

Arlington County HCV Program - Resident Advisory Board Comments

Resident Advisory Board Comment

AHCVP Analysis, Narrative, & Decision

My first question for you all today is if you think there is any additional places where you would recommend that the county try to get the word out about this plan and getting public comments?

Arlington Free Clinic

Big churches

Affordable housing properties with larger numbers of program participants

Additional outreach to the Ethiopian community

Coffee shops/bus stops

Facebook/Email listserv

Public Schools

Additional options in braille or large print for the blind

Libraries

Community centers

The AHCVP can commit to providing announcement flyers for public hearings to Arlington partner agencies, such as free clinics, community centers, libraries, public schools, and properties that have larger numbers of program participants. Additional options will certainly be available as a reasonable accommodation upon request. AHCVP will conduct additional outreach to determine additional languages that would require default translations in the Arlington community. Additional options mentioned will require additional research before AHCVP can commit to providing information that way.

Committing additional Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) to increase access for clients to ADA accessible units and larger units

Clients do not like the term "project-based" since "project" connotes a place that is not safe.

Concerns regarding the term "project-based" are noted. There are certain documents (this PHA Plan and the Administrative Plan) that have to be submitted to HUD as our funding agency. HUD's regulations refer to the program as "Project-Based Vouchers." To avoid any confusion, we have used that terminology here to make it clear that what we are proposing is not a new program. However, we will call it something else once the program is made available.

Creation of homeownership program as an option

AHCVP will explore the creation of a new homeownership program during its next 5-year plan.

Challenges locating additional units

Two and Three bedroom units can be difficult to find

A lot of the housing is very small

Historically, locating affordable, desirable units in Arlington has been challenging. AHCVP is exploring PBVs as a possibility to expand housing choice for our clients.

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Who will advocate for programs that are ADA compliant? It is hard to find and 2 or 3-bedroom units and you have to find a landlord that is understanding. We also have clients who have difficulty advocating for themselves.

AHCVP has existing relationships with locally-funded housing navigators to help clients locate units that meet their needs. While AHCVP cannot advocate directly with landlords on participant complaints, we can connect clients with the Office of Human Rights, Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, and the State of Virginia to help them obtain needed modifications.

Concerns regarding whether clients will be forced into PBV instead of tenant-based programs

Clients will never be forced into a PBV from a tenant-based program. The goal of expanding the PBV program is to gain access for participants to the types of units that are not regularly available but needed by clients. AHCVP struggles to locate ADA accessible units and units with more bedrooms - there are simply not enough of these in the community to meet the need. By providing PBVs, AHCVP can encourage property developers to create these types of units as rent is virtually guaranteed for 20 years.

Are there particular buildings being awarded PBVs?

AHCVP is exploring possibilities at this time. Properties that are awarded funds under the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program or the Arlington Affordable Housing Investment Fund NOFA can be awarded PBVs without a separate Request for Proposals.

Are some of the PBVs going to be for people coming out of homelessness?

AHCVP has preferences for individuals experiencing homelessness. Everyone admitted has to go through the waiting list first, regardless of whether they receive a tenant-based or project-based voucher.

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Creation of a separate PBV waiting list

Someone should check up more on the landlords to see how they are treating their tenants. There should be building meetings.

Concerns regarding safety in buildings

AHCVP encourages program participants to continue reporting concerns about landlords to the County. While AHCVP can only hold landlords accountable to the HAP contract, we cannot proceed without evidence to require landlords to fix a particular issue.

What are your thoughts on adding up to 100 project-based voucher units in areas such as Crystal City and North Arlington? Are there other locations that should be considered? Where? For what reasons?

PBVs need to be in areas where the neighborhood is accessible - not just the building.

AHCVP will include neighborhood accessibility standards in awarding points to any Request for Proposals and will include an evaluation of neighborhood accessibility/future neighborhood accessibility in awarding any PBVs under approved, alternative award methods.

