



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

July 31, 2007

TO: Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations Special Committee for Affordable and Workforce Housing

FROM: Paula C. Sampson, Director, Dept. of Housing and Community Development

SUBJECT: Response to Questions Raised at May Meeting

Let me begin by thanking you for the opportunity to meet with you in May. I believe the meeting was another positive and productive step in enhancing communications between our agency and the community. While we were able to respond to most of your questions and concerns at the meeting, you did ask for follow-up on some additional questions.

Below are our responses to your questions regarding FCRHA waiting lists and reporting income limits.

I. FCRHA Waiting Lists

Why are families now allowed to be on more than one Housing Program list?

Many families apply to more than one waiting list to increase their chances to obtain housing. Some lists move faster than others. Under Fair Housing laws, the FCRHA cannot deny anyone the opportunity to apply for housing, nor can they set limits on how many programs they can apply to.

Why isn't the Fairfax County Rental Program (FCRP) list completely separate in all aspects from the other Housing programs? A separate list would exclude people who are eligible for the Public Housing program or Section 8 Housing Voucher program.

Under Fair Housing laws, the FCRHA cannot deny anyone the opportunity to apply for housing, nor can the FCRHA set limits on how many programs they can apply to.

Can there be a time restriction for at least 1 year implemented to prevent families receiving housing from the Public Housing Program or Section 8 Housing Voucher Program from going to the Fairfax County Rental Program. If not, please explain.

Fair Housing laws would prohibit placing such restrictions on applicants. In actuality, families who are able to receive assistance through the federally funded Public Housing or Housing Choice Voucher programs are unlikely to request a transfer to the Fairfax County Rental Program (FCRP) as participants in the FCRP generally pay higher rent.

Department of Housing and Community Development
3700 Pender Drive, Suite 300
Fairfax, VA 22030-6039
703-246-5105, TTY 703-385-3578, Fax 703-246-5115
www.fairfaxcounty.gov

Eligibility: Define the priority criteria that determine how families are selected for each of the Housing Programs.

PUBLIC HOUSING:

Priority Group One:

An applicant may qualify for this priority if the Head or Spouse is employed, attending school, or participating in a job training program, for a combination of at least 30 hours per week; OR is 62 or older; OR meets HUD's definition of being disabled (see brochure); OR is the only adult in the household working less than 30 hours per week and who is the primary caretaker of a disabled dependent. In addition, the Head or Spouse lives or works in Fairfax County, and/or the City of Falls Church, and/or the City of Fairfax, and/or the Town of Herndon; AND during the past 90 days or longer, is paying more than 30% of all gross income (before taxes or deductions) for rent and utilities (excluding telephone and cable television costs); AND does not exceed the maximum income requirements.

Priority Group Two:

Head or Spouse lives or works in Fairfax County, and/or the City of Falls Church, and/or the City of Fairfax, and/or the Town of Herndon, and does not exceed the maximum income requirements. This group will not be invited for eligibility until all of the applicants in Priority Group One have been contacted for an interview

Priority Group Three:

Head or Spouse does not live or work in Fairfax County, or the City of Falls Church, or the City of Fairfax, or the Town of Herndon, but does not exceed the maximum income requirements. This group will not be invited for eligibility until all of the applicants in Priority Group One and Group Two have been contacted for an interview.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER

Priority Group One:

An applicant may qualify for this priority if the Head or Spouse is employed, attending school, or participating in a job training program, for a combination of at least 30 hours per week; OR is 62 or older; OR meets HUD's definition of being disabled (see brochure); OR is the only adult in the household working less than 30 hours per week and who is the primary caretaker of a disabled dependent. In addition, the Head or Spouse lives or works in Fairfax County, and/or the City of Falls Church, and/or the City of Fairfax, and/or the Town of Herndon; AND during the past 90 days or longer, is paying more than 30% of all gross income (before taxes or deductions) for rent and utilities (excluding telephone and cable television costs); AND does not exceed the maximum income requirements.

