

**PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS ON 2025 ANNUAL PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY (PHA) PLAN, 5-YEAR PHA PLAN FOR 2025 to 2029, ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUED OCCUPANCY PLAN, AND ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN—Comments Sorted by Topic**  
**Topic #1-----Board Meeting Accessibility and Transparency:**

**Public Hearing Comment #1—From Roye “Chris” Logan, Mitchell Court:**

Groups of residents have tried meeting with the Board of Commissioners at its public board meetings several times this year to explain complaints, but many of the meetings have been changed to virtual meetings or cancelled. The last in-person board meeting was in January 2024. In 2023, there were only two virtual meetings. We have wanted to provide our complaints in person to the Board; we have gone to the news; we have requested meetings at the housing developments. But, the Board has not responded to these requests. It is as if we are just poor people that can be ignored. What will you do to be more transparent and to establish better communication with HACM’s residents?

**Public Hearing Comment #2: From Vivian Jones, Lapham Park**

We have been down here several times before, but until now have not been able to speak directly with you. Thank you for finally giving us the chance to speak. You have heard our concerns and the issues that we have had living in the HACM properties—they are nothing new to you. But, it has taken you over 365 days to come and see what is going on in the housing developments.

We are tired of living in place that is not fit to be living in, but yet we still have to have somewhere to live. We shouldn’t be living in a place with rats and roaches and bedbugs. We shouldn’t live in a place where people go around shaking on our doorknobs. We shouldn’t live in a place where drugs are being sold in a building we are living at. We shouldn’t be living in a place where security is no help to us. We’ve got security but they tell you, “I’m not allowed to get involved in that.” A guy was robbed right on our front door of our building, a car was stolen, but they say they are not allowed to get involved in that. Why not? What is security good for? Nothing. Just like you guys—you sit here, you go home, you’re comfortable. You don’t have to worry about shaking bedbugs off of you. You don’t have to worry about people knocking on your door at 3 or 4 in the morning. You say your job is to help us live better---you need to get up and do your job.

### **Public Hearing Comment #3: From Brittany Walker, Common Ground**

I've had the pleasure of organizing some really spectacular people here in this room who are fighting for things they really shouldn't have to fight for. I'd like to ask just a few questions. I heard some things about your five-year plan and how you are willing to commit to certain things. Will you commit to having all your future meetings in person? Will you commit to having public comment at those meetings? Will you commit to reflecting those changes in the bylaws? Will you also commit to changing the definition of a quorum in the bylaws to a majority of seven, rather than a majority of appointed commissioners? In addition, while you say the board has toured some developments, we don't really believe the board has conducted a full tour of these developments? Will you allow residents to lead this tour so you're not just going in circles or touring vacant apartments with no real issues? Will you allow tenants who in many cases have lived there for multiple years to tour you around and show you where the actual problems are?

#### **HACM Response on Topic #1 Board Meeting Accessibility and Transparency:**

Over the past several months, the Board and HACM have received both directly and indirectly many complaints, concerns and requests for action. Additionally, board members have met with community groups, visited some of the HACM properties and have spoken with public housing experts. Board members are also open to doing visits at housing developments with attendance by resident leadership of that development as well. HACM leadership will also visit the developments regularly and meet with residents.

While the Board will occasionally need to have an option for a specific Board member to attend virtually from time to time due to their availability, the Board of Commissioners stated at the September 11, 2024 Board meeting that they are committed to have all Board meetings in-person moving forward.

Regarding public comments, Wisconsin Open Meeting laws give the public a right to attend and observe local government meetings but not a right to participate; a "public comment period" is allowed but is not required under Wisconsin Open Meeting laws. For several decades prior to the current members serving on the Board, the Board has not historically had as part of their agenda a regularly scheduled "public comment period." The one exception is when HACM has scheduled a public hearing on a specific policy change or action, such as annually regarding the PHA Plan or on other significant amendments to plans or policies, when HACM is soliciting input from residents and other members of the public.

However, the Board of Commissioners are in favor of implementing a public comment period, and has requested HACM leadership to begin to research the feasibility of having public comment periods as a regular agenda item as well as best practices on how to implement it to ensure compliance with open meeting laws, agenda items, discussion of specific items not on the agenda, time for comments, etc.

Regarding the quorum, changing the bylaws related to quorum is not a simple decision that does not have other consequences. The potential challenge in changing the definition of quorum to a “majority of seven” is that if commissioners leave the board or if there is a gap period in appointments of new members so that there are fewer members on the board, it could create the condition that no business could be transacted for several months until the Mayor has appointed and Common Council approves new members. This would include action items that are necessary for housing authority operations such as contract approvals, HUD requirements, necessary policy changes, etc.

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## **Topic #2: Accountability and Performance Reviews**

### **Public Hearing Comment #4: From Roye “Chris” Logan, Mitchell Court**

HACM’s biggest issue is bad management, from the top down. We have raised important concerns and complaints about the behavior or background of a number of senior management staff at HACM, but the Board has not held them accountable. When there have been issues, HACM has moved managers around from one development to another. The entire staff culture is rotten. The 5-Year Plan has nothing about how the Board is going to hold staff accountable for doing their jobs and treating residents respectfully. Our question is how will the Board hold HACM leadership accountable? Will you commit to performing performance reviews the Executive Director, Willie Hines, as a good board will do, and will you publicly share the results? Will you mandate that Mr. Hines perform performance reviews of his senior leadership team?

### **Public Hearing Comment #5: From Betty Newton, Becher Court**

You say you are holding the HACM staff accountable? Are you holding the Executive Director accountable? Because you gave him a raise. With all of the bad things happening in HACM buildings, you gave him a raise, even though he makes more than the Governor and the Mayor. Why does he deserve a raise when he won’t even come and meet us. I have invited him to my building several times. Never called me to have a conversation though I have given him my

numbers. If you ignore the RO Presidents, you definitely ignore the residents. We're not going to attack you; not physically.

### **Public Hearing Comment #6: From Kevin Solomon, Common Ground**

We want to have Mr. Hines speak as it says on the agenda and that you, the Board, demonstrate that you hold staff accountable right here, right now by asking him hard questions.

Number 1--HUD and Baker Tilley said they could not determine the financial net position of the Housing Authority. You don't even know the status of your own books. There's three million dollars missing. There's a thousand plus illegal self-payments. You claim you're poor but you can't even figure out your net position. So that excuse frankly feels vapid.

Number 2—I'm more concerned that you had no questions for Mr. Hines. One Board member asked no questions this entire board meeting. Another isn't even here. Another one—who knows if she's here and how many meetings has she missed now. No transparency, no justification given. You don't have any questions for Mr. Hines? Can you ask him now? We're here, we're waiting. The problem is that you talk to him behind closed doors and you cancel meetings. You talk about dialog but you don't do it. One helpful thing would be if you talk to him publicly and not behind closed doors. You're not doing your job. We're glad you're going to do a performance review—you didn't say when. We're glad you're going to hold him accountable—you didn't say how you were going to do that. That's the result of our pressure for two years. But you haven't demonstrated it here.

### **HACM Response on Topic #2 Accountability and Performance Reviews**

To address the concerns that the Board is hearing from residents, the public, and through media outlets, the Board has challenged HACM leadership to take action, to investigate issues or concerns, to hold their teams accountable, and above all to strive to provide safe, clean and welcoming environments for residents.

As many are aware, HACM has been put on corrective action plans by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development due to financial and accountability issues. The Board has requested that HACM leadership have as their top priority to get back on track by implementing corrective actions. The corrective action plans, which also includes the requirement to contract with an experienced agency to operate our Section 8 voucher program and a forensic audit to do a 100% review of all HCV financial transactions for five years from 2017 to 2022, are a significant focus in both the Annual PHA Plan and the Five-Year PHA Plan.

HACM is committed to transparency in our communications with internal and external stakeholders. HACM expects that departmental personnel and HACM leadership respond promptly to inquiries received generally or through the public records request process. Additionally, HACM utilizes a variety of communication channels, such as websites, email, social media, digital signage, tours, meetings, and newsletters to share information about the agency's operations. Our goal is to keep stakeholders informed and engaged in our efforts to advance HACM's mission.

Additionally, the Board will be implementing more intensive board oversight, via asking questions, requesting additional information, and digging into the details of frequent concerns from residents and the public.

At the September 11, 2024 public hearing, the Vice-Chair of the Board of Commissioners confirmed that the Board will conduct performance appraisals of current HACM leadership. Under the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law, one of the exceptions to open meetings is that closed sessions are authorized for certain specific employment issues for "considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility." While the actual performance review will be done in a closed session similar to those done by other public bodies (such as the Fire and Police Commission or other public bodies in the state), the HACM Board of Commissioners is committed to having the entire board participate in performance evaluations of the Secretary-Executive Director. In addition, the Board has committed to be transparent with their findings and recommended actions.

While the exact format has changed over the years, HACM has performed performance management evaluations of each staff by their supervisor(s), evaluating against accountability goals and standards that were established at the beginning of the year. In the current 5-Year PHA Plan for 2025 to 2029, HACM has included a specific objective (f) regarding performance management under "Goal 1: Optimize HACM's organization structure, processes, and procedures to attain resiliency and long-term sustainability."

