

GOVERNMENT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

+ + + + +

PROPOSED SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT FY11-FY15
CONSOLIDATED PLAN HOME TENANT BASED
RENTAL ASSISTANCE PUBLIC HEARING

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WEDNESDAY

DECEMBER 10, 2014

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The Public Hearing of the District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development convened in Room 200, Frank Reeves Center, 2000 14th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., pursuant to notice at 6:30 p.m., Nathan Simms, Deputy Director, presiding.

PRESENT:

NATHAN SIMMS, Deputy Director
MARIBETH DELORENZO, Ph.D., Housing
Development Advisor

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2 7:04 p.m.

3 DEPUTY DIRECTOR SIMMS: All right.

4 Good evening everyone. My name is Nathan Simms
5 and I'm the Deputy Director for the D.C.

6 Department of Housing and Community Development.

7 I'd like to thank you for attending today's

8 hearing on the Agency's Consolidated Plan

9 Proposed Schedule Amendment, HOME Tenant Based

10 Rental Assistance.

11 I'd like to introduce Maribeth

12 Delorenzo who is the Housing Advisor in the

13 Office of the Director. Thank you for being here

14 this evening.

15 DHCD's mission is to create and

16 preserve opportunities for affordable housing and

17 economic development and to revitalize under-

18 served communities in the District of Columbia.

19 We accomplish this mission through the

20 use of both Federal and local funding. The

21 purpose of today's hearing is to discuss the

22 District's fiscal year 2015 Proposed Substantial

1 Amendment to it's FY 11 through FY 15
2 Consolidated Plan to reprogram a portion of our
3 HOME funds received from the U.S. Department of
4 Housing and Urban Development, also known as HUD.
5 DHCD proposes using \$3 million in HOME funds from
6 HUD in FY 2015 to provide tenant-based rental
7 assistance to homeless households through the
8 District of Columbia Department of Human
9 Services.

10 In preparation for this submission of
11 the FY 2015 Substantial Amendment to the
12 Consolidated Plan, DHCD is seeking public comment
13 on its proposal. These comments will form part
14 of DHCD's substantial amendment as required by
15 Federal regulations 24 CFR Part 91.

16 This hearing is solely reserved to
17 discuss DHCD's Proposed Substantial Amendment.
18 The District receive entitlement, a grant from
19 HUD, a Community Development Block Grant or CDBG,
20 Home Investment Partnerships commonly referred to
21 as HOME, Emergency Solicitation Grant or ESG and
22 finally Housing Opportunities for Persons with

1 AIDS or HOPWA.

2 The DHCD administers the CDBG and
3 qualifies directly via the ESG grant is
4 administered by the Department of Human Services
5 and the HOPWA grant is administered by the D.C.
6 Department of Health.

7 In addition the Department uses the
8 Local Housing Production Trust Fund which is
9 funded through the District's Deed and
10 Recordation and Transfer Taxes for the production
11 and preservation of affordable housing in the
12 District.

13 The DHCD uses its Federal and local
14 fundings to support a variety of initiatives
15 including but not limited to single family and
16 multi family housing development, comprehensive
17 housing counseling services and direct assistance
18 to both current and future homeowners. These
19 initiatives help improve and stabilize District
20 neighborhoods.

21 Before we begin today I'd like to
22 mention a few housekeeping rules. Please make

1 sure all cell phones and other electronic devices
2 are on silent or vibrate. If you participate in
3 this hearing I understand you may want to use
4 personal examples when voicing your concerns, we
5 would be happy to speak with you one-on-one about
6 your concerns that you may have.

7 Lastly, we ask that you please be
8 respectful of others who are speaking and keep
9 side conversations to a minimum.

10 We have one witness who is registered
11 for today's testimony. After we have heard from
12 that witness we will open the floor or any
13 additional persons who wish to provide testimony.
14 If you have witness testimony please make sure
15 that we have a copy and limit your testimony to
16 three minutes.

