



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, 3rd Floor ■ Columbia, Maryland 21046 ■ 410-313-6320

Voice/Relay

Kelly A. Cimino, Director

FAX 410-313-5960

Director's Report

September 2016



CONTENTS

<u>Director's Note</u>	2
<u>Housing Opportunities</u>	3
<u>Community Planning and Grants</u>	4
<u>County Funded Projects</u>	5
<u>Outreach</u>	6

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In June 2016, the County Council approved Council Resolution 54-2016 to allow the Howard County Housing Commission to separate from the County's housing department. The separation was facilitated by the earlier passage of Council Bill 12-2016 in April 2016. The Commission will continue to act as the County's public housing authority and its employees will continue to be eligible to participate in the County's retirement and health plans. The recently adopted legislation can be viewed in its entirety at <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/olis>.

On July 1st, the Commission and Department became 2 separate entities. Tom Carbo will continue as the Executive Director of the Commission. After 2 months as the acting director, I was appointed to be the new director of the Department of Housing and Community Development on August 22, 2016. I appreciate the County Executive's confidence in my ability and desire to effectively manage the housing department. I am very excited about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Some of the Department's initiatives will include the introduction of a new program designed to help revitalize older neighborhoods, increased education and outreach efforts to individuals and families that want to buy or rent a home in the County, emphasis on ways to increase homeownership rates throughout the County, and encouraging "live where you work" opportunities through partnerships with area employers.

The Commission will continue to share space with the Department at the Columbia Gateway building until their new space at the non-profit center on Patuxent Woods Drive is ready for occupancy. The Commission's anticipated move out date is February 2017.

In the coming months, the Department plans to fill 3 vacant positions, introduce new programs (RENEW Howard and an improved version of the County's rehabilitation loan program), update the website and "rebrand" ourselves as a separate department. I welcome ideas and feedback so feel free to contact me by phone, email or ask for a meeting. Stay tuned for more details.

Kelly Cimino, Director

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

MODERATE INCOME HOUSING UNIT PROGRAM

Please see the attached MIHU Report.

SETTLEMENT DOWNPAYMENT LOAN PROGRAM

The Department's FY 2017 budget includes funding for the Settlement Downpayment Loan Program (SDLP) for both MIHU buyers and market rate homebuyers. For FY17, 5 MIHU buyers received SDLP loans, including 1 workforce loan, for a total of \$103,656. These low-interest, deferred payment loans are important to the success of the MIHU homeownership program.

Beginning in July 2017, the Department also made \$400,000 available through the Settlement Downpayment Loan Program to help working families to buy non-MIHU homes in Howard County. The Department will use the funds to make deferred second mortgage loans that can be used to pay for the settlement costs and down payments needed for home purchases. For FY17, 5 non-MIHU buyers received loans to assist with closing costs under the Homestarter and Workforce SDLP programs for a total of \$63,747. In recent years, funds in the program were only available to households purchasing properties through the County's Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) program.

A training session will be scheduled this fall and area lenders will be invited to learn more about the program. Interested homebuyers should contact a participating first mortgage lender to begin the application process. The Department's website has been updated to provide current program information.

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM (NSP)

The NSP program focused on purchasing foreclosures in zip codes 21045 (East Columbia) and 20723 (North Laurel) to help stabilize those areas. All four of the homes purchased with the grant funds have been renovated and resold. Program income from the sale of the previous homes was used to purchase a fifth property. Rehab of the 5th property is complete and the Commission is making plans to sell this home to an income-eligible family. The NSP grant will be closed out once the last home is sold.

MARYLAND HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Program (MHRP) can be used to assist eligible homeowners secure low interest loans to make home repairs and bring properties into compliance with applicable building codes and standards. The program is designed to benefit households with incomes that are at or below 80% of the statewide median income. Applications are available by phone, mail and online. Homeowners must be current on their mortgage, insurance and property tax payments to be eligible for the program. One new loan was approved in September. Once the loan closes, repairs can begin on the home in Columbia.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND GRANTS

FFY2015 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE & EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)

The CAPER is the annual reporting Howard County does to HUD after the conclusion of the program year. This CAPER is reporting on accomplishments in the fifth and final year of the previous 5-Year Consolidated Plan (FFY2010-FFY2015 Consolidated Plan).

The FFY15 CAPER was delivered to HUD on September 28, 2016. The Department should receive HUD Acceptance of the CAPER by November 15, 2016.

FFY2016-FFY20 CONSOLIDATED PLAN (5YR PLAN)/WITH FFY16 ACTION PLAN

The FFY16-FFY20 Consolidated Plan/FFY16 Action Plan was officially printed, bound and delivered to all interested parties within the County Government. The Plan is also posted on the Housing website for the public.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM

The Community Planning and Grants Division is in the process of reprogramming the Program Income funds received from the Housing Commission as a repayment, along with FFY 15 CDBG funds that went unspent by the sub-recipients. Reprogramming federal funds is a formal process where the public is given thirty (30) days and a public hearing to comment on perspective activities that will be funded by the reprogramming.