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FAIRFAX COUNTY RENTAL PROGRAM

1. Applicants must live or work in Fairfax County to be eligible to apply for FCRP, in addition to meeting the income requirements for their household size, and pass a credit check, rental references, and police records check.
2. Applicants are served based on the date of their application to the waiting list for the property or program for which they applied.
3. The FCRP generally serves working households or retired persons with incomes which are higher than those households in the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs.
4. Since a variety of funding sources have been used and most FCRP properties have different income requirements, citizens came visit the FCRHA web site for details on the specific income requirements (minimum and maximums) for each property. (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rha>)

II. Reporting of Income Limits

Provide documentation to show income percentages of the actual occupants of units owned by Fairfax County.

Based on a recent analysis of incomes in FCRHA programs, the following is the average household income for households living in FCRHA-owned housing:

Public Housing: \$21,996

Fairfax County Rental Program: \$35,005

Senior Housing: \$23,209

Request the FCRHA report household income of the actual occupants of all preserved units, instead of the maximum income eligible for a four (4) person family.

The vast majority of preserved units are owned by private entities and, as such, this is private information. HCD periodically does a quality control to ensure units are being rented to income-eligible households.

For FCRHA-owned units, the average total household income for families living in preserved units is \$46,924.

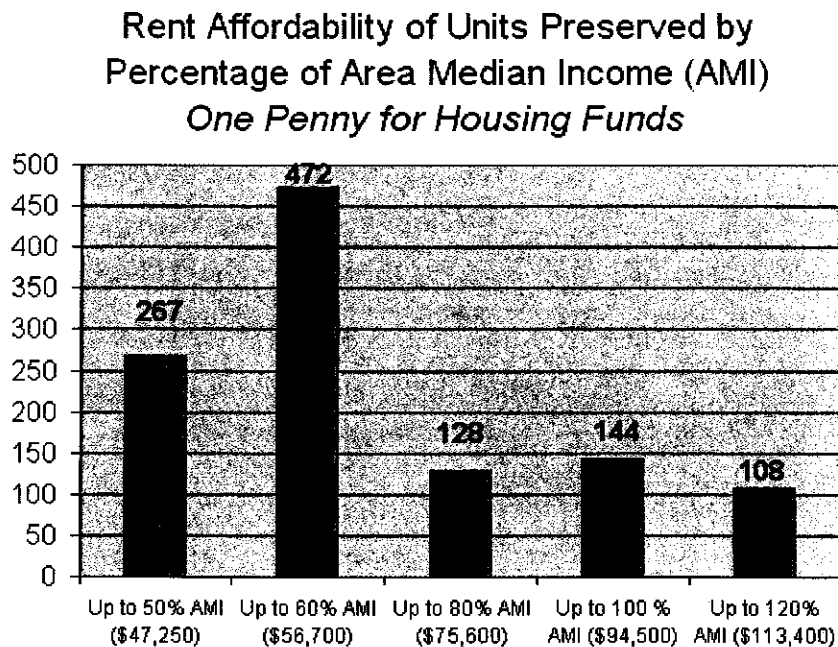
If over 70% of the families on the waiting list are 3 persons or less, why are the units preserved being reported at an income based on 4 persons?

The standard in the housing industry is to use the “Family of 4” as the benchmark for reporting housing data, including household income. The FCRHA has generally followed this standard, and rents are adjusted for actual household size.

How is the FCRHA preventing all of the units from going to the lowest or neediest of incomes?

The FCRHA values diverse communities – and strives to achieve a balance of incomes within the income range allowed for the property. The income range is based on the type of financing used to develop and/or operate the property. For example, for properties financed with low income housing tax credits, the units may be rented to households with incomes up to 60% of area median income. Efforts are made to market FCRHA programs to a variety of income levels – to ensure a diverse pool.

The bar chart below shows the breakdown to date of the incomes being served in preserved units:



What documentation is available to the public from the FCRHA that cites the actual incomes of actual families who occupy the units set at a particular income maximum?

This is private information protected under federal law.

If you have further questions, please contact me or my deputy Mary Stevens at 703-246-5105.