

NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER EDITION 2021

What's Inside...
The Family Self-Sufficiency Program
Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program
Meet Ron McCoy, Director, Housing Choice Voucher Program



Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

Housing  Authority
of Prince George's County



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



NATHAN F. SIMMS, JR.

Spring is full of growth and a fresh look at the world, and so are we here at the Housing Authority of Prince George's County! In my first year as Executive Director, we are gearing up to expand access to quality housing for low-income residents of the County in every way we can. We are already more active in leveraging our vouchers to expand and develop new housing opportunities, preserving and expanding communities we already have and assisting our residents in better accessing the housing available in the County.

This newsletter is one of the ways we have committed to stay in touch and make sure you know about the important things we are working on here. We've all made it through a challenging year. We are grateful to have residents who care about their communities and housing providers who continue to be responsible and consistent. Let's stay strong together. Our team is focused on delivering high levels of customer service to landlords and voucher holders alike. We want you to bring us ideas and feedback on what works and what could be improved. Please send your comments by email to:

hapgrad@co.pg.md.us. We look forward to hearing from you!

THE FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)

Program is a voluntary program administered by the Housing Authority of Prince George's County (HAPGC), with the help of local organizations, community agencies, nonprofit providers, and businesses, in a collective effort to provide supportive services that will enable participating families to achieve goals that will position them to achieve self-sufficiency and economic independence. HAPGC will enter into a Contract of Participation with the participating family and assist in creating an individualized training and services plan for each family member that will support their upward mobility. As the family members' earned income increases during the term of their Contract, credit is made on their behalf to an interest bearing escrow account. Upon successful completion of each goal indicated in their Contract, the family may claim the accrued escrow account balance. Anyone interested should call the **FSS Coordinator at (301) 883-5501**. There were four (4) graduates of the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program during the last six months receiving almost \$80k in escrow funds:

T.S. \$34,086.05 H.W. \$1,290.00
C.J. \$31,607.59 K.C. \$13,084.44



HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program (HCVHP) is a voluntary program administered by HAPGC designed to assist participating families to become first-time home buyers by using the subsidy that once helped them pay rent to a landlord to instead be given to them to offset mortgage expenses for a maximum of fifteen (15) years*. (*Special terms and eligibility criteria apply). Anyone interested should call **Shanell Williams, Homeownership Specialist**, at **301-883-5451**. In the last six (6) months, HAPGC has assisted the following clients with home purchases in the Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program:

CLIENT	ZIP CODE	PURCHASE PRICE OF HOME
A.B.	20613	\$300,000
C.J.	20720	\$280,000
C.A.	20715	\$425,000
A.R.	20720	\$372,650
K.H.	20720	\$440,000
O.D.	20735	\$390,000
Z.B.	20730	\$348,570
M.M.	20747	\$319,113
M.P.	20747	\$266,000
K.W.	20720	\$490,000



RONALD MCCOY

DIRECTOR OF THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Ronald McCoy became the new Director of the **Housing Choice Voucher Program in the Housing Authority of Prince George's County (HAPGC)** in November 2020. He has more than two decades of experience in housing industry. Prior to arriving at HAPGC, Mr. McCoy managed his own affordable housing consulting practice. Before he went into private practice, Mr. McCoy was the Director of the Housing Choice Voucher Program for the District of Columbia Housing Authority. Ronald McCoy transformed a once documented troubled program in D.C. (by HUD standards) into one of **the best voucher programs in the United States**. In his 19 year tenure as Director, his creative ideas have received multiple local and housing industry recognitions such as the creation of his Rapid Veteran Housing Model (recognized as a Bright Idea in Innovations in American Government by Harvard Kennedy School). Mr. McCoy has received several acknowledgements and awards of excellence for various programs and initiatives he created.

He is an expert and considered one of the top housing professionals in the industry. Mr. McCoy has managed a portfolio of **19,000 households** in both local and federal housing programs with an annual budget of just over \$400 Million.

LINKS TO LANDLORD FAQ'S, VOUCHER PROGRAM TENANT OBLIGATIONS & MORE

HUD Housing Choice Voucher Program FAQ Sheet:
HCV Fact Sheet for Landlords

HUD Myth-busting & Benefits for Landlords:
Myth-busting and Benefits for HCV Landlords

HUD How Family Portion of Lease Rent Is Determined:
Know how much rent will I receive

HUD Housing Quality Standards Inspection(s):
HQS Initial Inspection Flowchart
Biennial HQS Inspection Flowchart

HUD What Are Your Tenant's Obligations In The Voucher Program:
Learn about the tenant's obligations

PLEASE VISIT:
HUD.GOV



LANDLORD INCENTIVE PROGRAM

HAPGC is paying landlords! The Landlord Incentive Program is administered by the HAPGC and is designed to demonstrate the importance of customer service and an improved relationship with the landlord and property owner community under the direction of our manager, Mr. Ronald McCoy, and our Executive Director, Mr. Nathan Simms. Additionally, this serves as an opportunity for HAPGC to convey our need for affordable housing units equipped for persons with a disability, in "opportunity" zip codes (20601, 20613, 20623, 20715, 20716, 20720, 20721, 20724, 20735, 20772, & 20774) where HAPGC wants to attract more tenancy, and also larger units (3BR or higher) that are intended to house the larger families.