17 Our first witness Ms. Johanna Shreve.

18 MS. SHREVE: Good evening and thank you
19 for allowing me to come in and talk with you this
20 evening about your Proposed Substantial Amendment
21 to the Department of Housing and Community
22 Development regarding the creation of the Tenant

1 Based Rental Assistance Program.

2 I am the Chief Tenant Advocate for the
3 District of Columbia and in my particular role it
4 is my responsibility to review all local and
5 Federal regulations as well as any programmatic
6 submissions that go to either of those entities
7 to insure that the rights of tenants are being
8 protected throughout the District of Columbia.

9 With that said, the comments that I
10 will make this evening are extremely brief in
11 that I just received the notice today and so I've
12 been spending a great deal of time today talking
13 to one of your partners and reviewing again the
14 HUD regulations as it relates to the TBRA
15 program. So, my comments are not focused
16 specifically on every item that has been outlined
17 in the submission, but to speak to what I believe
18 might be some additional suggestions that would
19 enhance the approval of this by HUD going
20 forward.

21 To start with I'm going to refer to
22 the TBRA program and particularly the

1 administration that speaks to the certification.
2 And to establish a TBRA program a PJ must certify
3 in the consolidated plan that TBRA is an
4 essential part of its approved housing strategy
5 and that their market conditions in the locality
6 make TBRA a viable option. This means that an
7 assessment of market factors has been undertaken
8 and because there is an ample supply of housing.
9 A TBRA program is an effective way to expand
10 affordable housing opportunities in a community.

11 In my review of your particular
12 amendment I did not see that certification. I
13 did see, however, a brief discussion regarding
14 the market and with that in mind, I'd like to
15 make a recommendation that you expand the market
16 conditions assessment to include for the purposes
17 of HUD's review the challenges that the District
18 faces in the area of affordability and the supply
19 of affordable housing.

20 As well, I think by indicating the
21 marketing factors of the cost of housing within
22 the city you will be able to have HUD look at

1 this with a critical eye in terms of your
2 proposal due to the high cost of housing within
3 the District. As well as it relates to the
4 overall audience that you are attempting to
5 service, I believe that it is also important that
6 you speak to some of the underlining issues that
7 have created of the challenge for the District of
8 Columbia in being able to assist families in
9 finding affordable housing, i.e., I refer to the
10 most recent newspaper reports that spoke to the
11 notion that a majority of those who are in the
12 homeless category are 24 years or younger. A lot
13 of them have never held a first-time job. Some of
14 them have large family compositions and they may
15 not have graduated from high school. So, it puts
16 us as a city in a position to look at a variety
17 of variables and it would give, I think, the
18 agency a better assessment of what it is they're
19 trying to attempt in putting together a TBRA
20 program.

21 When you start to talk about your
22 point in time, you show in terms of the analyses

1 that looks at the current way the homeless
2 program is administered in the city, where it has
3 been and you indicate that the HOME funds
4 dedicated to provide to TBRA will allow the
5 District to transition households out of shelter
6 units and into housing which will increase the
7 number of shelter units available for hypothermia
8 placements.

9 I caution you to look at this
10 language. I caution you to then go back to the
11 regulatory guidance because you will find that
12 that is while it could be a purpose that the PF
13 is intending to serve, I believe that the agency
14 would be better suited in looking at this program
15 as (a) a demonstration program, a program that
16 they would be able to use as a tracking vehicle.
17 For those families that they do assist it is my
18 belief that the demonstration project would help
19 you to meet the HOME program criteria and it
20 would also give you the ability to identify new
21 ways to promote stability and continuity in the
22 life of the beneficiaries.

1 During the implementation phase which
2 in talking to Maribeth earlier today I was
3 informed that the program guidelines had not been
4 actually put together. I think it's important
5 that you do have some sense of a programmatic
6 outline that is attached to your supplemental
7 request to HUD. And the reason I say that is
8 because I believe the DHCD should be the first
9 responder in this case getting its funds from
10 your agency that are going to be used.