Objective (f) under Goal 1 covers accountability goals and performance management. It currently reads as follows:

"(f) HACM's Performance Management System, supervisors annually review and revise to ensure clear accountability goals and standards have been established that are integrated into every employee's performance management review."

In the 5-Year Plan, we will clarify further by adding the following sentence to Goal 1, Objective (f):  
“The HACM Board of Commissioners will perform similar performance management review(s) of  
the Secretary-Executive Director.”

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### **Topic #3---Accessibility**

#### **Public Hearing Comment #7: From Marion Moore, College Court**

A resident at College Court complained about accessibility in our buildings for persons with mobility disabilities. She noted that the doors are not wide enough and that she has to turn her stove sideways so she can enter the kitchen. How come your plan does not take into account reasonable accommodations such as this?

#### **Public Hearing Comment #8: From Barbara Leigh, County Commission for Persons with Disabilities**

I serve on the County Commission for Persons with Disabilities and also have experience with HACM . Our theater company worked with residents at Lapham Park creating original theater, music and dance. The residents were wonderfully talented people and I enjoyed working with them. This was about eight years ago. I’m just so saddened by what seems to have disintegrated. Lapham Park was a model agency, a beautiful place. It now seems to be falling apart.

I’m the Chair of the Housing Access Committee. I really have concerns about the number of people that HACM serves that have a disability—some very major and some more minor, but definitely a disability. I think it would be so important to have someone on your Board, for example, who has a disability, maybe in addition to being a resident. They would have that personal contact and could go into these apartments and make sure they are accessible. I can testify that many a restaurant, many a public place that say they are accessible are not; there have been many times in such businesses that I have had difficulty getting into a bathroom without major embarrassment. So, please, take that into consideration.

### **HACM Response on Topic #3 Accessibility:**

Residents with disabilities are valued members of our communities. HACM will work with residents to provide reasonable accommodations when needed. All residents can complete a request for reasonable accommodation (also called a Section 504 Reasonable Accommodation), and HACM will review it for consideration and action within federal guidelines.

Currently, HACM has a limited number of accessible units in our Public Housing portfolio due to its aging housing stock. Most of our public housing developments were built between 1937 and the early 1970s, and so are between 50 to 87 years old and the vast majority of these public housing units do not meet accessibility standards.

HACM has renovated a number of our older public housing developments into project-based voucher units through HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. These renovations have included more accessible units as part of the overall development renovation, in accordance with the requirements Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act when applicable. Via RAD conversions and the low income housing tax credit (LIHTC) and other funding that may be applied for, HACM is able to provide more accessible units as a required part of the renovations.

To deal with the concern that there are very few accessible units in public housing, in the Administrative Plan revisions that came into effect in early 2023, HACM included the following provision on page 18-33:

In addition, the PHA may place households that are referred by the PHA's public housing program onto the PBV wait list for a PHA-owned property (e.g., building converted to PBV through the RAD program) if the public housing household has requested and been approved for a reasonable accommodation that either (a) cannot be fulfilled in the public housing program or (2) cannot be fulfilled in a timely manner in the public housing program.

Examples include, but are not limited to these types of circumstances: (a) a resident in public housing requires an accessible unit and no accessible units are available in the public housing program or are available timely; and (b) there is a need for a 2 bedroom unit for a live-in aide, but all units in the public housing program are either 1-bedroom or not accessible.

This change meant that now if a public housing resident who submits a 504 reasonable accommodation request cannot be accommodated in public housing, they may be referred to a Project-Based Voucher unit in a PHA-owned property (such as a building converted to project-based vouchers via RAD) by being placed on a wait list for a unit that meets their approved needs.

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## **Topic #4—Public Address System**

### **Public Hearing Comment #9: From Minister William Harrell, Lapham Park**

Why can't Lapham Park Resident Organization use the intercoms to make important announcements to residents, including RO meetings, meal programs, food truck and food distribution, arts & crafts activities, etc.?

#### **HACM Response on Topic #4 Public Address Systems:**

In the past, the PA system had been used by a number of buildings for building-wide announcements. However, housing management was informed by our systems professionals several years ago that the current PA systems installed many years ago were not intended for non-emergency use. Rather, they were designed to be used for the building's fire system and other emergencies. The use for other non-emergency purposes such as regular event announcements was wearing out the system prematurely as it was not designed to be used for those purposes. Thus, all HACM housing development staff were informed two to three years ago to restrict building-wide announcements to emergency use only.

However, HACM will continue to evaluate options and costs to see it could be feasible at some point in the future to replace the system for one that could incorporate other periodic announcements.

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## **Topic #5--Resident Members of the Board of Commissioners**

### **Public Hearing Comment #10: From Minister William Harrell, Lapham Park**

The Board does not have enough Board members right now, but there are a lot of interested residents here. Is it possible to put more residents on the Board of Commissioners, and not the RAB Board which is useless, so that residents can give some input on what is going on and perhaps this would eliminate some of the problems HACM is currently experiencing.



**Public Hearing Comment #11: From Betty Newton, Becher Court**

Our resident board. I’ve heard there are supposed to be two residents on the board of Commissioners. Currently for the last three to four years, you’ve only had one, and I’m questioning if you have that one. I’ve asked previously whether the current resident on the Board is physically able to fulfill her duties. You came to my building with the Mayor on June 17<sup>th</sup>, unannounced. You didn’t come looking for me—you found me because my residents informed me you were there. It wasn’t with the Chair, Ms. Daniels, it was with you, the Vice-Chair, the Vice Chair whose term had expired already. There are supposed to be residents on this Board, then I want to see them and I want to see them doing their job.

**HACM Response to Topic #5 Resident Members of the Board of Commissioners:**

HACM currently has one of the two seats allotted for residents filled. The other seat became vacant in August 2023, just over one year ago, when that resident, who was also Chair of the Board, passed away. Mayor Johnson has appointed another resident to be a Commissioner, and HACM looks forward to the Common Council confirming the appointment, filling the second resident position on the Board. Chair Sherri L. Daniels is a long-time HACM resident and member of the HACM Board of Commissioners. She is currently stepping back from running the HACM Board Meetings for medical reasons, and while she is not running the meetings, she remains committed to serving her fellow residents as a member of the Board.

The Resident Advisory Board (RAB) is not only HUD-required, but is a proven tool for resident input into plans and policies such as the PHA Annual Plan, Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy and Administrative Plan, where changes have been made based on input from the RAB.

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**Topic #6—City of Milwaukee Funding for Maintenance Custodial Positions**

**Public Comment #12: From Franz Meyer**

In your 5-year PHA Plan, you state that HACM has hired only 3 of the 5 positions with the \$250,000 in funding that the City of Milwaukee awarded to you earlier this year? Only 3 of 5 in a year? Is that acceptable to the Board? What is the timeline for hiring the remainder of the positions? I hope that the Board considers how taxpayers feel when you have not made full and immediate use of money that was awarded to assist HACM with keeping the buildings clean.

**HACM Response to Topic #6 City of Milwaukee Funding for Maintenance Custodial Positions:**

All five of these custodial positions are currently filled, though staffing levels have fluctuated over the past year. HACM tends to see higher turnover in our lower-wage, entry-level positions like these. The Human Resources team has responded promptly to vacancies and will continue to do so as needed.

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**Topic #7---Pest Control**

**Public Hearing Comment #13: From Vivian Jones, Lapham Park**

We are tired of living in place that is not fit to be living in, but yet we still have to have somewhere to live. We shouldn't be living in a place with rats and roaches and bedbugs. You don't have to worry about shaking bedbugs off you.

**Public Hearing Comment #14: From Gidget Aranda, Becher Court**

We still have bedbugs, drain flies and rats crawling around our building. When we complain about bedbugs, we wind up getting evicted. We want to follow up with Director Hines to see how this will all be resolved.

**Public Hearing Comment #15: From Carmella Holloway, College Court**

The bedbugs at College Court are terrible. I shouldn't be paying rent if I'm in an uninhabitable apartment full of bedbugs. Crawling in my ear; crawling all over me; crawling on the walls and the floors I haven't had a decent night of sleep in six months. You go home and have a nice sleep—why can't I have one? I'm human just like you are, but you don't care. They sprayed five time. Watered down-I don't smell nothing. You aren't doing anything. Why should I have to pay rent where I can't lay my head? But yet Willie Hines does nothing about it.

**Public Hearing Comment #16: From Kelly Barnes, Hillside Terrace**

We also have problems with the rat problem. We have to come in the house before 8 because the rats are so bad. They are not even scared of you. I sent a video showing how close they come to you.

**Public Hearing Comment #17: From Charlene Bell, College Court**

You might have seen me in the Washington Post article or in the news. I'm a true fighter. If I get pissed off about something, I'm not going to give up. I'm going to keep fighting for true justice. I'm being eaten by bedbugs daily—I have a fresh bedbug bite now. I have my apartment sprayed once a month for the last year and a half and there is still bugs in my house. I spent \$100 on bed covers.