Reprogramming HUD Program Income funds is done by amending the current year Action Plan and reprogramming unspent entitlement funds is done by amending both the current year Action Plan and the Action Plan where the unspent funds are being recommitted.

The Department is hosting a Public Hearing on November, 15, 2016 from 6 – 7 pm at the Columbia Gateway building to discuss \$468,143.00 in CDBG Program Income funds being committed to purchasing two (2) condominium units for the non-profit Bridges to Housing Stability. The two (2) units will be used to house Bridges clients who are on the verge of homelessness. These units will become part of the Bridges Alliance Program and Bridges to Housing Stability will own these units.

The \$36,348.77 of FFY15 unspent CDBG funds will also be discussed at the Public Hearing on November 15, 2016. These funds will be committed to the Acquisition of Shalom Square by Heritage Housing Partners Corp. Heritage Housing Partners Corp. will utilize CDBG Funds for the Acquisition of Shalom Square to a Tax Credit Partnership that will facilitate the use of Low-Income Tax Housing Tax Credit financing to fund the property renovations.

The Environmental Reviews for the two (2) condominium units and Shalom Square are underway.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TRAINING

The Community Planning and Grants Division attended an Environmental Review Training September 27 – 29 at the HUD Baltimore Office. Six different jurisdictions participated in this live streaming training. The training consisted of a review of all Federal Environmental Regulations and provided examples with case studies.

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (HOME) PROGRAM

The department staff continues to be successful in committing and expending HOME Program funds. In September, the HOME Program staff person expanded her expertise regarding HUD's Utility Schedule Model (HUSM). HUD issued the updated information via a webcast for all its participating jurisdictions (PJ's) to review. PJ's with projects that were committed and funded after August 2013 can no longer use the utility allowance of the local public housing authority. As a result, any projects that were committed after that date must use the HUSM model to calculate the utility allowance for projects in which residents pay for their utilities. Staff will continue to attend training classes to remain up to date on all HUD regulation changes.

COUNTY FUNDED PROJECTS

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING/DAY RESOURCE CENTER

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Leola Dorsey Community Resource Center was held on Wednesday, June 8, 2016 at 10 a.m. next to the center's construction site at 10390 Guilford Road in Jessup. The Housing Commission, along with the support of the Department, its partners, stakeholders and neighbors, is proud of this project's progress and looks forward to its opening. When completed, the three-story center will provide services three days a week by Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center; and offer homeless persons access to meals, showers, laundry, check email, and visits to the center's pantry to receive donated necessities. Medical, counseling and social services will also be made available.

The project is owned by the Housing Commission and will be operated by Volunteers of America, Chesapeake, Inc., one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive human services organizations. Construction has begun and is expected to be completed in summer 2017.

RIVERWATCH

The Housing Commission received a donation of land in Elkridge as part of an MIHU alternative compliance plan. The developer of Annapolis Junction Town Center project in Savage transferred 31 MIHUs to this project. It has ground leased the parcel to a partnership created by Kirby Development, of which the Housing Commission is a member. The partnership will develop the land into an 84-unit

mixed-income community. Project financing closed on October 21, 2015. Project completion is anticipated to be in October 2016. The units are already leased up and there is a waiting list for interested tenants. The ribbon cutting ceremony is set for October 26, 2016, at the property site.

ACQUISITION/REHAB PROGRAM

The Department's FY17 budget includes funds for the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing scattered site properties. The Housing Commission has entered into a Master Lease Agreement with Bridges to Housing Stability, Inc., a local non-profit housing agency, to use some of these funds to provide much-needed permanent supportive housing for the community.

As of September 1st, the Housing Commission has purchased, renovated, and leased ten condos to Bridges for this program. These units have been turned over to Bridges for rental to households earning up to 60% of Howard County area median income. Two recently purchased units have been renovated and were turned over to Bridges on September 21. Another unit is being rehabilitated now.

OUTREACH

HOMEBUYER EDUCATION WORKSHOP

This month's Homebuyer Education Workshop was held on Monday, September 19, 2016. The next workshop is scheduled for Monday, October 17, 2016, from 6-9 p.m., at the Columbia Gateway building. Pre-registration is required. The Department's website provides ongoing workshop dates through 2016 and FAQs. Call 410-313-6328 for more information.

MIHU WORKSHOP

The next open enrollment month is October 2016. An MIHU Information Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, October 20, 2016, from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at the Columbia Gateway building. Interested applicants may email Lisa Wiseman (lwiseman@howardcountymd.gov) to register. Staff is available to partner with builders and nonprofits to present MIHU workshops throughout the year. Interested partners or applicants should visit our website or call 410-313-6343 for more information. Staff continues to search for opportunities to promote MIHU and homeownership informational sessions to employees of businesses in the County.

Attachment: MIHU Report
