



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-5000

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

November 1, 2013

Board of Commissioners
c/o Irene McBride, Chair
Alexander County Housing Authority
600 Elmwood Place
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Re: Public Housing Agency Recovery & Sustainability (PHARS) Assessment Results and Determinations


Dear Commissioners:

This letter is to convey the results and determinations of a PHARS assessment of the Alexander County Housing Authority conducted by HUD between September 4, 2013 and September 13, 2013 and to advise of the next steps to be taken by HUD. The Alexander County Housing Authority received an assessment of its financial condition and governance because of a designation of Substandard by HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center ("REAC") for the fiscal year ending 2012.

HUD reviewed key documents of the agency and conducted interviews with key staff and stakeholders. Thank you for the assistance provided by the agency during our assessment.

The results and determinations of the assessment are outlined in the enclosed summary. Based on the assessment HUD will assist the Alexander County Housing Authority to develop its required Action Plan, which must be adopted by resolution of the Board, to correct deficient performance areas. We appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me at Steven.E.Meiss@hud.gov or 312-913-8300. Thank you for your ongoing assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

 Steven E. Meiss, Director
Illinois State Office of Public Housing
Region-V

Enclosure

cc:

Mr. Harold McNelly
County Board Chair
2000 Washington Avenue
Cairo, Illinois 62914

John Price, Commissioner
Alexander County Housing Authority
100 Ohio Street
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Mike Brey, Commissioner
Alexander County Housing Authority
100 Ohio Street
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Judson Childs, Commissioner
Alexander County Housing Authority
433 – 38th Street
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James Huffman, Commissioner
Alexander County Housing Authority
100 Ohio Street
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Martha Franklin, Executive Director
Alexander County Housing Authority
100 Ohio Street
Cairo, Illinois 62914

The Alexander County Housing Authority
Public Housing Agency Recovery and Sustainability Assessment
Results and Determinations
October 31, 2013

Physical

- The Alexander County Housing Authority entered into an oral monthly contract for lawn care services that was improperly procured without competitive proposals and HUD's standard terms and conditions
- The job descriptions for maintenance staff are not adequate to describe assigned work activities and specialized training required
- The Modernization Coordinator Mr. Richard Harrington's employment contract was not procured in a manner required for professional services
- McBride development and Elmwood development have ongoing security issues
- The Alexander County Housing Authority must direct resources toward maintenance work to maximize their REAC score
- The Executive Director requires procurement training
- All long term vacant units must be cleaned and prepared for lease
- The plumbing at the McBride Development is deteriorated and in need of rehabilitation
- First generation dwelling units at McBride and Elmwood Gardens should be evaluated for obsolescence

Management

- The former Executive Director improperly procured a consultant services contract for himself
- The Alexander County Housing Authority awarded retirement packages and offered part time employment to specific employees with no documented or defined formula or eligibility requirements
- Due to the lack of a defined process for determining retirement, retirement packages may not have been offered to employees with like tenures
- Maintenance employees are not receiving the correct prevailing wage
- The Executive Director's son in law is employed at the Housing Authority as a maintenance person
- Board Member Judson Childs has a nephew and grandson employed by the Housing Authority
- The Assistant Executive Director's husband is a maintenance person at the Alexander County Housing Authority
- The Alexander County Housing Authority's nepotism policy is inadequate
- The Executive Director Martha Franklin is a member of the Laborers Local 773
- Board Member John Price is an Officer in Laborers Local 773
- Board Chairperson Irene McBride receives transportation unrelated to Board service and preferential treatment by Housing Authority Staff

- All Alexander County Housing Authority staff has not received adequate equal opportunity in housing and sexual harassment
- The Alexander County Housing Authority does not have a Community Service requirement for the residents
- The Alexander County Housing Authority has no active Resident Councils
- Employee evaluations are not tied to Housing Authority performance (TARs, occupancy rate, MENAR, etc.)
- The Executive Director's evaluation is not tied to Housing Authority performance (TARs, Occupancy Rate, MENAR, etc.)
- The Alexander County Housing Authority does not have a training program for all employees and does not maintain a record of trainings completed
- The Alexander County Housing Authority does not have a training program for the Executives and Board Members
- The operation of the Alexander County Housing Authority has not fully converted to the Asset Management
- The Executive Director serves in various capacities at the Alexander County Housing Authority performing executive, management and non-management functions