**Public Hearing Comment #18: From Cornelius Sawyer, Highland Gardens**

We keep talking about bedbug. We brought up the fact that every other organization that has employees, even Spectrum, that goes from house to house, put footies on their feet so they won't transfer any pests, especially when they are going from apartment to apartment doing inspections or work orders.

**HACM Response to Topic #7 Pest Control:**

Pest control is a top priority, both for the well-being of our residents and for the care of our properties. HACM manages pest control through in-house staff who can most efficiently and cost-effectively provide services. HACM also has a purchase order with a third-party vendor to provide secondary pest control services, when necessary.

Services include regular monitoring and treatment of properties and specific pest remediation when reported by residents and staff.

Effective pest control requires a partnership with residents, who play a lead role in proper disposal of trash, upkeep of housing units, and preparation of units for pest control treatment. Early identification and reporting of pests by residents to management is extremely important—if HACM does not know of a pest problem, it may not be found until it is time for a unit inspection.

Once reported, managers will put in a work order for service. Pest control staff will schedule the service and/or inspection and will complete the service. Residents assist in the treatment by preparing for the pest control service. Pest control also determines whether further services are needed or not.

Pest control actively goes to certain exterior areas where a number of complaints from rats have been reported, including Lapham Park, Townhomes at Carver Park, Hillside Terrace, among others. This typically happens weekly, and staff walk the grounds and treat for rats. Residents

can do their part for exterior pests by not throwing garbage on the ground, by putting garbage in plastic garbage bags, putting the bags in the appropriate garbage can or dumpster (depending on the site), and fully closing the lid.

Pest control chemicals have been formulated and improved over the years with the intention to avoid strong odors and staining, also to be safer for pets and people. Some chemicals come in a powdered form to be used in a sprayer, so water has to be added in accordance with the instructions by the manufacturer. HACM does not “water down” the chemicals as that would make the entire process ineffective.

There is not conclusive evidence that booties work in reducing spread of bedbugs and it is not currently considered the industry standard to employ them. Bed bugs do not jump; you would have to sit or lean against walls/furniture to get them on your clothes in order to take them to another unit. They can also pose slip hazards. HACM requires maintenance staff to wear slip-proof work shoes to avoid accidents. Roaches don’t interact with people and the egg casings are typically in/near their hiding spots, things that make it less likely to transport them from unit to unit. Our techs are trained in pest control and they know how to avoid transferring pests. Other professionals that specialize in cable installation or gas meter installation would not have the same awareness and knowledge.

HACM is committed to continue to work in partnership with our residents and pest control services to keep pests out of our housing.

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## **Topic #8 –Safety**

### **Public Hearing Comment #19: From Vivian Jones, Lapham Park**

We shouldn’t live in a place where people go around shaking on our doorknobs. We shouldn’t live in a place where drugs are being sold in a building we are living at. We shouldn’t be living in a place where security is no help to us. We’ve got security but they tell you, “I’m not allowed to get involved in that.” A guy was robbed right on our front door of our building, a car was stolen, but they say they are not allowed to get involved in that. Why not? What is security good for? Nothing. You don’t have to worry about people knocking on your door at 3 or 4 in the morning. You say your job is to help us live better---you need to get up and do your job.

**Public Hearing Comment #20: From Gidget Aranda, Becher Court**

My property was stolen in front of my apartment. I made a report to public safety. I called the next day to follow up and they didn't know what I was talking about. There are two cameras in the hallway, so why are they not following up on this? We do not feel safe.

**Public Hearing Comment #21: From Kelly Barnes, Hillside Terrace**

I have to be careful sending children to the basement because homeless people are either down there or down there doing drugs. That's scary to me coming into my apartment building with my grandkids not knowing what to expect. I feel if we complain or if we are asked to go on the news, I would be totally honest. But you are not being honest. How can you say what is going on in our apartment or apartment complex if you never even came there to look? I just want you to understand what we are going through each and every day.

**Public Hearing Comment #22: From Kesha Tate, Hillside Terrace**

The residents of Hillside are having problems with the rats, prostitution, the homeless people, and the trash. My kids are not able to go outside due to the fact that the homeless people are out sleeping on the playground or by the trash. They are breaking into our apartments going to the basements to sleep. They are also coming there to buy drugs. I complained about another resident having her boyfriend there selling to them. And nothing has been done, even though he is also on the no trespass list so he shouldn't even be there. The rats are attacking residents. My kids are afraid to go outside due to the drugs, the homeless. Why should I pay to live somewhere where they can't be comfortable and they can't live well? I complained about my neighbor's boyfriend selling and they're trying to break into our units and stuff. We shouldn't have to worry about that.

**Public Hearing Comment #23: From Betty Newton, Becher Court**

I have asked the Chief of Public Safety multiple times to give us a list of the cameras in our building—the ones that work and the ones that do not work because I get sick of hearing that something was not caught on camera. They stole a fan out of our laundry room. I told them the date that it happened, but they could never come back and tell me who stole it. They stole a table and chairs out of our lobby by two exit doors. They never told us who stole it. And I've asked repeatedly. You can't tell me you don't put a camera by two exit and entrance doors.

## **HACM Response to Topic #8 Safety:**

Across all HACM developments and properties, HACM acknowledges the concerns regarding security presence, response times, and the handling of incidents such as thefts and loitering. HACM's Public Safety is committed to addressing these issues to ensure a safer and more secure living environment for all residents.

Your concerns about individuals gaining unauthorized access to buildings, unescorted guests, or illegal activities occurring in or around our developments are serious matters that our team is actively working to address.

Our Public Safety Specialists have specific roles and responsibilities to resolve safety issues and assist residents. However, HACM's Public Safety's direct intervention may be limited in dangerous situations or emergencies, as we are not the police, do not have arrest powers, and do not carry a gun or weapon. In an emergency, please call 911 immediately. If it is a non-emergency, you can call Public Safety at (414) 286-5100 or you can call the Milwaukee Police Department non-emergency number at (414) 933-4444.

We recognize the importance of timely and effective communication between Public Safety and the residents. Our team is committed to maintaining open lines of communication, ensuring that reports are accurately tracked, incidents are thoroughly investigated, and residents are kept informed of the status of their reports. Public safety staff often attend resident organization meetings when possible, to provide information regarding crime or safety, or answer questions.

Regarding the concerns about the functionality of cameras at all developments, including Becher Court, we are in the process of updating and expanding our camera systems to ensure optimal coverage and to minimize blind spots. We are also coordinating with our IT department to ensure all current camera systems are operational and positioned to effectively monitor key areas such as exits, entrances, and common spaces. We have recently implemented a regular review of cameras in each development at least once a week to identify ones that may be down for a connection reason or that need replacing. At the time it is identified, a work ticket is put in to our Information Technology department that the camera or connection is not functioning. Additionally, we are seeking creative ways to fund improvements such as new cameras or replacements of older cameras to ensure the safety and security of all residents. In the Capital Fund Program -Five Year Action Plan amendment, additional line items were included for security cameras.

We are actively collaborating with HACM Maintenance Services and other relevant departments to address issues like unauthorized individuals accessing buildings and the cleanliness of common areas. We are also coordinating efforts with the Milwaukee Police Department to enhance patrols and interventions where needed.

We have a robust records management system in place that ensures all reports are accurately logged, and there is a clear expectation that residents are informed of the actions taken when Public Safety responds to calls for service. We ensure accountability by making sure follow-up actions are communicated quickly to the residents involved

We also encourage you to review the objectives that are included in the Five Year PHA Plan for 2025 to 2029 under Goal #4 regarding Safety and Security. These incorporate some of the major strategies we have been implementing over the past two years.

We understand that safety is not only about having security personnel or cameras—it’s about making sure those resources are effective and that residents can trust the process. HACM Public Safety Department takes concerns seriously, and we are committed to making the necessary improvements to enhance security across all developments, acting in partnership with the community.

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**Topic #9—Access to Amenities**

**Public Hearing Comment #24: Gidget Aranda, Becher Court**

At Becher Court, we still have no access to the kitchen and they still have old nonfunctioning gym equipment. At Becher Court, we still have washing machines that destroy our clothes, or are filled with water. There are 4 washers for 120 units. Why does it take over a month to address this?

**HACM Response to Topic #9 Access to Amenities:**

For a number of developments, HACM leases the washing machine and dryer service from a local business that works with many multifamily housing developments across Milwaukee, and they maintain and service the machines. The Becher Court property manager has called several times regarding the problems with the one washing machine. She has now called to request replacement of the machine and has unplugged the machine and put an “out of order” sign on it in the meantime. She has also asked them to process the refund to the resident that had clothes damaged.

Residents of Becher Court have access to the amenities of the adjoining Becher Terrace senior living community, which is not owned or operated by the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee. To use Becher Terrace’s kitchen, Becher Court residents just need ask the Becher Terrace management office. The management of Becher Terrace have stated they will not be replacing the equipment in the exercise room at this time.

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## **Topic #10—Work Orders**

### **Public Hearing Comment #25: From Gidget Aranda, Becher Court**

At Becher Court, we still have systematic plumbing issues throughout the building.

