

Statement of Housing Needs and Strategies for Addressing Needs

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires each year that housing authorities evaluate their needs and provide a detailed analysis of the demand for affordable housing within the local jurisdiction. Affordable housing needs may change over time and are contingent upon many factors to include labor markets, housing costs, income, life span, and accessibility. The 2022-2023 Annual Plan for Columbia Housing outlines that needs for housing within the City of Columbia and Richland County jurisdictions.

The Housing Authority of the City of Columbia (Columbia Housing) evaluates the needs for housing in the local area annually and uses the information to develop this strategic plan to address shortfalls, demand, and develop strategic transformation and acquisition plans upgrade current portfolio to better equality and more economically sustainable housing and add additional affordable housing to its inventory. This section of the CH's Annual Plan includes statistical data on the number of families seeking affordable housing assistance and provide demographic data on each waiting list.

Subcomponent A: Housing Needs of Families in the Jurisdiction Served by Columbia Housing

Housing Needs for Public Housing Waiting List Data and Needs Analysis

Area Median Income	Percentage
> 30% of AMI	94%
>50% of AMI	0%
>80% of AMI	5%
Not Low	1%

Overall Housing Needs	Total Number of Renters Households Needed Overall	Impact Scale
	Affordability	5
	Supply	5
	Quality	3
	Accessibility	3
	Size	2
	Location	3

Income is often a factor that drives the need for affordable housing. According to data published by the *National Low Income Housing Coalition*, workers earning an average renter's wage of \$13.25 per hour pays an average rent less than the FMR for a one-bedroom unit. The average household income for Columbia Housing's public housing applicants is \$6516. In comparison to the average renter's wage, the families who apply for housing has income significantly less than

the average renter's wages. Using data from this statistical analysis further supports the need for affordable housing in the Columbia and Richland County area and demonstrates that those individuals and families with income less than 50% of AMI make up 98 % of the Columbia Housing's waiting list.

Subcomponent B: Housing Needs of Families in Public Housing

Public Housing

The entire public housing waiting list was opened in August 2017 and closed in January 2018 apart from two categories which include housing for seniors age 62 and older and families qualifying for 4 and 5 bedrooms. In June 2019, after keeping the waiting lists open for a substantial period, Columbia Housing closed its waiting list due to the limited number of responses from applicants.

The greatest need for housing in the Public Housing Program continues to be one-bedroom units, which is currently (2743 applicants) followed by three-bedroom units, (1667 applicants). We continue to see the affordable one-bedroom demand continue to grow throughout the housing programs. Households granted HCVs continue to experience hardships finding one- and two-bedroom units that fit within the payment standard. As a result, the Columbia Housing adopted payment standards that are more representative of the local market fair housing rates.

Housing stabilization for low-income families is impacted by several factors. Although the demand for housing remains constant, our capacity to provide housing for families has decreased due to the decline of habitable public housing units. With Columbia Housing losing the ability to place families in Allen Benedict Court, a 246-unit development, fewer units were leased up in the public housing program in 2019-2020 fiscal year. ABC is community with many one-bedroom units which is our highest demand for housing. We are anticipating that this will increase the length of time one-bedroom eligible applicants will remain on the public housing waiting list. With the new leadership at CH, considerable efforts have been made to assess the existing housing inventory and determine the appropriate plan of action to ensure that all housing is safe for our residents.

A breakdown of public housing applicants consistent of special population consists of:

Demographic Categories	Number of Applicants	% Of Total Families	Annual Turnover
Elderly	238	4%	
Disabled Household Members	735	12%	
Families with Children	2153	36%	
1 Bedroom Applicants	2743	45%	
2 Bedroom Applicants	1667	28%	

3 Bedroom Applicants	924	15%	
4 Bedroom Applicants	650	11%	
5 Bedroom Applicants	43	1%	
5 + Bedroom Applicants	2	0%	
Total Applicants	6029		
White	385	7%	
Black/African American	4332	72%	
American Indian/Alaska Native	74	1%	
Asian	15	0%	
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	15	0%	
Hispanic	234	4%	
Other	3	0%	
Declined	59	1%	

The number of Senior Housing applicants for our Public Housing Program is currently 226. CH operates a HUD approved Housing Designation Program which provides a total of 257 housing units for elderly (age 62 and above) in the Oak Read Highrise and the Marion Street Highrise. The decision was made to not fill any vacancies in the Marion St. Highrise and transferred the current tenants to other housing communities or provided HCVs. This will result in a temporary loss of housing designated for seniors; however, the repositioning plan entails new housing for seniors in the near future. As we continue to expand our portfolio, evaluation of the specific housing designations will be taken into consideration as we continue to encounter more aging applicants seeking affordable housing options such as HCVs and PBVs.

Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher Program Needs

The Housing Choice Voucher waiting list was opened December 18th through December 20th, 2019 to accept applications for the lottery. During the 3 days of intake, CH received 7655 applications. A system was developed to randomly select 3000 applications to be placed on the waiting list.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program remains the program of choice, presumably for its element of housing choice and the opportunity to port from one location to another. Partnering with other agencies during the lottery process increased the CHA's outreach and made the process accessible to many applicants who desire a voucher. The Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List is currently closed.

Demographic Categories	Number of Applicants	% Of Total Families	Annual Turnover
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Elderly	50		
Disabled Household Members	113		
Families with Children	446	15%	
1 Bedroom Applicants	3024	99%	
2 Bedroom Applicants	16	1%	
3 Bedroom Applicants	6	0%	
4 Bedroom Applicants	2	0%	
5 Bedroom Applicants	1	0%	
5 + Bedroom Applicants	0	0%	
Total Applicants	3049		
White	28	1%	
Black/African American	573	19%	
American Indian/Alaska Native	6	0%	
Asian	1	0%	
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	
Hispanic	10	0%	
Other	1	0%	
Declined	1	0%	

Area Median Income	Percentage
> 30% of AMI	95%
>50% of AMI	0%
>80% of AMI	4%
Not Low	1%

The current number of applicants on the HCV Waiting List is 3049

Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program

The total number of Section 8 MOD-Rehab applicants remaining on the Waiting List is 52.

Project Based Vouchers

The PBV developments served by Columbia Housing is Lorick Place, River's Edge and 4 Seasons. ***There are 1229 applicants on the waiting list for PBV developments.***

VASH Vouchers

The 2019 Point-In-Time count conducted by the United Way of the Midlands identified 188 Veterans experiencing homelessness in the Columbia area of which 30 being unsheltered. Although there continues to be a need to ensure that Veterans receive adequate housing, the

turnover rate for VASH Vouchers is significantly high. This has required CH and the VA to create strategies to stabilize the Veterans and ensure that they are provided services that deter the likelihood of them becoming homeless again. The program has the capacity to fund 414 VASH Vouchers. The VA refers eligible beneficiaries to CH whenever vouchers are available. ***There are 6 applicants on the waiting list.***

Housing Needs for Special Populations

Addressing homelessness in the Columbia area has been more of the strategic initiatives conducted by Columbia Housing. To increase the number of affordable housing units in the Columbia area and reduce wait time, the CH created a Homeless Program Department in 2007. The CH partnered with the City of Columbia, United Way of the Midlands and the University of South Carolina, School of Medicine to provide housing to chronically homeless individuals with disabilities through the Housing First Program. The CH continues to partner with numerous agencies in the Midlands Area Consortium for the Homeless (MACH) to create additional housing for homeless persons and families. Currently the total number of units funded under the programs is 73 units.

Data collected from the 2019 Point-In-Time Count indicated that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness decreased 23% over the last 5 years. The efforts are due to programs such as the Continuum of Care and HOPWA administered by Columbia Housing. The local area is seeing an increase in the number of youth ages 18-24 experiencing homelessness which has risen 35% since 2016. We will apply for the FUP Grant and will continue to pursue other options to address homelessness in youth and other populations such as those aging out of foster care.

Emergency Housing Vouchers

In July 2021, CH was allocated 84 EHV's in partnership with the local CoC to provide housing for homeless or at risk of homeless individuals and families. ***Currently, there are 200 applicants on the waiting list*** At the time of this report 46 of the EHV's have been leased.

HOPWA

The CH administers a multi part housing program for persons diagnosed with AIDS or and AIDS related illness through funding allocated by the Housing Opportunity for Person With AIDS (HOPWA) Grants funded mostly by the City of Columbia. Each year, Columbia Housing responds to requests for proposals to continue funding the program and provide housing to individuals and families with at least one person in the household diagnosed with AIDS. The program has been quite comprehensive in which CH established great partnerships with PALSS and University of South Carolina School of Medicine to provide supportive services for HOPWA families. ***Currently, there are 12 applicants on the HOPWA waiting list.***

1. The current HOPWA allocation for Housing Choice Vouchers provides funding for approximately 50 vouchers for persons diagnosed with AIDS or an AIDS related illness.