Landlords interested in participating in the Landlord Incentive Program must attend a Landlord Briefing Session. The next Landlord Briefing Sessions are scheduled for: July 21, 2021, and August 25, 2021.

For more information, visit our website: <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/906/Housing-Authority> or call Carolyn Floyd, Ombudsman Program Coordinator at 301-883-5485.

OPPORTUNITIES

HAPGC has a rolling Request for Proposal (RFP) on its website to increase the number of units in its project-based portfolio that can be made UFAS accessible for families with disabilities. Please visit:

<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/bids.aspx?bidID=92>
for the details of this solicitation.





CUSTOMER SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

HAPGC is striving to improve its customer service delivery to both its client population it serves as well as participating landlords. Over the course of the next several month's you will see some of the **improvements** we are working on such as:

- Greater internal emphasis in the timeliness of responding to emails and phone calls;
- Improved technology to make doing business with HAPGC easier such as:
 - Kiosks that will allow the uploading of your landlord and client documents without having to speak with an HAPGC representative; and
 - Online services that will enable both landlords and participants to conduct business and submit information remotely;
- Greater online transparency in the amount of rent HAPGC will approve for a rent by zip code and bedroom size so that families and landlords can make timelier informed decisions on where they would like to rent and what rents a landlord will accept;
- Dedicated housing search assistance for all families searching with vouchers – including those with disabilities;
- Formulation of a new **Landlord Advisory Committee** that will work in partnership with HAPGC to provide input on how HAPGC policies and procedures impact how we do business with our landlord partners and assist in providing necessary voucher program training(s) to new and potential landlords. The Committee will also work with HAPGC to expand its portfolio to recruit new landlords – especially those that have units that are or can be made accessible for families with disabilities;
- Creating solutions that would provide direct training and/or offer referral resources for voucher families to be trained/counseled in areas such as **How to Be A Good Neighbor, Basic Housekeeping Skills, Financial Literacy, Mental Health**, and more;
- Creation of a Voucher Program Landlord-Tenant mediation component to work with both parties (landlord and tenant) to recommend reasonable solutions in areas where program participants may be in jeopardy of losing their voucher assistance or face landlord eviction for alleged lease violations and/or voucher program obligation violations. Note: HAPGC cannot intercede in any formal landlord-tenant lease disputes as HAPGC is not a party to the lease between the landlord and their tenant;
- Recruitment of Housing Choice Voucher Participant(s) to sit on the **Resident Advisory Board** to provide input and recommendations on how HAPGC policies and procedures impact the clients we serve.



HAPGC

POLICY UPDATES

HAPGC BOARD APPROVES NEW LANDLORD RENT CEILINGS & RENT INCREASE POLICIES

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations, the Housing Authority of Prince Georges County (HAPGC) is required to set the maximum rents it can pay by zip code using HUD's Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs). HAPGC rents were set at 100% of HUD's SAFMRs across the County.

In an effort to ensure our voucher families have greater access to more units within the County, as well as attract new landlords and retain landlords who have been great partners, the HAPGC Board approved a resolution on May 24, 2021 to raise the maximum level of rents that can be paid for any new voucher client move-in from 100% of HUD's SAFMR to 110% of HUD's SAFMR across all zip codes and bedroom sizes.

Along with this resolution, the HAPGC Board adopted new policies that clarifies the amount of rent increase a landlord can receive annually, as well as a new rent reasonableness methodology that would make it easier and transparent for HAPGC staff, landlords and voucher families searching for units to know what lease rent will be approved by bedroom size and zip code.

Please stay tuned for further updates on these policies that will be reflected on the HAPGC website within the next 30 to 45 days by visiting <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/906/Housing-Authority>

SPOTLIGHT ON FAIR HOUSING

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on seven protected classes: color, race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status. In the State of Maryland source of income (which includes families who use vouchers to rent) is also a protected class.

The Fair Housing act also requires housing providers to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is a change in rules, policies, practices, or services so that a person with a disability will have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling unit or common space. Reasonable accommodations may be necessary at all stages of the leasing process, including application, tenancy, or to prevent eviction.