**HACM Response:** Becher Court does not have systemic plumbing issues throughout the building. Gidget Aranda contacted the management office at Becher Court on September 27, 2024 to report a clog. It appeared that Ms. Aranda had someone try to unclog her sink and a pipe was broken in the process. HACM’s maintenance staff fixed the clog and broken pipe on October 1, 2024.

### **Public Hearing Comment #26: From Kelly Barnes, Hillside Terrace**

My main issue is my grandchildren. They go outside and they can seriously get hurt. There is a steel pipe just hanging from the ground. I have told them numerous times and nothing has been done. The jungle gym that they play on is dangerous because bars are loose on there.

**HACM Response:** HACM is in the process of identifying and contracting with a vendor to complete the removal of the playground equipment at issue.

### **Public Hearing Comment #27: From Kesha Tate, Hillside Terrace**

Numerous times I’ve called in work orders for stuff to get done but nothing is getting done. I have to fix stuff myself so my kids won’t get hurt. My kids got locked in the bathroom. I put in a work order two months ago—nothing has been done. I’ve complained about the carpet and my refrigerator. They had to come inspect it to see if I was lying. It got done but still I should not have to constantly call you to put in the same thing over and over again just to get something done. My kids come first.

**HACM Response:** There is a record of nine maintenance requests for this unit between January 1, 2024, and October 1, 2024. Each work order was completed within the required timeframes



set forth by HACM’s funders (24 hours for emergency, 3 days for routine work), with the exception of one item which appears to have been overlooked by staff. Work order #179637 (replace light) was entered on July 22, 2024 and had not been completed as of October 2, 2024. This has been given to the Hillside Terrace manager for immediate action.

Work orders are prioritized based on severity and age. Emergencies take first priority, and all other work orders should be completed on a first-come first-served basis. Flooring replacements, while important, are a budget-restricted item. There are finite resources to make improvements to our units each year, and when those resources are depleted, some improvements must be deferred until the next budget cycle.

**Public Hearing Comment #28: From Charlene Bell, College Court**

I told them all about my issues—about the mice coming out of the hole in the wall and that I almost broke my neck falling off the toilet. It did not get taken care of until the new manager came to the building. He showed me there was a note that the problem had previously been fixed. I told him that you see these pictures of the hole in my wall-does it look like it’s fixed? They put mousetraps in my house to catch mice and I said I’m afraid of those mice, why are you putting these traps in my house? You’re not fixing the problem, you’re putting a bandaid on it.

**HACM Response:** There have been no records of mice in this unit. A work order regarding baseboard tile in the bathroom was submitted on April 16, 2024. On July 12, 2024, the new College Court manager had a conversation with Ms. Bell where she expressed concern that mice could enter the bathroom through a missing ceramic baseboard tile. At this time, the manager became aware the April work order had never been fully completed. On July 15, 2024, the work in Ms. Bell’s bathroom was completed and her concern was resolved. HACM continues to encourage all residents to report any concerns to the management office.

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## **Topic # 11--Inspections**

### **Public Hearing Comment #29: From Brenda Lawrence-Gillum, Common Ground**

In your 5-Year plan, you state that HACM will ensure appropriate documentation of inspections for the voucher program. Your 2022 audit found that 10% of voucher properties hadn't been inspected in 24 months and 40% of the inspections were overdue. Once they happen, most of the inspections are quick, check the box type inspections and don't really look at the real conditions. How will you ensure that the inspections happen and are done properly? How will you, as the Board, check the progress and quality of the inspections?

### **Public Hearing Comment #30: From Bonnie Cooper, Hillside Terrace**

You're saying that you're holding HACM accountable but they're walking in and out of our unit without letting us know. I've put up a sign to let them know that this is a privacy law that you cannot come in our unit whenever you decide to.

### **HACM Response to Topic #11 Inspections:**

At the time of the HUD site monitoring review in 2022, there were a number of contributing factors for both the actual number of late inspections and that caused the HUD PIC system to show inspections as late. One of these had to do with how inspections were recorded by HACM into HUD's PIC system. Rather than recording a separate action in the HUD PIC system when an inspection was completed, HACM held it and recorded it when the recertification was complete. If a recertification was late, that inflated the number of late inspections. HACM has made progress in reducing the number of late inspections. In August 2024, YARDI's Late Recertification report showed a total of only 82 late inspections at that time.

While Public housing nationwide has adopted NSPIRE standards as the new type of inspection standard, HUD has delayed the transition from the current standard (Housing Quality Standards or HQS) to NSPIRE. The new transition date is 10/1/2025.

Both HQS and NSPIRE have standards that need to be reviewed as part of the inspection. HUD recently developed NSPIRE so that all housing programs were using a similar standard. The NSPIRE standards and the definition of deficiency is more clearly defined in NSPIRE, so that an inspector knows exactly what a deficiency is (looking at the size of a hole in the wall, for example, to determine whether it is a deficiency or is not a deficiency, and if it is, what type of severity).

In addition, in the voucher program, HACM performs Quality Control Reviews of a sample of inspections by a supervisor or by another qualified person other than the person that originally did the work. The supervisor would go out and do a re-review of the inspection findings. This is part of the SEMAP quality control testing. If the reviewer finds errors or issues with the inspection, they correct the inspection to show items that should have been failed or should not have been failed. They also follow up with the original inspector to provide additional training and explain the errors.

An additional area of quality control testing takes a sample of inspections that failed to test whether the item was appropriately enforced by HACM—was the deficiency corrected by the applicable deadline based on HUD regulations and PHA policy and if not, were other steps taken to abate the Housing Assistance Payment to the landlord and/or issue a voucher to move to another location in accordance with PHA policy.

Regarding notice and whether a resident needs to be present during an inspection/work order, the policies for both public housing and the voucher program are as follows:

**Public Housing (Per Chapter 8 of HACM’s Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy):**

- HACM’s general policy is that we provide at least 48 hours prior to any non-emergency inspection. For regular annual inspections in public housing, the PHA will attempt to provide the family with one-week written notice of the inspection to allow the family to prepare the unit for the inspection.
- Entry for repairs requested by the family will not require prior notice. Resident-requested repairs presume permission for the Public Housing Authority to enter the unit.
- While the resident is required to be present for move-in inspections, the resident is not required to be present for the inspection. The resident may attend the inspection if they wish.
- For all inspections in public housing: If no one is at home, the inspector will enter the unit, conduct the inspection and leave a copy of the inspection report in the unit.

**Voucher program (Per Chapter 8 of HACM’s Administrative Plan):**

- Both the family and the owner will be given reasonable notice of all inspections. Except in the case of a life-threatening emergency, reasonable notice is considered to be not less than 48 hours. Inspections may be scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Generally, inspections will be conducted on business days only. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, the PHA will give as much notice as possible, given the nature of the emergency.
- When a family occupies the unit at the time of inspection an authorized adult must be present for the inspection. The presence of the owner or the owner's representative is encouraged but is not required.
- At initial inspection of a vacant unit, the PHA will inspect the unit in the presence of the owner or owner’s representative. The presence of a family representative is permitted but is not required.

If staff have not followed these procedures, a resident or participant can submit a complaint with the Property Management Office or with the Voucher program, whichever is applicable.

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**Topic #12—Evictions**

**Public Hearing Comment #31: From Barb Valley, Lincoln Court**

A resident at Lincoln Court mentioned that recently there have been residents that were evicted for reasons, but they keep coming back to the building. Some of them were violent. One fellow poured gasoline around the building as he wanted to get rid of bedbugs. It took 6-8 weeks for him to get evicted. Another resident was beating up residents for no reason. It took over a month for her to get evicted and out of the building. Why does this take so long?

**Public Hearing Comment #32: From Sandra Eagle, College Court**

In November 2023, my car got vandalized three times in two weeks. Management did nothing. The person that did it lived right next door to me. (note to ken—she lived in 415 and he lived in 412—the person was Aaron Turner). In January 2024, most of the residents suspected him. Later

in January, he admitted to me he did it. What are you going to do about it---Nothing. Where is the problem? He got evicted finally in March 2024.

**HACM Response to Topic #12 Evictions:**

Determinations on when and whether to evict a tenant because of conduct issues are made on a case-by-case basis depending on the individual circumstances involved. It may also include evaluation of the actual evidence that is available to support eviction due to conduct.

As a general matter, residents facing potential eviction because of conduct issues are provided with a 5, 14, or 30-day notice to vacate depending on the underlying reason(s) leading to the eviction. These notices are sometimes curable, meaning the tenant can stay if they correct their actions, and sometimes not curable, again depending on the individual circumstances. In the event that a notice is not or cannot be cured and the tenant has not vacated the premises voluntarily by the end of the notice period, an eviction action must be brought in Milwaukee County Circuit Court to evict them. After an eviction case is filed, an initial court appearance takes place no more than 25 days after the date of filing the case. If the tenant does not appear and/or there are no disputes related to the eviction, a judge can grant a default judgment in favor of HACM and grant a writ of restitution, which provides that the Sherriff's Department will assist with removing the defendant from the premises within the next 10 days.