Concerns regarding landlords who appear to add additional barriers to low-income tenants who rent with vouchers.

Concerns regarding landlord waiting lists for affordable units.

Concerns regarding appearance of landlord preferences for non-subsidized tenants.

AHCVP will continue to reiterate Source of Income protections to landlords and encourage program participants to report these types of barriers. AHCVP will explore adding options for disapproval of landlords for non-compliance with Source of Income Protections.

GOAL 1: Lead with customer service and strive for continuous program improvement

Program participants have questions about the differences between CAF, LIHTC, and other unit types and how they impact program participation.

AHCVP will identify and obtain some additional training for staff regarding other subsidized housing programs.

Concerns regarding landlord retaliation for complaining about conditions in buildings

As part of our customer service standards, AHCVP staff will always ask how we should address the complaint. There are several remedies AHCVP can apply to address sub-standard housing.

Goal 2: Expand the supply of affordable housing & housing choice for low-income residents

Concerns regarding landlord retaliation for complaining about conditions in buildings

AHCVP encourages program participants to continue reporting concerns about landlords to the County. While AHCVP can only hold landlords accountable to the HAP contract, we cannot proceed without evidence to require landlords to fix a particular issue.

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Goal 3: Increase the quality of affordable housing

Landlords having difficulty getting parts/replacements or taking a long time to repair anything

Concerns regarding landlord preferential treatment

Concerns regarding fire alarms not reaching every floor in a building

You have to know the right people to get landlords to fix things

AHCVP will continue to do outreach to landlords to improve the overall condition of properties assisted.

Goal 4: Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of participating households - As you think about your own financial goals, what resources, tools or policies did you think would help you reach those goals faster, better, more successfully?

Job training, connections to workforce training

Homeownership

Credit repair

Coordination with other Arlington County programs

AHCVP is in the process of creating a quarterly newsletter for program participants that will include information on these topics. Additionally, self-sufficiency programs will be examined in depth during our next 5-year planning process.

Goal 5: Ensure equal opportunity and fair housing to foster vibrant and sustainable neighborhoods

Concerns regarding state/local enforcement of fair housing laws favoring landlords/HUD sending federal complaints to the state level for enforcement

AHCVP will continue to work with the Arlington County Office of Human Rights to help ensure access to investigators.

Goal 6: Stabilize at-risk households

Will people be able to apply for all waiting lists?

Yes - when someone applies for an AHCVP program, they will be able to apply for every open voucher program at the same time.

Training for landlords on topics like VAWA

Landlord incentives may help get landlords to participate

AHCVP will continue to hold landlord symposia where topics like this will be discussed. Regarding incentives, AHCVP has a limited budget to offer meaningful incentives - accordingly, any incentive plan would need to be thoroughly investigated and planned to ensure sustainability.

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What is the difference between HCV and the Housing Grant program?

The HCV program is federally-funded by HUD and provides a housing subsidy based on a percentage of the client's income. Housing Grants are locally-funded and provide a flat rate to offset rent. Additional information will be included in a quarterly participant newsletter.

Arlington County HCV Program - Public Hearing Comments

Public Hearing Comment

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How should ACHVP get the word out about these hearings?

Libraries, digital screen and flyers on bulletin boards

Flyers to parents through schools

Social media, apartment complexes that are geared for affordable housing, hospitals, schools

Laundromats, churches, have to reach every diverse community

Arlington food assistance and sites served

The AHCVP can commit to providing announcement flyers for public hearings to Arlington partner agencies, such as free clinics, community centers, libraries, public schools, and properties that have larger numbers of program participants. Additional options will certainly be available as a reasonable accommodation upon request. AHCVP will conduct additional outreach to determine additional languages that would require default translations in the Arlington community. Additional options mentioned will require additional research before AHCVP can commit to providing information that way.

