



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
Illinois State Office, Region V
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PUBLIC HOUSING

The Alexander County Housing Authority
Public Housing Agency Recovery and Sustainability Assessment
Results and Determinations
November, 2015

Physical

- PHARS visit in September 2015 identified Alexander County Housing Authority's (ACHA) existing contract with Terminix Pest Control as not effective. Complaints from tenants still being made at Board meetings about bedbugs, roaches and rat infestation. Emergency funds identified in September 2015, from the State of Illinois still not being used because ACHA not identified a pest control company, and key lock company to replace locks at McBride and Elmwood;
- Tenants still complaining about maintenance staff's failure to make repairs for long standing work orders (tubs with peeling paint, mold in units, leaking sinks, etc.);
- Long term vacant units identified in October 2013 PHARS report and again during the September 2015 PHARS visit and Results & Determinations letter, not being addressed by maintenance staff;
- Complaints from tenants and applicants regarding time on wait list for available apartments, registered at the September 2015 Board meeting, still being made by tenants and applicants at the November 2015 Board meeting;
- Garbage and debris in the 72 vacant units identified in September 2015, still not started as of the November 2015 PHARS visit;
- Staff still accused of being non responsive when requests for work orders are made by tenants, another complaint heard at the September 2015 Board meeting;
- McBride and Elmwood developments have major security issues first identified in PHARS Results and Determinations report of October 2013, and again stated in the Results and Determinations letter of September 2015. Most recent incidents reported are tenants shooting at suspects breaking into units;
- Maintenance supervisor hired on October 21, 2015 but does not have a computer assigned to complete required work;

- August 25, 2014 PHARS Results and Determinations report showed the Alexander County Housing Authority with a 12 percent vacancy. The ACHA was directed to adjust expenditures to have funds available to prepare and lease units. As of the September 2015 PHARS visit the vacancy was 18%. By the November PHARS visit vacancies were at 22% and climbing and still no budget adjustment completed by ACHA;
- The PHARS Team requested 2 months of work orders completed by maintenance staff, and shared that information with the Board during your meeting. For the four maintenance staff assigned there were only 299 work orders completed over a two month period or 42 working days, which represented a completion range of 2.69 a day per maintenance worker to a low of .71 work order completion each day. As pointed out during your meeting, this production is a poor use of resources considering the high costs required by your union contract;
- The PHARS Team also pulled certifications and re-certifications completed over the past 6 months, and determined that ACHA has more than 120 outstanding/late re-certifications, which is a violation of your ACC;
- There is no organized waiting list process; it appears as though ACHA has a continuous open waiting list that is never advertised, simply word of mouth. As such there are 76 currently on the waiting list ranging in wait time from 10/10/2013 to 11/09/2015; however there is a second list called "Transfers" with 32 families and wait times from 05/22/2012 to 10/10/2015. There does not appear to be any organized process for leasing units, thus the need for a leasing plan that has failed to be completed after being requested by the Field Office for the past two months;

Management

- Multiple grievances, EEO claims and law suits pending against the agency by existing and former staff are increasing because of a lack of leadership and direction by the Board;
- Inadequate legal representation for the ACHA; legal counsel is being directed to file legal notices when units are abandoned, which is an unusual and unnecessary expense for ACHA;
- Untrained property management staff, financial staff, work order center staff, maintenance staff, with no standard operating procedures or work plan. Not only is the staff untrained, but not being properly supervised which has resulted in low, or no production;

- A union contract that does not reflect public housing standards for compensation and benefits, which has resulted in ACHA not having enough funds to pay expenses on a regular basis;
- The pest control contract with Terminix has no baseline deliverables (Terminix is going to units based upon calls from the work order center, rather than having a plan to regularly treat units) to assist the ACHA in knowing what level of pest control is being delivered by the vendor; consequently the infestation at the developments remains the same;
- Master key for units located at McBride and Elmwood was allegedly sold by a former employee several years ago, and locks have not been re-keyed. This has resulted in a large number of units being burglarized, and now tenant shootings at McBride, because of break-ins;
- ACHA has been operating without a permanent executive director since November 2014, and the staff production has been unacceptable because of the lack of leadership and direction;
- Vacant units are not being turned over in a timely manner and the ACHA does not have a leasing plan in place, and apparently does not know how to prepare one given the continuous request from the Field Office over the past two months;
- Tenants are not paying their rent in a timely manner, and in some cases they are paying partial rents, which the Board and staff were informed is unacceptable;
- Modernization Manager is under a contract to work one day per week, and he does not know how to properly procure contracts and has refused to attend training;
- As stated in the Results and Determinations letter dated October 31, 2013 the ACHA does not have a Community Service requirement for the residents and this is a HUD regulatory requirement;
- As stated in the Results and Determinations letter dated October 31, 2013 the ACHA has not converted to Asset Management, and two years later it appears there is no desire to convert;
- When tenants either abandoned units, or are evicted, there is no effort to clean out the vacant units, thus creating opportunities for rats, roaches and bedbugs to further infest the units and developments. The Board agreed with the PHARS Team during the September 2015 visit to hire several Section 3 Tenants to begin cleaning units, however this has not been done;

Governance

- As required in the October 2013 Results and Determinations letter, the ACHA has not provided a cash flow/budget for all of the retirement payouts and EEOC payments that would identify how those payments are made from the annual budget of the ACHA;
- There is no budget and it appears as though a budget has existed within the ACHA since 2013;
- The Board of Commissioners continually makes administrative and personnel decisions, even they have been advised not to by the Field Office and PHARS Team. During the October 2015 meeting, it was reported that a maintenance supervisor was hired and the Board would determine how to provide a benefit package. This task should have been directed to the interim executive director, who would make a recommendation to the Board;
- There has not been a permanent executive director for the ACHA since November 2014; however, the Board has hired two interim executive directors who have not dedicated the necessary time at the ACHA to correct existing problems;
- The Field Office recommended Board Training in August 2014 and provided the HUD website for the interim executive director to share with each member, but no effort has been made to complete this training that is essential to the proper governance of the ACHA;
- There is no resident advisory board for the ACHA;
- The ACHA has been on Zero Threshold since July 2014; and required all contracts and purchases to be reviewed by the Field Office assigned engineer, who has provided Technical Assistance. However there has been no improvement in the procurements by the ACHA, which has on most occasions caused vendors to not be paid timely.