In the event a tenant appears at the first hearing and/or there are potential factual issues raised, the court may set a date for a contested hearing to take place up to 30 days after the initial hearing. This second hearing is often further adjourned by the court to allow a defendant to seek legal counsel or to allow recently-retained legal counsel to become familiar with a case.

In the event judgment is entered in favor of HACM in contested eviction cases at one of these subsequent hearing dates, the court grants judgment in favor of HACM and issues a writ, but the court has the discretion to stay the writ for up to another 30 days. Thereafter, the Sherriff has up to 10 days to act on the writ.

In sum, while sometimes fairly quick, some contested evictions resulting from conduct issues can last for multiple months before someone is removed from the property because of the court processes involved.

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## **Topic #13--Communications**

### **Public Hearing Comment #33: From Barb Valley, Lincoln Court**

I emailed Mr. Hines about a year and a half ago and during our meeting at my building, you said you wanted to check into the details so you could get a complete answer and that you would not forget about me. You forgot about me-- I never heard back.

#### **HACM Response to Topic #13 Communications:**

Mr. Hines remembers the meeting he had with Ms. Valley after he had received a letter from her. He believed that the meeting ended with the understanding that the issues discussed had been explained/addressed and no further action was needed.

Since Ms. Valley states that answers are still outstanding, Mr. Hines will provide a full response to the issues raised in her letter.

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## **Topic #14—Social Workers and Lutheran Social Services**

### **Public Hearing Comment #34: From Sandra Eagle, College Court**

Four years ago, I think you used to have a number of social workers. Instead of getting more, you eliminated them and only have Lutheran Social Services taking care of thousands of people. It took me two weeks to get ahold of Lutheran Social Services, and then it took another two weeks to get an appointment. So then the problem does not get solved, and then management says that, well, "it's your problem—it's not social services problem." You've got to take care of this issue.

#### **HACM Response to Topic #14 Social Workers and Lutheran Social Services:**

Since the 1990s, HACM has had only one social worker on staff, with a significant part of their job responsibilities being to coordinate with and provide technical assistance to the resident organizations and attend resident meetings. While some referrals for social services were done by the HACM social worker, most of the residents referred were assisted by SET Ministry.

At the same time, beginning in 1995, a nonprofit organization named SET Ministry received a grant to develop a service coordination/case management program for seniors and persons with disabilities in public housing, beginning in Lapham Park and then expanding to other public housing

highrise developments. Part of the funding for these services came from a small amount of funding that HUD had included in the operating subsidy for some housing authorities and part came from SET Ministry applying for competitive grants with HUD to fund the services. SET was very successful at that time in applying for competitive grants which funded a number of social workers working across thirteen highrises.

SET Ministry merged with Interfaith Older Adult Services in 2019 to form UNISON. In 2019, the newly-formed UNISON announced they were closing down operations. HACM was able to find another organization with experience in service coordination to take over services—Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc. (LSS).

Since 2019, the number of service coordinators has dropped, in part due to limited funding. As the ROSS grants that were remaining at the time of the transition from SET Ministry had been expended, the number of social workers decreased as well. Additionally, until recently, ROSS grants were limited and could not be used to fund RAD developments. Due to the decrease in available funds, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan currently has two social workers that perform service coordination in highrise developments. Due to the fact that they are serving a number of developments, LSS office hours are limited in each building.

As was stated earlier, for many years, HACM only had one certified social worker who juggled responsibilities related to resident organization technical assistance with actual referrals for service. In 2023, when the social worker resigned, HACM made the determination that it would be more efficient to form a Resident Liaison section that could both provide that technical assistance and communication with resident organizations, as well as provide coordination of services and assistance to residents who need it. Referrals are made to the service coordinators (Lutheran Social Services staff) when a licensed social workers is truly needed. Resident Liaison staff can also assist when residents are having difficulties with communication with managers, or in reviewing or understanding their rent ledgers.

HACM continues to work with LSS to identify and apply for funding to fund service coordination. In addition, we are also looking for any additional partners that have resources and can assist in providing various services in our developments. Later this year, we plan to issue a Request for Proposal for Service Coordination services for 2025.

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## **Topic #15: Garbage**

### **Public Hearing Comment #35: From Bonnie Cooper, Hillside Terrace**

I want to know in this Five Year Plan when is the timetable to get our building rehabbed or fixed, because our boiler is so old it's causing fire. Our basement is filled with garbage cans that are so dirty that when you go down there to do laundry, they have gone to the hospital due to what they are ingesting from the dirty garbage cans. They are not being disinfected. We took the Resident Liaison down there and still nothing has been fixed. People look at the outside of the building at Hillside, but they never go in the middle and see the rats, the roaches, the garbage cans. There are so many units and there's like 5 garbage cans for like 10 units. That's not acceptable and that's not enough, so where are people supposed to put the garbage. We have asked for more garbage cans for the development. Without them, people will put garbage on the ground which feeds the rats.

### **HACM Response to Topic #15 Garbage:**

Although it was difficult to tell at first due to the amount of smoke, the fire was not from the boiler in the basement of the Hillside highrise. The fire was caused by a pile of leaves just outside the building that someone had started on fire and the smoke was drawn into the building through an air vent.

However, the boiler is getting older. Currently, the proposed amendment to the Capital Fund Program-Five Year Action Plan for 2023 to 2027 includes a line item for calendar 2025 for Hillside Terrace for heating and ventilation equipment as follows:

HVAC replacement throughout Hillside Development, including 2 new water heaters, 6 boilers for the family developments, 4 heating units at the highrise, and 3 air conditioning units at the highrise, for approximately \$500,000

The rolling garbage dumpsters that are in the basement of the Hillside highrise are also older equipment. We will try to clean them once or twice a year with a pressure washer. If persons use garbage bags for their garbage disposal, it will help to decrease any contamination of the inside of the dumpster.

HACM has had discussions with the Department of Public Works (DPW) about additional garbage cans for Hillside Terrace. They had previously provided an additional 90 garbage carts, and HACM continues to work with DPW to see if we can obtain more. We also have explored use of larger dumpsters outside, but that would not be feasible with the current infrastructure at Hillside.



Pest control actively goes to certain exterior areas where a number of complaints from rats have been reported, including Lapham Park, Townhomes at Carver Park, Hillside Terrace, among others. This typically happens weekly, and staff walk the grounds and treat for rats. Residents can do their part for exterior pests by not throwing garbage on the ground, by putting garbage in plastic garbage bags, putting the bags in the appropriate garbage can or dumpster (depending on the site), and fully closing the lid. Also, it is helpful if very young children are not sent out with the garbage, as they tend to leave the bags on the ground and not put them in the garbage can.

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## **Topic #16--Radiators and Fire Safety**

### **Public Hearing Comment #36: From Bonnie Cooper, Hillside Terrace**

For the Hillside building, we have children and we still have radiators. Those are not safe. If a child touched that, that's a Child Protective Services case. No one is listening to that issue. These radiators are too hot for people that can't breathe, we have windows that can't even open, so if there is a fire in the building, we can't get out of the door, the only way we can get out is the window. How is the fire department going to get us out, people that can't go down the stairs?

### **HACM Response to Topic #16 Radiators and Fire Safety:**

HACM follows industry standards and safety is our first priority.

In the case of radiators, they are used in housing around the country. Injuries could only be sustained with extended exposure- someone would have to maintain contact with the radiator to get burned. It is no different than a stove or oven. Our family units where the majority of our children live do have covers over the radiators. If the cover is missing, the resident should advise the property manager. Care must be taken to avoid accidents.

Depending on the type of development, HACM has windows that are designed to open and windows that are not designed to open. If windows that should open do not, or if the resident is not sure, the resident should put in a work order or inquire with the property management office. This would also be inspected during the annual unit inspection.

Sprinkler systems in HACM's high rises are visually inspected monthly (we are only required to inspect yearly) to ensure there are no leaks, broken gauges, or loss of pressure. We do a quarterly

flow test on each floor. We perform an annual test with more in-depth testing and inspecting of the sprinkler system.

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## **Topic #17: Department of Neighborhood Services Inspections**

### **Public Hearing Comment #37: From Bonnie Cooper, Hillside Terrace**

I've reported all this to DNS and have gotten nowhere. This lady Jamie at DNS, she works for HACM. I want to know if that's a conflict of interest. You're working for DNS and you're also working for HACM. We're trying to get to the bottom of that.

### **Public Hearing Comment #38: From Charlene Bell, College Court**

DNS is working with HACM; they're not helping us, so I want you to know that too. I told them all about my issues—about the mice coming out of the hole in the wall and that I almost broke my neck falling off the toilet. It did not get taken care of until the new manager came to the building. He showed me there was a note that the problem had previously been fixed. I told him that you see these pictures of the hole in my wall-does it look like it's fixed? They put mousetraps in my house to catch mice and I said I'm afraid of those mice, why are you putting these traps in my house? You're not fixing the problem, you're putting a bandaid on it.

### **HACM Response to Topic #17 Department of Neighborhood Services Inspections:**

HACM wants to confirm to all HACM residents and to the general public that the inspectors that work for the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS) are the employees of DNS. While they may be assigned by DNS to inspect HACM properties when requested, they are not employees of HACM. That is not true.