Committing additional Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) to increase access for clients to ADA accessible units and larger units

People need more space

It is hard for families - trying to find a 3 bedroom can be very difficult. A lot of people in Arlington have been in their units for a long time for units to be available. Waiting for people to leave those limited larger units

There needs to be some additional space for older people and families too

Committing PBVs in this way will incentivize developers to create additional, larger units and make them available as affordable housing.

Arlington County HCV Program - Public Hearing Comments

Public Hearing Comment

AHCVP Analysis, Narrative, & Decision

It is hard for HCV participants. Some landlords do not want to rent to people on Section 8

AHCVP will continue to reach out to landlords and develop additional partnerships to increase the number of landlords who participate in the program. AHCVP will continue to provide landlord education about SOI discrimination.

Housing Navigator in Falls Church works with families. One family has an Arlington Voucher. We do 8 week courses to help families and get a certificate. One property would not fill out a portion because they needed to know how much they would receive. Other properties don't do that. Suggests would be helpful to have more consistency in protocol across properties. Need to build a bridge to landlords.

Interior and exterior of properties? How are they?

As a 22204, I'm concerned about safe and affordable housing , how can we increase large units and improve maintenance? Can we prioritize funding for neighborhood improvements, like better lighting and community spaces?

AHCVP funds can only be used to provide additional housing subsidies. However, these concerns are being passed on to other Arlington County divisions that work with developing and improving community spaces.

Creation of a separate PBV waiting list

How will the preference list work? For all and for those in transitional or temporary housing

Preferences will be the same for both tenant-based and project-based programs.

The County needs to explain the waitlists to people and the differences between the vouchers. Most people will not understand and will not know what to choose.

AHCVP will develop documentation that explains the differences between the waiting lists and encourage everyone to apply for both.

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What are your thoughts on adding up to 100 project-based voucher units in areas such as Crystal City and North Arlington? Are there other locations that should be considered? Where? For what reasons?

Those [the suggested Crystal City and North Arlington locations mentioned in the draft plan] are excellent locations

Rosslyn desirable but maybe unrealistic because expensive

Westover, north of Langston Ave, Rosslyn; Columbia Pike

Question about AMI and concern that residents are unable to meet minimum income qualification

We appreciate the feedback on locations. AHCVP wants to help ensure that clients are able to locate and obtain housing in areas where they wish to live.

Goal 1: Lead with customer service and strive for continuous program improvement

Suggest training on trauma-informed care/lens

Fluency in languages other than English important; consider bonuses for those who are trilingual

AHCVP, as part of DHS, is helping implement Trauma-Informed Care standards throughout the program and staff are receiving additional training. Additionally, AHCVP has obtained approval for bilingual pay for staff and will continue to consider additional languages in its hiring plan.

RAB should meet more often, potentially with other residents regularly so the RAB can bring ideas and comments back to County

Tenant group that publicizes articles. Tenant education. Tenant support group

Hard to convince people to speak up - scared of management

Goal 2: Expand the supply of affordable housing & housing choice for low-income residents

Considering landlords run a business, they have an interest in knowing tenant will take care of the home and report maintenance needs. Suggest educating tenants on topics important to landlords and improving communication between tenants and landlords

AHCVP will continue to work with the RAB on these issues and explore additional opportunities to provide participant education given available funding.

Property management not stable and new staff always increases the rent

AHCVP will continue to do outreach to new property management staff to provide additional training.

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Similar to this public hearing, should hear from landlords on their concerns, reasons they don't want to rent out and then come back and make sure everyone is on the same page

AHCVP works with the Housing Assistance Bureau to run quarterly landlord meetings to listen to concerns and provide education about the programs.