This amount is substantially less than previous allocations which initially helped 95 families with vouchers.

2. The HOPWA Permanent Housing Program was created to address increasing rents and the inability of clients to locate housing. With funding allocated by the City of Columbia through the HOPWA Program, CHA purchased and renovated 9 units to provide housing for eligible individuals and families. The units are managed and maintained by property management staff.
3. The HOPWA Housing First Program provides housing for 15 persons who were homeless and diagnosed with AIDS or and AIDS related illness. The scope of this program includes CHA renting the units from landlords and paying utility costs for the tenants. This program is transitional to the HCV or Permanent Housing Programs.

The HOPWA Program is greatly needed to assist persons diagnosed with AIDS with stable housing and supportive services that include medical treatment. The reduction in funding over the past four years has decreased the number of families being served.

The following documents provide statistics on CHA's waiting lists.

1. Public Housing
2. Housing Choice Voucher
3. HOPWA
4. MOD Rehab
5. Emergency Housing Vouchers

Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

In 2017, Richland County in partnership with Columbia Housing development a comprehensive analysis assessment of fair housing. Within the report, various impediments were identified that impact housing access for special populations and protected classes. The assessment cited racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty within the county in addition to the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) barriers which increased over the past ten years. Additionally, the continued growth of elderly populations and access to affordable housing for persons with disabilities continue to be target areas of need. The Columbia Housing's PHA Plan creates affordable housing for the targeted populations who have impediments to housing of choice. Through the provision of fair housing education, promoting housing education through counseling, and making available various types of affordable housing opportunities, CH has implemented initiatives to address impediments fair to housing choice.

Strategy for Addressing Housing Needs

The Annual Plan identifies housing needs for the local jurisdiction area. Based on the information provided, the greatest housing needs are for individuals with low income, needing one and two bedrooms. To meet the most significant housing needs in the local area, the

Columbia Housing had to assess its existing capacity. The current public housing portfolio has 1684 habitable units and 4034 Housing Choice Vouchers. The number of individuals on the combined waiting lists exceeds the availability of housing resources controlled by CH. As a result, we have identified several strategies to address housing needs and support the most vulnerable population of citizens in the area.

Possible Strategies for Addressing Needs

The low vacancy rate for affordable housing becomes a challenge when helping families with HCV secure quality housing in desired areas. Due to the lack of inventory for affordable housing in Columbia, there is not enough affordable housing (less than allowed under the Fair Market Rents) for families and individuals to lease up their vouchers. The CHA continues to see more families doubling up, because they cannot pay the private market rents, which are frequently above the Fair Market Rents (FMR).

Possible Strategies for Addressing Housing Needs	Indicates Adopted Strategies	Reason for employing Strategies
Maximize the number of affordable housing units available to the PHA within its current resources	x	Ensure that housing is accessible and free of health hazards
Increase the number of affordable housing units	x	Decrease homelessness and number of families needing affordable housing
Target available assistance to families at or below 30% of AMI	x	The PH waiting list is 94% applicants at or below 30% of AMI
Target available assistance to families at or below 50% of AMI	x	
Target available assistance to elderly	x	Ensure that one of the most vulnerable populations have stable housing
Target available assistance to families with disabilities	x	The CoC Homeless Program targets housing for disabled homeless families
Increase awareness of PHA resources among families and ethnicities with disproportionate needs	x	Inform more LEP families of housing resources

The following activities will support the strategies for addressing housing needs for low-income individuals and families.

- Reposition current portfolio to create more sustainable housing stock and leverage resources to expand initiatives to create more affordable housing;
- Create partnerships with other housing providers;
- Expand the number of HCV landlords participating in the program;
- Administer special population programs such as Continuum of Care, VASH, HOPWA, Mainstream Vouchers, and Family Unification Grant;
- Redevelop housing on public housing property that has been demolished;
- Maintain lease up rate of 98% for the HCV Program;
- Capitalize on financial resources by liquidating nonpublic housing assets and
- Promote LEP outreach activities.