If DNS receives a complaint, they reach out to the complainant and schedules an inspection. When they perform an inspection, it can result in an order to the property owner (HACM) or it may be not verified if no violations are observed. If it is an order, DNS gives the property owner a due date as may be prescribed in the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances or DNS policies, depending on the type of repair/action. HACM must schedule a reinspection with DNS once the item has been resolved. If violations remain at reinspection, HACM may be find a reinspection fee. If an item remains in violation after the due date, the inspector may refer the order to Municipal Court for further enforcement.

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**Topic #18: Customer Service**

**Public Hearing Comment #39: From Albert Washko, Jim Luther New Hope Center**

I am a board member at the Jim Luther New Hope Center, one of the largest food pantries in Milwaukee. We have overlapping interests with HACM as we serve many of the same people. We provide food insecurity solutions for our clients, many of whom are your clients. I’m a retired federal executive. I was with the VA Hospital system for over 30 years—at one time I was responsible for 23 VA hospitals. One of my responsibilities was to ensure that there was a good customer service orientation which is what public service is all about. It appears to me that listening isn’t enough. I learned that the hard way over my thirty years. I’ve learned that good customer service requires dialog. It appears that this is missing as this turnout today and the lawsuit and the other turnouts reflect that there is a pretty serious communication problem. What is needed is a structure for dialog, a structure for community service dialog, and that means not only is there listening, but there is also feedback. I would be very happy as someone that has experience in that area to help you find models that will work for you. And I would be happy to help you as well and I can leave you my card.

**Public Hearing Comment #40: From Charlene Bell, College Court**

We have official people telling us “Those are our buildings, maam.” These are your senior people, talking to us residents. They don’t care. They were bringing a man through the building. I heard it was someone from HUD. But they said I could not talk to him as it wasn’t my concern. I bet the camera crews want me to talk. I bet they won’t ask me to be quiet. They have staff that do not know how to speak respectfully. That’s one of the reasons the previous manager got attacked, because she didn’t know how to talk to people. She spoke with me like I’m a kindergartener. I’m closer to 60 than I am 18. Go to the office--don’t talk to me in the hallway.

**HACM Response to Topic #18 Customer Service:**

HACM’s residents and participants are our customers, and HACM is committed to providing high-quality customer service. In the past year, HACM’s Human Resources department has added specialist staff with a goal of establishing ongoing trainings in a variety of modalities for both new and existing employees. HACM has engaged staff – from its Rent Assistance Voucher offices, to the Property Managers and maintenance staff at its properties, from frontline staff to managers at all levels of the organization – in a variety of trainings, both industry-specific and with a focus specifically on customer service.

We also want to point out that HACM’s 5-Year PHA Plan for 2025 to 2029 includes a number of objectives under Goal #4 that are specifically related to the goal of providing excellent customer service.

If residents feel that a staff person has provided poor customer service, HACM practice is to direct them to contact the supervisor of the employee in question, or alternately, to contact HACM’s Human Resources department.

HACM shares Mr. Washko’s appreciation in the value of genuine dialogue as well. HACM may reach out to Mr. Washko, as a potential partner in service to our residents, to explore models of dialogue between and amongst staff and residents.

HACM’s residents and participants are our customers, and we expect all staff to provide excellent customer service. If HACM corroborates information that staff members are acting inappropriately, HACM will deal with it promptly in accordance with our personnel policies regarding employee conduct.

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**Topic #19: Retaliation**

**Public Hearing Comment #41: From Bonnie Cooper, Hillside Terrace**

The management talks to residents very unprofessionally and rudely. We report matters to DNS with complaints, and then later management issues a violation. What is this for—is this retaliation?

**HACM Response to Topic #19 Retaliation**

HACM does not tolerate retaliation against a resident. If HACM corroborates information that an action taken by an employee was not justified by circumstances and policies and was instead retaliation, HACM will deal with it promptly in accordance with our personnel policies regarding employee conduct.

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## **Topic #20: HUD Quality Assurance Division Report**

### **Public Hearing Comment #42: From Kelly Glustott, Common Ground**

I'm a community member and a volunteer with Common Ground. I have been an advanced practice nurse and served patients in hospice and palliative care. During that time, I have learned that no matter who a person is or where they live, their home is one of the most important things to them. Their home is not just a place to close the door. Their home is somewhere where they can feel safe, security, clean, and a place that supports their best health. I now serve as a volunteer coordinator for a nonprofit that provides services to older adults, including Arlington Court.

I noted that in your Five-Year Plan, you did not discuss the progress you have made on the Quality Assurance Division Corrective Action Plan. As of the end of June, in fact, HACM reported that they had only closed 2 of 30 total findings. That's 5% progress. If I hired an employee or a volunteer and they performed only 5% of the corrective actions I made a year ago, they would be fired. Is 5% progress acceptable to you?

### **HACM Response to Topic #20 HUD Quality Assurance Division Report:**

HACM has been responding to several Corrective Action Plans from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including a previous one from the HUD Field Office related to the 2022 Monitoring Review, the new SEMAP Corrective Action Plan from the HUD Field Office, and the Quality Assurance Division Corrective Action Plan. Yes, it is true that a number of the recommended corrective actions have not been closed out.

However, one has to keep in mind that the majority of these corrective actions are in progress and by their nature are not a quick turnaround item. However, the end result and the impact on improvement of performance in will be long-lasting. The majority of the corrective actions are related directly or indirectly to the following actions that were required by HUD:

1. HUD required HACM to engage a financial management consultant/auditor to perform a forensic audit—a 100% review of all financial transactions for the five years from 2017 through 2022 related to the voucher program; ensure correction of any errors found; identify any items towards possible misuse of funds; and any variances must be researched, reconciled, corrected and prior period adjustments prepared for correction of the unrestricted net position (UNP) and/or restricted net position (RNP) balances.

Note that HACM engaged CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA, CPAs) to perform the financial records reconstruction/forensic audit. The firm assigned staff to perform the review to ensure timely completion. The work started in October 28, 2023 starting with the review of 2017 transactions and CLA has been continuing to work on the other four years of transactions. The work is in its final

stages and should be completed shortly. Once the 100% participant file review is completed, there may be additional impacts upon the UNP and RNP depending on corrections needed.

- YARDI had been implemented as HACM’s housing software since August 2019 and as the financial/accounting software for the Housing Choice Voucher financial transactions since 1/1/2023. However, the use of a separate software system for accounting (Multiview) created some potential for errors or unreconciled differences. One of the corrective actions from QAD is that HACM work with YARDI to replace Multiview and to use YARDI as the financial accounting software enterprise-wide for HACM.

This has been in process during 2024 with the goal to perform setup of the system and train staff, so that HACM can use YARDI as the financial software enterprise-wide by January 1, 2025.

- QAD required HACM to hire an independent third party contractor to perform a 100% participant file review for all participants in the voucher program, ensuring that the participant files are complete and correct; that the income, rent and other calculations are correct; that FSS updates related to the 50058 are correct; and that all corrections that are needed to Yardi or to the 50058 record are made by the contractor and track the necessary corrections to the record so that any needed changes are made in HUD’s PIC and VMS systems.

QAD also clarified in the final corrective action plan that the 100% file review should be completed concurrently with the contracting out of the HCV program administration/operation and be performed by the same contractor.

- As another corrective action, QAD required HACM to develop an RFP to contract out the management and operation of the entire Housing Choice Voucher program to an experienced contractor.

The RFP was released earlier in the year with responses due by 3/8/2024. Evaluations of proposals including interviews and references have been completed and a recommendation is expected to be submitted for Board review and approval at their October 2024 meeting.

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## **Topic #21: HVAC System at Victory Manor**

### **Public Hearing Comment #43: From Rob Chernow, Common Ground**

I was a field-commissioned Officer during the Vietnam War and when I came back, and I ran for a the Veterans Stand Down for homeless veterans and their families for several years. My question has a lot to do with Victory Manor which was a new project that was put up basically for veterans. Residents were using their ovens to keep warm last winter. What have we done to fix the issues with the air conditioning units at Victory Manor? Your senior staff originally denied this issue but then admitted it to the Journal Sentinel. They have provided the residents with space heaters. They have hired Southport Heating and Cooling to work in and out of the apartments to tinker with the system, but nothing seems to be fixed. This is not a way to honor veterans like myself and others who live there. And, where there appear to be conflicts of interest when the building was built, because when I was in the construction industry, the parties that were responsible for constructing the building would have been responsible for fixing the problems, and they weren't.

### **HACM Response to Topic #21 HVAC System at Victory Manor:**

The Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system at Victory Manor is a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system. It uses refrigerant liquid in a modified heat-pump system to provide both heating and air conditioning in the building. A main advantage to this system is that individual apartments can have heating or air conditioning at the same time. In other words, one apartment can be in heating mode and another can be in cooling mode. This can be especially important during "shoulder" months when temperatures can range between 40 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Almost from the beginning of the occupancy of Victory Manor, there were problems with the VRF system. During the first year of occupancy, the air conditioning could not cool the building to the level the residents were requesting. During the subsequent heating season, there were issues with the level of heat being supplied to the building. The original HVAC contractor was continually working on the system to correct the issues. Many consultants were brought in to diagnose what was causing the problems. Unfortunately, it took much longer to determine a "solution" to the problems than anyone expected. In approximately 2022, the VRF system appeared to stabilize enough to provide fairly consistent heating and air conditioning for the building. Individual apartment units were still having problems but the "overall" system issues seemed to have stopped.