More information about HUD Fair Housing and Maryland State Laws on Fair Housing and Reasonable Accommodations, visit:

www.hud.gov/fairhousing; and

<https://www.peoples-law.org/laws-against-housing-discrimination#disabilities>



JOIN THE RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD (RAB) NOTICE TO HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PARTICIPANTS

The Housing Authority of Prince George's County is soliciting applications of interest from Housing Choice Voucher participants to become members of the Resident Advisory Board. The Resident Advisory Board will consist of representatives of public housing as well as Housing Choice Voucher participants. The public housing RAB members are elected by the public housing residents. The Executive Director will appoint a limited number of eligible Housing Choice Voucher participants (including those residing in project-based voucher units) to serve on the Resident Advisory Board.

The Resident Advisory Board is a group of public housing residents and HCV program participants that will represent Housing Authority tenants and Housing Choice Voucher participants and their common needs before the Housing Authority; to express their ideas concerning general Housing Authority policy as well as the implementation of such policy.

Housing Choice Voucher participants interested in participating as a member of the Resident Advisory Board must complete an application of interest. The applicant must be at least 21 years of age and in compliance with program requirements. In other words, there must not be any pending program terminations, lease violations, etc.

The application will be available on the HAPGC Housing Authority's webpage (<https://princegeorgescountymd.gov/906/Housing-Authority>) starting June 25, 2021 and will remain available until the Housing Choice Voucher Program RAB slots are filled. Once applications are completed, they can be placed in the dropbox outside of the HAPGC Central Office located at; 9200 Basil Court, Largo Maryland 20774, or can be emailed to CECarter@co.pg.md.us.

HAPGC MODIFICATION FUND FOR FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES

Current Housing Choice Voucher participants with disabilities can ask for a **reasonable accommodation for services** or to use HAPGC's housing modification fund to make their unit meet the needs of their disability. This can include auxiliary aids or services, materials in an alternative format, or help in completing paperwork or changes to your housing based on your disability.

The Modification Fund is for the exclusive use of participant families with disabilities in the **Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP)** who need modifications to rental housing in **Prince George's County** as an accommodation to their disability.

The Modification Fund is available to address the needs of individuals with various disabilities including, but not limited to, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; individuals who are blind or have limited vision, and individuals with psychiatric or mobility disabilities.

The Modification Fund is intended to assist Participant Families with making modifications to meet the disability-related needs of a family member. Uses for the Modification Fund may include, without limitation:

- installation of grab bars
- hand held shower
- flashing fire alarm
- raised toilet
- stair glide
- motion sensor
- wheelchair lift or ramp
- tub seat
- widened doorway
- curb cut



Modification Fund requests are subject to review and require HAPGC approval. Please be advised that there is a total cap per family. Modification request can be made more than once and can be used for both modifications and returning the property to its pre-modification condition. Landlord approval is needed prior to modification funds being dispersed. If interested in applying, submit an application or email request to: Nicole Garrett, 504 Coordinator at [301-883-5576](tel:301-883-5576) or Dhcd-504@co.pg.md.us.

*Funding is available on a first-come, first-serve basis and is subject to availability.

Housing Choice Voucher Program families who believe **they need a reasonable accommodation as a result of their disability** can reach out to the HAPGC ADA/ 504 Coordinator at (301)883-5576 or email dhcd-504@co.pg.md.us for assistance.

COMPLIANCE

In the last year, the agency has been able to retract \$58,318 in overpaid housing assistance payments to landlords for deceased single member households. New employer? New addition to the family? Be advised, it is required that you report all changes in writing regarding your income and household composition. Failure to do so is a violation and may result in penalties.



SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

The Housing Authority of Prince George's County hosted its first virtual Meet and Lease event on February 25, 2021 for the elderly families searching for a new unit. Several clients attended to hear presentations from landlords from Woodside Village and the Lodge at Marlton about their community and the amenities. There was also a presentation from the MyActiveSenior community organization that offers a resource marketplace for the senior population.

Woodside Village Apartments @ 301-839-2150

Lodge at Marlton @ 301-599-5422

MyActiveSenior @ 866-594-6249

The next Meet and Lease event will tentatively be held on July 22, 2021. More details to come!

Having Problems Finding A Unit?

If you are struggling to find a suitable unit and need some assistance, please contact Keith Moone, Mobility Counselor, at 301-883-5501.

Got A Problem?

Did you know HAPGC has an Ombudsman? If you have an unresolved concern and need an impartial intermediary to help fully address your complaint, please send an email to: hapgcrad@co.pg.md.us

Prince George's County Department of Social Services

E-Mail: <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/1629/Social-Services>
(301) 909-2000

Housing Authority of Prince George's County

(301) 883-5501; E-Mail: HAPGCRAD@CO.PG.MD.US

Maryland Energy Assistance Program

(800) 332-6347

Prince George's County Health and Human Services Resources

211

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