

MESA HOUSING SERVICES GOVERNING BOARD

September 8, 2016

The Mesa Housing Services Governing Board of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on September 8, 2016 at 7:30 a.m.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

John Giles, Chairman
Alex Finter
Christopher Glover
Dennis Kavanaugh
David Luna
Dave Richins
Kevin Thompson
Kenneth Dennis

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Jim Smith
Dee Ann Mickelsen

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Approval of minutes of a previous meeting as written.

It was moved by Boardmember Glover, seconded by Boardmember Kavanaugh, that the minutes from the April 7, 2016 Mesa Housing Services Governing Board meeting be approved.

Carried unanimously.

3-a. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide approval of the opening of the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List.

Housing and Community Development Director Liz Morales introduced Housing Supervisor Mary Brandon.

Ms. Brandon stated that staff is requesting approval from the board to open the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list (Section 8). She stated that the voucher program was opened in May 2013 and received over 4,000 applications and exhausted the waiting list by August 2016. **(See Attachment 1)**

In response to a question from Chairman Giles, Ms. Brandon stated that the City of Mesa currently has 1,715 housing vouchers being utilized, 1,524 represent Section 8, and 191 represent Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. She explained that each month, 12 to 15 housing vouchers open up as families move out of the City of Mesa, are removed or no longer need the program. She added that families or individuals are then moved from the waiting list to the Section 8 list.

Ms. Morales stated that Veterans Affairs (VA) is constantly sending newly identified homeless veterans to them for housing assistance.

In response to questions from Chairman Giles, Ms. Morales replied that the last round of VASH allocations did not include additional vouchers for Mesa. She added that the reason for this may be due to the fact that the need is not as great in Mesa and because we are still utilizing the vouchers we have. She stated that HUD has not increased regular housing choice vouchers in many years, but that is always a request and if we were given the opportunity we would apply for more vouchers.

It was moved by Boardmember Luna, seconded by Boardmember Glover, that the City of Mesa approve the opening of the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list (Section 8).

Carried unanimously.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Mesa Housing Services Governing Board meeting adjourned at 7:35 a.m.


JOHN GILES, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK



I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Mesa Housing Services Governing Board meeting of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 8th day of September, 2016. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

WAITLIST OPENING SUMMARY HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (SECTION 8)

Introduction

The City of Mesa will be opening the waitlist in the next 60 days after exhausting the waitlist which opened for two days in May 2013. This document will provide an overview of the process, accommodations available for equal access to those with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency, and steps that will be taken to outreach and inform potential applicants of the waitlist opening.

The last opening of the waitlist in 2013 was a success with over 4,000 applications received in two days. This was the first time that the City of Mesa offered an online application. Staff took significant steps to ensure applicants had equal access, support and assistance to submit the HCV Pre-Application. The City received no complaints and many accolades from partnering nonprofits and landlords who hosted waitlist opening parties to assist clients complete the housing application. It is with this experience that the City of Mesa is striving to make additional improvements so that all persons who wish to apply can apply without unnecessary barriers or difficulties.

Online Application/Webpage

- City/Housing Website page link to Section 8 online application. Software vendor Emphasys Elite designed and maintains online application program.
- Online application available in English and Spanish
- Application and website were compatible with tablets and smartphones
- Place Microsoft Translate button on website to enable translation of our information into over 50 languages
- Locations for assistance for completing online applications to be held at three City libraries, DES, and MesaCan who will make their computers available for waitlist applications and Housing staff will be present to assist
- Create a public notice, FAQs, and instructions on how to complete the online application
- All informational items listed above to be translated into Spanish and posted on the website
- Will have accommodation and customer service information prominently displayed in bold on the website
- Will have language translation and accommodation information prominently displayed on the website.

WAITLIST OPENING SUMMARY HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (SECTION 8)

Accommodations

- The online application will be continuously open during the three-day period to accommodate the working poor and others not available during business hours
- Offer paper applications for individuals with disability requesting accommodation to include applications in braille.
- City staff will use translation resources available to accommodate limited English customers including American Sign Language
- All Housing Department staff are educated on the waitlist process and accommodation procedures to assist customers
- All informational and instruction documents will be posted in Rich Text Format to ensure compatibility with visually impaired reading software.

Outreach

- Official City press release
- Specific outreach to circulation news organizations such as the East Valley Tribune, and specialty news such as the Asian American Times, The Arizona Informant, and La Voz
- Publish waitlist information in city water bill
- Information to be posted on the web and social media including Facebook and Twitter
- Announcement on Channel 11 and City website
- Waitlist announcement will be added to on-hold message for all calls
- Flyers and informational documents translated and distributed to community partners, state agencies, and social services organizations listed below.
- Engage in direct outreach to all refugee populations, limited English proficiency populations, homeless services providers, all DV service providers, the Veterans Administration for homeless vets, and specialty language/culture organizations



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Informational Material Distribution List (not limited to these agencies)

Families	Homeless & Domestic Violence	Seniors & Disabled	Veterans	Minorities
PHA's located in Maricopa County	East Valley Adult Resources	Ability 360	Veteran Affairs	Chicanos Por La Causa
Current and Past S8 Landlords	New Leaf	Marc Center	Paz de Cristo	Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens
Mesa Public Schools	Save the Family Foundation	Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care	La Frontera Rally Point	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Community Legal Services	Community Bridges, Inc	Area Agency on Aging	Mesa Post Disabled American Veterans	Catholic Charities
Mesa faith-based organizations (i.e. Latino Pastor Network LDS, Lutheran, etc)	Circle of the City	Salvation Army	Arizona Coalition for Military Families	Refugee Focus – Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest
Other Nonprofits receiving Mesa funding (not already listed)	Family HUB (UMOM)		City of Mesa Housing Our Heroes Partner Agencies	Arizona Immigrant & Refugee Services
United Way	Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence			Vietnamese local paper