Goal 3: Increase the quality of affordable housing

One person shared that they are generally happy with home, just wish it was bigger

Suggest the quality of materials in affordable units makes maintenance difficult. For example, market rate units may have granite but countertop material in affordable units cannot be cleaned with chemicals

Carpets a concern, including in the common areas. Not cleaned and smell

Positive experience with maintenance requests...any repairs, they respond fast. A couple of people shared similar positive about their specific landlord

Concern about AC filters not being replaced on recommended cadence

Desire for more regular inspections. One person shared that there has been no inspection in 2 years

Increasing quality and efficiency of inspections helpful for preventative checks and set up direct channel for residents to report issues or ideas

Safety concern about loitering outside of building

AHCVP will continue to reach out to landlords and provide training on their responsibilities under the program. While current HUD-required inspection standards (HQS) do not cover many of the items listed, the new standards (NSPIRE) will. The new standards are currently supposed to start in February 2027.

Support for having a maximum number of affordable housing units in any specific building, such as the plan mentioning 20%. Concern about stigma.

AHCVP understands the concern property owners and program participants may have about public perception. This is why the intent is to spread any project-based vouchers to many properties.

Desire for County to consider holistic situations, for example a dependent moving for a limited time (e.g., for school)

AHCVP can certainly work with clients on this. Clients with unique situations should reach out to their Housing Specialist to discuss options.

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Some concern about inconsistency in the empathy and care shown by County workers ("not so much with housing")	AHCVP will continue to provide training to staff on trauma-informed care and working with individuals in unique situations.
Surprised County brought in contractor for inspections; thought County was doing a good job	Due to staff turnover and budgetary constraints, a contractor was needed to ensure timely inspections. AHCVP will continue to evaluate annually as to whether this contract remains cost-effective and necessary.
Suggest at next meeting each person has a microphone	AHCVP will explore assistive technology options for public events.
Question about County funds available to cover late fees when the voucher arrives late (for example, with recent snow closures)	This question appeared to relate to Housing Grant programs, which still issue two-party paper checks. It has been referred to the appropriate staff.
Goal 4: Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of participating households - As you think about your own financial goals, what resources, tools or policies did you think would help you reach those goals faster, better, more successfully?	AHCVP will evaluate homeownership programs as part of its next 5-year planning process. Due to budget constraints, developing this program is not feasible at this time.
Desire for mechanisms to save money -- and education about what is already available	
Help people get out of the program and become homeowners	
Goal 5: Ensure equal opportunity and fair housing to foster vibrant and sustainable neighborhoods	AHCVP will continue to provide information to clients on resolving and reporting fair housing issues.
Experience is not a good response unless go directly to DHS. DHS solves.	
Arlington County doing a great job in this area	
Dashboard to track decentralization of poverty is excellent	

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Goal 6: Stabilize at-risk households	AHCVP will work on developing additional guidance for families to help them make informed decisions when applying for programs.
Separating waitlists will help	
Access in and out of building can be dangerous for wheelchairs	AHCVP has reasonable accommodation policies that can help clients move into buildings that meet their needs, such as allowing higher payment standards. Please reach out to us if there are needs that are not met by your current unit.
Open Discussion	AHCVP will continue to do outreach to landlords to improve the overall condition of properties assisted.
Desire for recycling options	
Desire for double pane windows and other energy saving options	
Question about who controls annual rent increases	Landlords control their own rent increases. However, for assisted clients, any increase must meet reasonableness criteria.
Desire for education on the differences between Housing Grants Program and HCVP	AHCVP will include information on this in its quarterly participant newsletter.

Arlington County HCV Program - Email Comments

Email Comment Comment

AHCVP Analysis, Narrative, & Decision

I'm commenting on behalf of my daughter who lives in the Cadence managed by Wesley in a unit designated for adults with disabilities. Regarding quality of housing, the unit is very nice but there are some problems with how the unit is managed over the weekends when there is not staff on site. We've been very frustrated with the attention by property management to the fact that over the weekends many people are smoking cigarettes and marijuana in the building, in front of the building, and in the garage. There is also frequently lots of trash and pet waste in the hallways and elevator over the weekends.

Thank you for your comment. While AHCVP cannot control what management will allow at a property, we can certainly raise concerns to property management on your behalf. Please reach out to AHCVP staff and we will work with you to report concerns and, if necessary, help your daughter move with her HCV assistance.