

February 13, 2007

Resident Advisory Board (RAB)  
Recommendations on HPHA Five-Year and Annual Plans

**Five Year Plan**

The RAB has reviewed the Five-Year Plan and the RAB has no comments at this time.

**Annual Plan**

**Component 1: Housing Needs**

- a. The RAB recommends that all federal housing projects be in compliance with ADA guidelines. The RAB feels that residents, who are handicapped, have the right to go in and out of their community freely without obstacles.
- b. The RAB recommends that HPHA install adequate lighting in all federal housing projects. The areas that the RAB are most concerned with are the parking lots, courtyards and common area where inadequate lighting may result in unwanted activity.

**Component 2: Statement of Financial Resources**

- a. The RAB recommends that HPHA develop guidelines, for the management units, in the issuance of Resident Participation Funds to the resident associations. In addition, the RAB feels that the funds MUST be diligently relinquished on a yearly basis.

**Component 3: Eligibility, Selection and Admission**

- a. In regards to income mixing and de-concentration efforts by HPHA, the RAB recommends that the curbside appeal of all federal public housing communities be improved so that housing projects may be able to attract higher income tenants.

- b. The RAB strongly feels that some communities are overloaded with tenants of one ethnicity. The RAB recommends that HPHA find ways within the limits of the law, to avoid the stacking of ethnicities within one complex.
- c. Within the preferences listed in the PHA Plan, the RAB feels that the homeless preference needs to be revisited to clearly include the houseless and the hidden homeless.

#### **Component 4: Rent Determination Policies**

The RAB has reviewed Component 4: Rent Determination Policies and has no comment at this time.

#### **Component 5: Operations and Management**

- a. The RAB has recommended and continues to recommend to HPHA a billing system that reflects two different charges, one for rent charges and the other for maintenance charges. The current system takes maintenance fees out first which often leaves residents with rent balances that are considered delinquent.
- b. The RAB recommends that management units follow the newly established 25 day turnaround for vacant units. The RAB feels that HPHA should follow the 25 days turnaround especially for A and B units.
- c. The RAB recommends that management unit hours be staggered over an 18 hour period each day. This will ensure that management will be on site when infractions occur, allowing them to immediately report them and to take appropriate administrative action.
  - a. Staggered work hours will also ensure that HPHA staff will be able to attend to emergencies should they occur.
- d. The RAB recommends that a translator be present when tenants, whose first language is not English, are filling out documents to live in federal public housing. The RAB strongly feels that it is important for tenants to understand from the start what their rights, rules and responsibilities are.
- e. The RAB recommends that HPHA provide training for mediation. This will enable management to properly deal with volatile situations and actions between tenants and management, which may circumvent eviction.

- f. With HPHA's transition to project based budgeting, the RAB strong feels that HPHA and the management units MUST be held accountable for the non-payment of rent.

### **Component 6: Grievance Procedures**

- a. The RAB feels that HPHA makes the grievance process more complicated than it actually is, causing tenants to not utilize the process for complaints such as unsafe conditions, tenant files not being readily accessible, the performance of the maintenance staff, or rent not being calculated correctly.
- b. The RAB recommends that the grievance procedures be put into plain language so that all residents may be able to understand the grievance procedure and process.
- c. Due to the numerous nationalities residing in federal public housing, the RAB recommends that the grievance procedures should be translated into various languages so that residents are able to understand their rights and the grievance process from start to end.

### **Component 7: Capital Improvement Needs**

The RAB has reviewed Component 7: Capital Improvement Needs and has no comment at this time.

### **Component 8: Demolition and Disposition**

- a. The RAB strongly recommends that contractors, upon receiving notice of award of a contract, be held to the agreed amount stated in the contract. In addition, HPHA should monitor progress of contracts to observe that the work stated in the contract is being done according to the timeline specified.
- b. The RAB is concerned that HPHA is not holding to the timetable for the demolition of units. In many instances, unit are vacated and left empty for months before demolition actually occurs. This contributes to "broken window" scenario which attracts crime (drug dealing and loitering) and other unwanted activities into the community.

- c. The RAB has repeatedly asked for better lines of communication between HPHA Engineers and residents concerning the status of construction work being done on their community. Communication should include a projected timetable as to when the construction will start and be completed.

### **Component 9: Designation of Public Housing**

The RAB has reviewed Component 9: Designation of Public Housing and has no comment at this time.

### **Component 10: Conversion of Public Housing**

The RAB has reviewed Component 10: Conversion of Public Housing and has no comment at this time.

### **Component 11: Homeownership**

The RAB has reviewed Component 11: Home Ownership and has no comment at this time.

### **Component 12: Community Service and Self-Sufficiency**

- a. The RAB strongly recommends that HPHA should earmark grants or funding so that programs are not allowed to stagnate or be terminated. Residents will not be able to take advantage of the benefits these programs have to offer if programs are allowed to end due to lack of funding.
- b. The RAB strong feels that HPHA should secure funding to hire a third-party to administer and monitor the community service requirement.
- c. To help residents fulfill their community service requirement, the RAB feels that management should accept the hours, that residents spend doing resident association activities, such as the volunteer resident patrol and community cleanup and beautification, towards the community service monthly requirement.

### **Component 13: Crime and Safety**

- a. The RAB recommends that HPHA allocate funding to both current and newly formed tenant initiated security walk programs, for all federal public housing throughout the state.
- b. The RAB recommends that HPHA re-assess current expenditures being spent for uniform security services. The RAB strongly feels that funding currently being used for uniformed security services could be used to impact more than one community.
- c. The RAB recommends that an assessment be done on what the security limitations are of the uniformed security services and what specific crimes these security services are deterring.
- d. The RAB recommends the following to be done by HPHA to ensure the safety of all federal public housing residents.
  - o Install strategic located lighting fixtures to deter criminal activity and to assist in the reduction of the crime rate in the projects.
  - o Provide and post in communities crime deterrent, neighborhood watch and no trespassing signs.
  - o Provide information to all communities on the sex offenders located within or around their communities.
  - o Hire off duty police officers or sheriffs to provide security services in the highly volatile communities.
- e. In support of the trespassing initiative, the RAB recommends that HPHA should give authorization to association presidents or a community designee to work with the Honolulu Police Department should they be called into their community during off hours.

### **Component 14: Pet Policy**

- a. The RAB recommends that HPHA secure funds to hire an independent third-party to administer and monitor the pet policy.

### **Component 15: Civil Rights Certification**

HPHA proposed no changes to this section. The RAB has reviewed Component 15: Civil Rights Certification and has no comment at this time.

### **Component 16: Fiscal Audit**

HPHA proposed no changes to this section. The RAB has reviewed Component 16: Fiscal Audit and has no comment at this time.

### **Component 17: PHA Asset Management**

HPHA proposed no changes to this section. The RAB has review Component 17: Asset Management and has no comment at this time.

### **Component 18: Other Information**

- a. The RAB recommends that HPHA financially support, up to \$40 per person, PC/telecommunications for the RAB and Associations for the purpose of communication and networking with members throughout federal projects throughout the state.