



## Q & A about SSHP Changes

*New HUD funding coming into the Seattle Senior Housing Program (SSHP)*

The Seattle Housing Authority is working with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to bring traditional public housing subsidy to the Seattle Senior Housing Program (SSHP). This will make it possible to keep rents affordable and pay for needed building repairs. About \$33 million is needed for repairs to elevators, siding and windows.

This administrative change will bring new funding into SSHP while at the same time maintaining it as a separate program targeted to Seattle seniors. Current rent policy for SSHP will remain in effect and most administrative practices will remain the same.

### **What are the benefits of this change?**

The main benefit is the millions of dollars in funding for rehabilitation and maintenance of Seattle Senior Housing stock. Making the units eligible for public housing subsidy will result in a net increase of about \$3 million per year. Without this funding, rents would likely need to be increased substantially in order to repair and maintain the buildings.

### **Will Senior Housing buildings remain in the current Senior Housing program?**

Yes, all of our Senior Housing buildings will continue to house Seattle seniors and will maintain an age restriction of 62 and over. The program will have the same staff it now has and will be operated as a distinct and separate program from public housing.

### **How will this affect disabled residents of Seattle Senior Housing who are under the age of 62?**

The current guideline of making ten percent of the units available to younger people with disabilities will continue in place.

### **As a Senior Housing resident, how will this change affect my rent?**

We will continue to structure rent in tiers that keep SSHP units affordable. Your rent will not change as a result of this new subsidy, unless your income has increased or decreased enough to move you into a different rent tier. The new funding allows Seattle Housing to make building improvements in the future without having to raise rents to pay for them.

### **If I have a Section 8 voucher now, will I have to move?**

No, you will not have to move out if you are currently using a voucher. Residents with Tenant Based vouchers can choose to put their voucher "on hold" until such time as they may want to move out of SSHP. Residents with vouchers dedicated to SSHP (known as "Program-based vouchers") will no longer need them, and these vouchers will go back into the general voucher pool. Residents with either type of voucher will continue at their current rent.

### **Will my eligibility for housing change under these new policies?**

Basic eligibility for the program will not change. Current residents of the SSHP program will not have to meet any different requirements, with the exception that residents will be required to certify that they are legal permanent residents of the United States.

### **What policy changes can I expect under the new subsidy program?**

There will be a few changes as public housing subsidy is brought into SSHP. Staff is committed to making these changes as seamless as possible for SSHP residents. Here are a few of the policy changes that will occur:

- The wait time to apply for a building transfer will be decreased from five years to three years.
- Resident income will be reviewed every three years, instead of just at move in. All residents will have to go through this initial review as part of the administrative changes connected to new funding.
- HUD staff will occasionally inspect a sampling of units.
- Residents will have the right to formal grievance hearings.
- Resident Councils will qualify for some operating funds under the new subsidy program.

### **What is the timeline for these changes?**

Seattle Housing hopes to make these changes operational in the Fall of 2011 so that the new subsidy could be in place in January of 2012. There will be informational meetings in each SSHP building in May. Check building bulletin boards and *The Voice* for more information. A formal public hearing will take place on June 6 at 5 pm in the community room of the Porchlight Building in Ballard (907 NW Ballard Way).

### **Does this mean that SSHP will be the same as Public Housing?**

SSHP will continue to be a separate and distinct program, administered by the same core staff and building managers that you already know. The Seattle Housing Authority is designated by HUD as a "Moving To new Ways" or MTW housing authority. This special status allows us to make rules that apply to us in Seattle without following all of the same rules that other housing authorities nationally must follow. Because of this special status, we are able to formally bring public housing subsidy to SSHP without actually combining the two programs.

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