



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2020-04-22 (1)

Date: April 22, 2020

To: THA Board of Commissioners

From: Michael Mirra
Executive Director

Re: The Rise at 19th – Conversion of HUD-VASH Vouchers to Project-Based VASH Vouchers

This resolution authorizes the conversion of eighteen (18) Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers to project-based VASH vouchers at Tacoma Housing Authority's (THA) new housing development The Rise at 19th.

Background

The Board of Commissioners adopted Resolution 2018-05-23 (5) to execute an Agreement to Enter into a Housing Assistance Payment (AHAP) Contract and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract between THA and 1800 Court F LLLP (The Rise at 19th) for fifty-three (53) Project Based Vouchers. The Board of Commissioners then adopted Resolution 2019-0-22 (7), authorizing eleven (11) additional vouchers in the AHAP and HAP contracts upon execution. The total number of Project-Based vouchers in the AHAP increased to sixty-four (64). The AHAP for this property was signed on June 26, 2019.

The Rise at 19th has tax credit set-asides for homeless and disabled households, as well as families with children. All households must be at or below 60% AMI, with thirty-two (32) units reserved for households at or below 30% AMI. The combination of all sixty-four (64) units receiving Project-Based assistance from THA with the specific tax credit set-asides ensures that very low and low-income families can live at this property.

The rate of homelessness amongst the nation's veteran population is staggering. This, coupled with additional needs often present in serving the veteran community, led the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. This program is a partnership between HUD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Some of the most vulnerable veterans are identified by the VA, and if they are homeless and actively engaged with case management services through the VA they are eligible for a HUD-VASH Voucher. VA case managers refer veterans to the local housing authority when vouchers are available.

Housing authorities are invited to apply for HUD-VASH vouchers on an annual basis. THA submits applications for additional HUD-VASH vouchers at every opportunity in order to ensure they are available for the veteran population in our community. Currently, THA has one-hundred fifty-seven (157) VASH HCV in its ACC, with 35 available for issuance. The most recent award of HUD-VASH vouchers to THA was twenty-five (25) in November 2019. THA deferred the effective date of this award to May 1, 2020. In addition, THA partners with several community-based organizations that house veterans in their respective portfolios, assisting thirty (30) units with Project-Based vouchers. THA works closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System (American Lake Division) to receive referrals and house homeless veterans. While the utilization of Project-Based VASH vouchers is strong, the full utilization of the HUD-VASH vouchers has been more challenging in recent years.

While we are confident there is a need for homeless veterans to utilize these specialized vouchers, various factors have contributed to their underutilization. The VA has been understaffed with case managers, leading to fewer referrals and case management availability in our region. This is not a problem unique to THA as housing authorities throughout the area have experienced the same effect. Tacoma's high demand housing market has also led to the underutilization of vouchers despite over 400 homeless Veteran families in Pierce County. Project-Based vouchers at The Rise at 19th are a direct response to help address the VA's utilization challenges. We believe that converting eighteen (18) of the available thirty-five (35) HUD-VASH vouchers into Project-Based vouchers will provide needed housing for veterans in our community experiencing homelessness and put these vouchers to use in housing reserved for them.

HUD approval is not required for this conversion. However, a letter of support from the Department of Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System (American Lake Division) is needed prior to this action, stating it is in support of the decision and committing to continued provision of case management services. On March 5, 2020, THA received this letter of support from the VA, meeting HUD's only requirement for conversion of these vouchers (See Exhibit A). THA and the VA have a strong working relationship, which will streamline the referral of households to occupy the eighteen (18) Project-Based VASH units set aside at The Rise. THA would allocate eighteen (18) of the most recent twenty-five (25) HUD-VASH vouchers awarded to be converted to Project-Based vouchers.

Recommendation

Approve Resolution 2020-04-22 (1) authorizing the conversion of eighteen (18) HUD-VASH Vouchers to Project-Based VASH Vouchers at THA's new housing development The Rise at 19th.



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2020-04-22 (1) **(The Rise at 19th – Conversion of HUD VASH Vouchers to Project-Based VASH Vouchers)**

A **RESOLUTION** of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma

WHEREAS, the Rise at 19th has sixty-four (64) units that will receive Project-Based assistance from THA; and

WHEREAS, the Rise at 19th will house low-income and very low-income households in our community; and

WHEREAS, THA has underutilized HUD-VASH vouchers available; and

WHEREAS, THA is committed to providing housing for homeless veterans in our community; and

WHEREAS, THA and the Department of Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System (American Lake Division) concur that the conversion of these HUD-VASH vouchers will provide an additional housing option for many homeless veterans in our community; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma, Washington as follows:

Approve the conversion of eighteen (18) HUD-VASH Vouchers to Project-Based VASH Vouchers at THA's new housing development The Rise at 19th.

Approved: April 22, 2020

A blue ink signature of Derek Young, written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Derek Young, Chair



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Puget Sound Health Care System
1660 South Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108-1597

MAR 05 2020

American Lake Division
Tacoma WA 98493-5000

In Reply Refer To: 663/S-00

Seattle Division
Seattle WA 98108-1597

Michael Mirra, Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 S. L St.
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Mr. Mirra:

I am pleased to be able to offer this letter of support on behalf of the Tacoma Housing Authority's (THA) application to convert 18-20 HUD-VASH housing choice vouchers to Project-Based Vouchers. This project is an agreement between Tacoma Housing Authority and VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

THA has developed a project called "The Rise," focusing on households that are homeless individuals, homeless families with children and physically disabled individuals. This project is located in the City of Tacoma, which has a high-demand housing market, creating a challenge for HUD-VASH participants to secure housing their housing-choice voucher. This has led to the underutilization of vouchers, despite over 400 homeless Veteran families in Pierce County. THA has agreed to low-barrier rental criteria for HUD-VASH participants, further removing challenges for Veterans experiencing homelessness to be housed.

THA has been an outstanding HUD-VASH program partner, working collaboratively with VA Puget Sound Health Care System and the larger community toward the goal of ending Veteran homelessness. The VA Puget Sound Health Care System is a proud supporter of THA and we are confident that this conversion of HUD-VASH vouchers to project-based HUD-VASH vouchers will serve our collective effort to end Veteran homelessness. Should you have any questions about this letter of support, please contact Rachel Silis, Supervisory Social Worker, Community Housing and Outreach Services (CHOS), VA Puget Sound at (253) 583-2826.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael C. Tadych", is written over a horizontal line.

Michael C. Tadych, FACHE
Director