In 2023, more problems with the VRF system arose and both the original contractor and Travaux spent a lot of time trying to determine what was causing the problems. During visits to the apartments, it was found that the thermostats in many of the units had "locked out" and were

not functioning as they should. This was a primary cause of the individual apartment HVAC problems. At that time, it was found that some of the thermostat settings, which had been set with limitations on both upper and lower temperature limits, had been “hacked” to allow some of the apartment units to request heating over the set upper temperature limits. This was found at more than 25% of the units. It is assumed, someone “unlocked” the system to allow temperatures outside of the limits. In this unlocked condition, parameters within the thermostats were being set to a condition that fully locked the system and stopped it from working altogether.

In 2024, at the request of the residents, the investor, PNC Bank, engaged a third-party engineer to inspect the apartments. The inspection was completed in May – June, 2024. One of the basic results of the inspection is a suggestion to replace the thermostats with a “simpler” model that would allow the residents to adjust the temperature for comfort but would not allow access to the more sensitive parameters of the HVAC system. The initial attempt at replacing the thermostats did not work and alternative solutions are being investigated. Additional results of the PNC inspection are being reviewed at this time.

In conclusion, the HVAC system at Victory Manor can and has been supplying the required heat, 68 degrees Fahrenheit, to the building. There is no danger to the residents from low temperatures. We are attempting to develop a strategy to modify the HVAC system to provide more comfort to the residents in a safe and economical fashion.

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## **Topic #22: Significant Amendments and Public Hearings**

### **Public Hearing Comment #44: From Cornelius Sawyer, Highland Gardens**

Are you aware that I asked for the removal of the million dollar threshold--- the requirement that you don't have to report anything that is under a million dollars? The exact time that they implemented this policy is when the performance of the housing authority declined from high performer to troubled. So, since they know that those two things coincided, they need to start reporting down to the micro-dollar what they are using money for.

### **HACM Response to Topic #22 Significant Amendments and Public Hearings:**

Pages 31-32 of the Annual PHA Plan requires the PHA to provide its criteria for determining a “Significant Amendment or Modification” to its 5-Year and Annual Plan. The definition was last changed in 2018 when it was updated by the HACM Board of Commissioners, after a review by the



HACM management and the Resident Advisory Board. Prior to 2018, HACM’s policy on the definition of significant amendment and substantial deviation had not been updated in many years.

A significant amendment is a change in policy that significantly and materially alters HACM’s stated mission, goals, objectives and activities as stated in the Plan. Significant amendments require a PHA to put out a public notice for a public hearing which can result in a delay in responding to an issue.

The significant amendment policy that was approved by the HACM Board of Commissioners in 2018 was that the significant amendment/public hearing process should not be triggered by minor changes in a capital budget or in minor wording changes. Rather, it should be reserved for items such as major changes or additions to a capital item, material changes to rent policies, admissions policies, etc., or major changes on demolition, disposition or conversion activities.

The speaker appears to be referencing the portion of the definition regarding certain capital fund items. The definition of significant amendment included items such as the addition of a capital fund project that is not included in the current 5-year action plan of over \$1,000,000. This was an increase from the previous definition of \$250,000. The determination was that a smaller change of \$300,000 or \$500,000 in the capital budget of \$8 million annually did not appear significant enough compared to the annual or 5-year capital plan to require a public notice process for a public hearing before the Board of Commissioners. In addition, this larger threshold is not unusual for larger public housing authorities nationwide.

In addition, under HACM’s Procurement Policy, any contract that is \$250,000 or more would need to be approved by the Board, so the item would be discussed and voted on at a HACM Board of Commissioners meeting when an actual contract comes before the Board.

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**Topic #23: Resident Services and “Union-Busting”**

**Public Hearing Comment #46: From Cornelius Sawyer, Highland Gardens**

The Housing Authority thinks I’m taking it lightly that they have staff members that have been union-busting resident organizations. Even though I have told staff in one instance the person is unreported. Because they took it so lightly, me and the other presidents that I work with, the request is termination of those two employees. The union-busting has got to stop. I want the board to really pay attention to this one because when we did the RO President’s meeting with HUD, HUD said it is not allowed. If those employees want to keep their jobs, then you need to

Speak with me about those employees keeping their jobs. I don't care how highly you perform, when your performance includes criminal actions against people and their rights, they have to go.

**HACM Response to Topic #23 Resident Services and "Union-Busting":**

Resident organizations or resident councils are independent entities separate from the public housing authority, and as such, they follow their organization bylaws as well as the overall regulations from HUD that govern resident organizations. A public housing authority such as HACM does have some responsibilities related to resident organizations that are outlined by HUD in the regulations, including: providing technical assistance and information to resident organizations; providing assistance in monitoring resident council elections in coordination with a third-party independent monitor; and funding resident participation annually, approving resident participation funding budgeted activities, and auditing the spending of the resident participation funds. HACM does not condone retaliation against any individual resident or resident organization. The Chief Operating Officer-Program Services will follow up with the speaker to get more details regarding the specific allegation.

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**Topic #24: Resident Organization Funding**

**Public Hearing Comment #46: From Cornelius Sawyer, Highland Gardens**

I'm asking for money because in order for resident organizations to operate properly, each resident organization should receive an additional \$10,000. I'm asking for that because it seems that every charitable organization in the city that wants to do something that HACM is happy with gets funding, except for the organizations that Housing has to work with—the resident organizations. Let's fund these ROs so that we can afford to get lawyers and do what we need to do to operate properly. We can do what we need to do and get lawyers and get funded properly. I'm trying to make things easier, especially for persons with cognitive issues, this will be my second time asking for accounting software for the resident organizations.

**HACM Response to Topic #24 Resident Organization Funding:**

HUD encourages public housing residents to be actively involved in their communities particularly through duly-elected resident councils. Resident councils work to improve residents' quality of life and support residents in creating a positive living environment in their community. To support resident participation, HUD provides funding to public housing authorities (PHAs) for resident participation activities and part of this funding is reserved for resident councils. This transfer of funds from the housing authority to the resident council and the related agreements, creates a partnership between the housing authority, resident council, and HUD.

In years when Congress provides sufficient funding, HUD provides housing authorities with \$25 for every occupied, public housing unit for resident participation activities. Of this amount, \$15 for each unit annually goes to the resident council and the other \$10 can be used by the PHA to pay for costs related to resident participation. The PHA may choose to fund resident councils above \$15 per unit each year. Funding can only be provided to a resident council through a written agreement between the housing authority and resident council. This resident participant funding is only for public housing developments or for RAD units that were converted from public housing in RAD developments.

In addition to the amount required by HUD, HACM has historically voluntarily included an additional amount of \$3 per public housing/RAD unit in separate funding to Resident organizations.

Finally, while HACM would certainly like to be able to increase the amount of funding for resident organizations, we are unable to at this time due to by the number of other priorities that we need to fund, including but not limited to maintenance and repairs, public safety and all other operating costs from a limited budget.

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## **Topic #25: Salary Levels and Comparability**

### **Public Hearing Comment #47: From Cornelius Sawyer, Highland Gardens**

As a RAB member, I'm familiar with the Section 3 program that housing authorities must follow, which promotes hiring residents to the greatest extent possible. Currently, HACM does not give a pension anymore. I've heard from people who are getting \$10,000 less than what they are supposed to be paid. You can't pay someone significantly less than the median incomes for the jobs. And HACM says that they can't get people to work for them. Or they leave. Of course they leave HACM, because they are being paid \$10,000 less than somewhere else. By helping people be successful, they can become homeowners. We need to get the salaries paid to these individuals higher than what is currently being paid so that it is equivalent to the median income.

### **HACM Response to Topic #25 Salary Levels and Comparability:**

In 2017, HACM conducted a compensation study in partnership with Gallagher Benefits Services. The study allowed HACM to determine how to pay out employees, and retain current ones through fair salaries. HACM's objectives of the study were to:

- Conduct a comprehensive compensation study
- Market price benchmark jobs based on job content
- Ensure alignment with the external market

- Confirm jobs within HACM that are at a similar level of complexity and decision making are in the same grade
- Recommend implementation strategy for proposed changes

The project consisted included Job analysis and classification; job evaluation; compensation study and methodology; and recommendations/next steps. The study incorporated the following:

- Reviewed current systems to understand issues and needs
- Position description questionnaires were used to gather information on each job’s duties, responsibilities, and decision-making level
- This information was used as the basis for creating the classification structure
- Use of the Decision Band Method Job evaluation methodology
- Use of market data from comparable organizations and the nearby geographic area
- Balance internal equity and market data to develop a salary structure
- Cost implementation options for the proposed salary structure

The Compensation Plan was presented to the Board of Commissioners in February 2017, so it is now seven years old. Like most organizations, HACM’s Human Resources department will continue to review hiring concerns to see if there is needs to update the information in our compensation grading structure or in the ranges for each grade (low, mid, high).

