



CITY OF RICHMOND HOUSING AUTHORITY

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Timothy Jones, Executive Director

VIA E-MAIL

September 29, 2015

Sherry Rufini c/o
Michael Simmons, Foreperson
Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

**Contra Costa County 2014-2015 Civil Grand Jury Report No. 1505 Response
Housing Authority of the City of Richmond, CA**

Dear Mr. Simmons:

As Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Richmond, California ("**RHA**"), I'm providing this response to the Contra Costa County 2014-2015 Civil Grand Jury Report No. 1505. I would first like to apologize for the delay in providing this response. It is one month late due to RHA's preoccupation with the Hacienda relocation process and activities related to the pending construction loan closing for the Friendship Manor and Triangle Court Public Housing Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Program conversion projects.

The following information outlines the nine (9) findings and seven (7) recommendations included in the report. As required each finding has been responded to in accordance with Section 933.5(a) of the California Government Code; each recommendation has been responded to in accordance with Section 933.05(b) of the California Government Code.

FINDINGS

F1. RHA is required to implement HUD regulations.

The respondent agrees with this finding.

F2. To implement HUD regulations effectively and transition to market housing RHA needs well trained, knowledgeable, and responsive management and staff.

The respondent agrees with this finding.

F3. Management of the HCV program does not sufficiently supervise staff.

The respondent partially disagrees with this finding; there are some HCV staff that consistently perform at a very high level, thus indicating that in some instances management is sufficiently supervising staff.

F4. RHA does not provide ongoing training in record keeping.

The respondent agrees with this finding.

F5. RHA lacks an employee manual advising RHA staff on expectations.

The respondent agrees with this finding.

F6. RHA lacks a manual describing its policies and procedures relating to the HCV and the LIPH programs.

The respondent partially disagrees with this finding; RHA has a Section 8 Administrative Plan describing all policies and procedures relating to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, and RHA has a Low Income Public Housing (LIPH) Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) describing all policies and procedures relating to the LIPH program. However these manuals may not be easily accessible to all staff, which is why the respondent partially disagrees with this finding.

F7. Work orders are not consistently addressed within 24 hours.

The respondent agrees with this finding.

F8. Staff describes employee relations as unsatisfactory.

The respondent agrees with this finding.

F9. Employees are not given annual performance evaluations.

The respondent partially disagrees with this finding. There are some annual employee evaluations that are consistently conducted on time, and others that are late and some missed. Therefore the respondent partially disagrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. After identifying the space needs, and identifying and allocating the funding necessary to do so, RHA should move the Executive Director and staff, except the Finance Department, to the same work location.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future as part of the Nevin Plaza RAD conversion project, Nevin Plaza is where the majority of RHA staff is located. The Nevin Plaza RAD conversion project will entail a complete renovation of the building including the administrative wing maximizing the existing space to accommodate all of RHA staff. The Nevin Plaza RAD conversion project is schedule for FY2017-2018.

R2. After identifying and allocating the funding necessary to do so, RHA should consider hiring an experienced front-line manager to supervise employees who work in its HCV program.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future as part of the Housing Authority's HCV Corrective Action Plan with HUD. This plan includes training of existing HCV management staff and addressing RHA's HCV Program quality control concerns, with a target date for improvement in the areas identified of June 30, 2016. If measurable improvement has not been confirmed by HUD then RHA will utilize the services of a HCV Program Contract Administrator to manage the program.

R3. After identifying and allocating the funding necessary to do so, RHA should develop and make available a written policy for staff to use in implementing the LIPH and HCV programs.

This recommendation has been implemented. As indicated in finding #6 RHA has a Section 8 Administrative Plan describing all policies and procedures relating to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, and RHA has a Low Income Public Housing (LIPH) Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) describing all policies and procedures relating to the LIPH program. Staff may now access these policies electronically whenever the need arises.

R4. After identifying and allocating the funding necessary to do so, RHA should develop and provide its staff with a Policy and Procedures manual concerning RHA's policies, procedures, and expectations for staff performance.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future as part of the Housing Authority's coming fiscal year's budget where funding to support this recommendation has been identified. Our next fiscal year begins on July 1, 2016.

R5. All employees should receive annual performance evaluations.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented in total; annual evaluations are being conducted but it will take the balance of this fiscal year to complete them all.

R6. After identifying and allocating the funding necessary to do so, all RHA employees should receive ongoing training in customer service and quality control procedures.

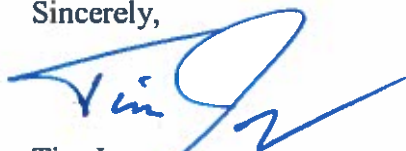
This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future as part of the Housing Authority's coming fiscal year's budget where funding to support this recommendation has been identified. Our next fiscal year begins on July 1, 2016.

R7. RHA should establish and enforce standards for timely responses to customer complaints, including, but not limited to those complaints related to building maintenance and safety/security concerns.

This recommendation has been implemented. Over the past year RHA has implemented a customer service follow-up process that provides for a follow-up phone call to all residents in response to work order requests safety issues and customer service concerns. The RHA Resident Services Executive Officer follows-up any issues expressed by the tenants that cannot be resolved over the phone with a home visit to address their specific concerns.

This concludes the RHA responses to the findings and recommendations included in the Contra Costa County 2014-2015 Civil Grand Jury Report No. 1505. The Housing Authority would like to thank all of the members of the Contra Costa County 2014-2015 Civil Grand Jury for their interest in RHA's operations and most of all for their sincere concern for the well-being of our low-income housing program participants. Their thoughtful consideration for our clients was very clear in the questions that they asked and the opinions that they conveyed throughout this process. If you have any questions or require any additional information regarding these responses please do not hesitate to contact me at (510) 621-1310. Thank you again for your patience with my delay in providing this response.

Sincerely,



Tim Jones
Executive Director

cc: Bill Lindsay, City Manager

