PULL DATA FROM 10/09 – 1/10

Waiting	# Pulled	# No	Denied	Vouchers	Vouchers	Successful Lease-		
List Pulls		Response		Issued	Expired	up		
						#	%	
Oct. 09	67	10	7	50	3	47	94%	
Nov. 09	35	6	3	26	3	23	89%	
Dec. 09	90	17	7	66	6	60	89%	
Jan. 10	130	27	6	97	11	86	89%	
Total	322	60	23	239	23	216	90.7%	

PRIOR LEASE-UP PERCENTAGES BY YEAR

Waiting List Pulls	#Pulled	Vouchers Issued	Successful Lease-up
2007	207	156	75.4%
2008	880	711	80.8%

Several of the 23 households that did not use their voucher returned it by choice, for reasons such as deciding to remain in public housing. When that is taken into account, the true success rate is even higher than 91%.

REASONS VOUCHERS EXPIRED WAITLIST PULLS OCT 2009 – JAN 2010

Oct 09–Jan 10	# No Response	# No Deposit	Already Housed	Voluntarily Declined - Other	No Longer Needed – Over Income	Bad Credit or Debt to Past Landlord
# Expired Vouchers	5	1	9	4	3	1

Mixed Results for Landlord Guarantee Fund and Tenant Education

Of the 239 households assigned vouchers over the four waiting list pulls, 186 were given access to the Landlord Guarantee Fund, and 34 chose to participate in and then completed a tenant education program. (All of the households pulled from the waiting lists were given the option to enroll in the tenant education program as their name neared the top of the list.)

Success rates for these participants were the same (91% for those with landlord fund access) or slightly lower (87% for those completing a Tenant Education program.) However, the 25 households given access to the Landlord Guarantee Fund who also completed the Rent Well program had a lease-up rate of 96%. It is interesting to note, however, that participation in these programs resulted in a shorter time to find a place to rent.

LEASE-UP ANALYSIS FOR SPECIAL INITIATIVES Data for tenant-based vouchers issued after November 1, 2009										
	# Vouchers Issued (Oct-Jan)	# Leased To Date	% Leased To Date	% Expired	% Leasing Under 60 Days	Average Days to Lease	Median Days to Lease			
All Vouchers	236	213	90%	9%	66%	48	42			
Landlord Guarantee Fund Pilot										
Not Given LGF Access	50	43	86%	14%	58%	49	42			
LGF Access	186	170	91%	8%	68%	47	42			
Rent Well Tenant Education Pilot										
Completed HAP's Rent Well	30	26	87%	10%	80%	39	35			
Failed to Finish Rent Well	15	15	100%	0%	73%	52	51			
No Rent Well	187	168	90%	10%	62%	49	42			
Landlord Guarantee Fund + Rent										
No LGF or Rent Well	41	37	90%	10%	61%	51	42			
LGF & Completed Rent Well	25	24	96%	0%	88%	37	35			
LGF but No Rent Well	161	146	91%	9%	65%	49	42			
Rent Well but No LGF*	9	6	67%	33%	67%	38	39			

Remaining Factors: Housing Assistance and Rental Market

HAP believes that increased lease-up assistance for voucher holders and conditions conducive to Section 8 acceptance in the private rental market both contributed to the improvement in the success rate, although there is no precise way to measure the impact of these factors.

The agency has a team dedicated to working with new voucher holders through lease-up, at which point they are assigned to a case manager on a separate team who works with them on an ongoing basis. Starting with the October 2009 waiting list pull, the lease-up staff has instituted several new practices, the most important of which is to check in with new voucher holders who haven't been successful in the first 30 days of their housing search. From that point forward, staff works with them at an individual level to help them with their search. The support includes linking them with services that may be beneficial, providing them with leads to prospective landlords, and offering counsel and encouragement throughout their quest. This increased level of service has proven very beneficial to voucher holders.

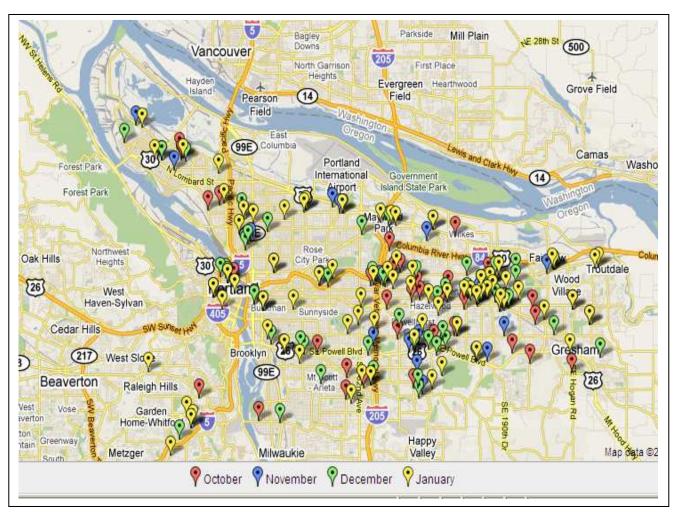
In addition, HAP believes market forces played a role in the positive results. During the months that the voucher holders were looking for places to rent, the private rental market remained relatively soft due to economic conditions. In addition, during such downturns, landlords often take a more favorable view of the Section 8 program for the reliable revenue stream it provides. They know they will continue to receive rental income even if their tenant has a change in life circumstances, such as losing a job.

Other Data from the Waiting List Pulls

HAP captured additional information over the four waiting list pulls that it thought would interest the task force:

- 18% of the voucher holders leased with landlords who were new to the program. This percentage did not vary significantly if a voucher holder had Landlord Guarantee fund access (18%) or completed the Rent Well tenant education course (19%), although it was slightly higher (21%) for voucher holders participating in both. In all, 23 landlords joined the Section 8 program as a result of the four pulls.
- Voucher holders reporting barriers, ranging from past evictions to lack of transportation for housing search, had success rates ranging from 90% to 100%, depending on the barrier.
- Voucher holders found places to rent throughout Multnomah County, with clustering in mid and east-County.

SUCCESSFUL LEASE-UPS BY LOCATION AND ZIPCODE October 09 through January 10 Section 8 Waiting List Pulls



Zip Code	# Households	Zip Code	# Households	Zip Code	# Households
97007	1	97211	6	97220	16
97024	5	97212	2	97221	1
97030	11	97213	4	97227	2
97060	2	97214	6	97230	25
97080	4	97215	1	97231	1
97202	9	97217	7	97232	2
97203	13	97216	4	97233	30
97205	4	97217	7	97236	22
97206	5	97218	6	97266	10
97209	9	97219	7	98133	1