11 And in light of the fact that the
12 proposed thought is to a transfer of these funds
13 to the Department of Human Services, I caution
14 you strongly with regards to that particular
15 thought. I caution you because you would have to
16 develop your sub-recipient agreement, that's
17 number one. Two, you would have to constantly
18 monitor to insure that there was compliance with
19 the regulatory provisions. And, three, I believe
20 that if you're going to develop a TANF program
21 for the city, one, we know that TANF is only a
22 24-month program. So, therefore, as a

1 demonstration program it would give you the
2 ability to look at what were the best practices,
3 what worked well, what didn't and in what ways
4 can we as a city improve on our ability to serve
5 the needs of those who do find themselves
6 homeless for whatever reason.

7 As you are all aware I fun the
8 Emergency Housing Program for the District of
9 Columbia. So, I am one in which you would call
10 the first responder for many of the individuals
11 who end up in a homeless shelter. We know based
12 upon our experiences that there are a variety of
13 challenges that the Government faces in
14 attempting to assist these families, (a) there
15 are very large families involved so finding
16 suitable housing for those individuals is going
17 to be a challenge. That's why I say maybe a
18 demonstration program would work better because
19 there's a flexibility enhancement there that you
20 don't get if you just turn the program over and
21 you try and use the existing HUD regulations,
22 (b) I also believe that in the efforts that have

1 been undertaken thus far by Government entities,
2 meaning DHS, specifically, where they put out a
3 request for funding activity. There may be a
4 need to look at that whole thought and think
5 about doing what we would call the master lease
6 approach where you would contract with the
7 housing provider and that way you have control
8 over the units because (a) the housing provider
9 knows that there would be stability in them
10 receiving their financial payments, (b) this
11 would also allow you to guarantee that all
12 participants were involved in the case management
13 program, (c) for those who have not completed
14 high school it would be a requirement to finish
15 within a two-year period, (d) for those that
16 needed a job the coordination between DHCD and
17 DOES would go much smoother. So, I think that
18 that would be one of the reasons to show that
19 there could be then a way for your to measure the
20 success of all aspects of the program.

21 With regards to the coordinated entry
22 situation I was fascinated by the information

1 that Maribeth provided to us this evening as well
2 as earlier today to talk about how families are
3 actually being assessed and how the continuity of
4 that assessment allows us to see across the city
5 who is the most vulnerable and where are the
6 needs. And I think that as a part of that a
7 District-wide map should be developed that has
8 pins in it that show by who are those
9 individuals, where are they located currently and
10 what are the needs that we need to develop in
11 order to associate with this particular program?

12 And, lastly, I do believe that there
13 needs to be a time line associated with your
14 submittal to HUD. I don't think that it is
15 appropriate just to send in the amendment but if
16 you have a time line that shows (a) you've had
17 your public hearings, (b) you've looked at your
18 comments, and (c) then the next part is the
19 overall regulatory guidance that you're going to
20 use to develop this plan.

21 With that, that's the end of my
22 comments but within a short period of a couple of

1 hours today I felt it was important for me to
2 come and talk to you as colleagues. We are all
3 in this together and because of my past
4 experience working in all of the HUD programs, I
5 felt lending that expertise at this particular
6 exercise was also going to be beneficial to what
7 you do in the future.

8 DEPUTY DIRECTOR SIMMS: Absolutely.

9 MS. SHREVE: Okay. With that I'm
10 finished.

11 DEPUTY DIRECTOR SIMMS: Thank you. All
12 right. Thank you very much.

13 Are there other witnesses in the
14 audience wishing to testify?

15 DR. DELORENZO: Please come forward.

16 DEPUTY DIRECTOR SIMMS: Seeing no
17 others other than you two pointing at each other,
18 thank you so much for your testimony this
19 evening. Your feedback is valuable to this
20 agency and the city as a whole.

21 Again, your comments will be part of
22 the DHCD's Substantial Amendment to the

1 Consolidated Plan as required under the Federal
2 Regulations.

3 This concludes today's public hearing
4 on the Consolidated Plan Proposed Substantial
5 Amendment for FY 15, HOME Tenant Based Rental
6 Assistant Program.

7 Please feel free to speak to our
8 senior managers if you have any additional
9 concerns.

10 Thank you for attending. Good night.

11 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
12 went off the record at 7:18 p.m.)
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Before: DHCD

Date: 12-10-2014

Place: Washington, D.C.

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Court Reporter

NEAL R. GROSS

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