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**Topic #26: Waiting Lists and Retention**

**Public Hearing Comment #48: From Cornelius Sawyer, Highland Gardens**

The agency plan is too waiting list oriented. There is a mandatory 80% retention rate that is required. That does not exclude people that meet financial levels to leave out of housing. But when you have people leave housing to be homeless, there is a difference.

**HACM Response to Topic #26 Waiting Lists and Retention:**

It is in the best interest of landlords to retain good tenants. However, we are not aware of any requirement for a “80% retention rate”, either by HUD or any other entity.

However, HACM agrees that resident retention is important, which is one of the reasons that HACM agreed with the RAB’s previous comment and incorporated an objective in our 5 Year PHA Plan goals to it as follows:

- f. In addition to being efficient in filling vacant units, HACM will continue work to improve resident retention and reduce move-outs. Resident retention is often improved by: (1) communicating timely and effectively with residents; (2) dealing with maintenance requests timely; (3) taking

actions with neighbors that are causing issues, and (4) working with residents to maintain street appeal and cleanliness.

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## **Topic #27: Complaint Resolution**

### **Public Hearing Comment #49: From Cornelius Sawyer, Highland Gardens**

Hopefully in the future, you guys will be more receptive to these issues. As Commissioners, you do have the right to do certain things. When people have complaints to you guys, especially about the Executive Director or his staff, they should be vented. That is a conflict of interest. Let's get someone else in place to take these complaints, even if it's Common Ground—they're taking complaints anyways. Let the complaints go to them and we'll have better communication at these meetings.

### **HACM Response to Topic #27 Complaint Resolution**

The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) is committed to addressing resident complaints in a timely and effective manner. The process for handling complaints varies based on the nature of the issue. If site staff are unable to resolve a complaint, residents can seek further assistance from HACM's Resident Liaison division or request a formal grievance hearing with their property manager.

Below is a breakdown of the available options for different types of complaints:

#### **EMPLOYEES & CONTRACTORS**

For issues related to HACM employees or contractors, residents should file a formal complaint with HACM's Human Resources department.

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Residents should contact the **Milwaukee Police Department (MPD)** for:

- Violent crimes or emergencies (e.g., assault, robbery, domestic violence).
- Serious or life-threatening situations (e.g., active break-ins, armed individuals).
- Observations of illegal activities (e.g., drug dealing, gunshots).
- Situations where there is a direct and immediate threat to someone's life or safety.
- Any criminal activity that requires a police report for legal or insurance purposes.

Residents should call 9-1-1 for emergencies and MPD's nonemergency line at 414-933-4444 for nonemergency matters.

Residents should contact **HACM’s Public Safety Department** for:

- Suspicious behavior or activity within HACM properties.
- Non-violent disturbances or conflicts among residents.
- Security concerns or breaches in common areas.
- Non-emergency safety concerns like loitering or noise complaints.
- Requests for safety escorts or assistance within HACM property.

Residents can contact Public Safety for non-emergency assistance 24/7 by calling (414) 286-5100 or by submitting an online [public safety concern form](https://www.hacm.org/programs/public-safety-silent-complaint-form) (the website is <https://www.hacm.org/programs/public-safety-silent-complaint-form> ). Complaints may also be submitted anonymously.

**PROPERTY CONDITIONS**

If property management staff or their supervisor are not providing an adequate response, residents may escalate their concerns to the City of Milwaukee’s Department of Neighborhood Services.

**RENT / ACCOUNT DISPUTES**

For rent or account-related issues, residents should first contact their property management staff, as they are most familiar with residents' accounts. If concerns are still unresolved, residents can reach out to a member of the Resident Liaison team.

**SECTION 8 (RENT ASSISTANCE VOUCHER) PARTICIPANTS**

Section 8 participants should reach out to the Section 8 (Rent Assistance) office at 414-286-5650 for issues related to their participation in the program. If a participant has an issue with the property they are leasing, they should first contact the landlord. If they are unable to get a satisfactory resolution, they should contact the Section 8 office.

**FAIR HOUSING**

Federal law prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, and disability. Residents can file a fair housing complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Complaints to HUD can be filed [online](https://www.hud.gov/fairhousing/fileacomplaint) at <https://www.hud.gov/fairhousing/fileacomplaint> , by mail, or by calling (800) 669-9777.

If issues are not resolved through these existing processes, they may be elevated to the Board of Commissioners.

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## **Topic #28: Contract with Nan McKay**

### **Public Hearing Comment #50: From Nicole Binns, College Court**

To address this consultant's thing—what are we consulting? Why do we have a five-year plan about consulting and what are you consulting for? Because we (the residents) need to be consulted about how we are treated, misrepresented and mismanaged at HACM. And ripped off. Why are we consulting? And who is Nan McKay—we don't even know her? That's my concern. And my concern is that we have to have more sympathy and empathy.

### **Public Hearing Comment #51: From Ann Ritchey, Common Ground**

How much money have you paid Nan McKay in total over the past five years?

### **HACM Response to Topic #28 Contract with Nan McKay**

Nan McKay and Associates, Inc. is contractor based out of California that has extensive experience in providing services to many public housing authorities for more than 40 years. Such services have included separate functions in public housing or housing choice vouchers, including direct program management, certification and recertification, inspections, technical support, performance improvement tools, call center services, operational and organizational assessments, training, and many other types of services.

Regarding contracts with Nan McKay, in early 2022, HACM was in urgent need for a new Independent Entity (IE) to provide certain HUD-required services for PHA-owned units, including but not limited to, determination of initial rent to owner and annual redetermination of rent to owner. HACM solicited pricing for a variety of services including these IE services from Nan McKay and Associates, Inc. in April 2022 and HACM submitted the selection of Nan McKay to the HUD local field office for approval as required by the regulations, and received approval from HUD. The original award was effective May 16, 2022 with an option to add four additional one-year terms upon mutual consent of both parties.

In response to the HUD Field Office recommendations from the September 2022 on-site monitoring review to increase outsourcing of certain functions, HACM amended the original purchase order with Nan McKay to outsource a portion of initial eligibility certification processing of applicants selected from the HCV waitlist, as well as a portion of annual recertification processing of HCV participants. Nan McKay has been completing the last of the assigned participant files that had been assigned to them for initial eligibility and recertification and we have terminated that portion of the contract services effective September 30, 2024.

At this time, they will still continue to act as an Independent Entity for certain actions that HUD requires an IE, such as rent determination for HACM-owned units.

The amount of the Purchase order with Nan McKay is currently a cumulative total of \$650,000 for these services from 2022 to 2024. Once all invoices have been received from Nan McKay through 9/30/24, HACM may need to request Board approval for one final amendment of an additional amount between \$50,000 and \$100,000 for final payment for these services.

## **Topic #29: Process for the RFP for the Management and Operation of the Voucher Program**

### **Public Hearing Comment #52: From Ann Ritchey, Common Ground**

Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a decent place where they can be satisfied with their lives. In your five-year plan, you say you plan to hire a third party to do a 100% participant file review of all voucher files. Why are you planning to hire a for-profit company to do the job? Will you publicize the results of that review?

### **Public Hearing Comment #53: From Christlyn Stanley, Common Ground**

I'm a member of Common Ground and a member of the community. As a public servant, we are called to do good, to seek justice and to correct oppression. Some of the things I heard today really makes my heart cringe. We have the responsibility to protect the rights of those we consider to be afflicted or destitute. Milwaukee is an awesome City and I think we have the resources to do that.

In your five-year plan, you say that you are contracting a third-party to manage and operate the entire Housing Choice Voucher program and that HACM will soon make the recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. How many candidates did you evaluate for the RFP? Who was a part of the evaluation team? How will you as the Board evaluate the recommendation that HACM staff put forth? Will you have a public meeting about the recommendations? How will you hold that third party accountable and how soon will the decision be made? We are substantially past our original RFP deadline, and participants are stressed and suffering because HACM's Section 8 office is so terrible.

### **HACM Response to Topic #29 Process for the RFP for the Management and Operation of the Voucher Program:**

As one of the Corrective Actions required by HUD's Quality Assurance Division, HACM was required to solicit contractors through a Request for Proposal to manage and operate the Housing Choice Voucher program. In addition, another required part of the scope of work was a 100% participant file review of all voucher files over a period of time. These were required corrective actions in our Corrective Action Plan with HUD.



HACM worked on drafting the RFP and submitted it to HUD several times for their feedback and comments in an effort to ensure: (a) we were addressing all required items from the corrective action plan; and (b) that the list of services to ensure quality management of the program was comprehensive.

The RFP was issued on 1/19/24 and proposals were due on 3/8/2024. The RFP did not specify that a Respondent to the RFP had to be a for-profit company; it could be a qualified for-profit, not-for-profit, or a public housing authority. The language in the RFP was:

“The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) intends to enter into a contract with a highly-qualified professional consulting and management firm or a highly-qualified public housing authority to manage and operate all of the key functions of HACM’s entire HCV program.”

Six proposals were received by the closing date of the RFP:

1. AMA Consulting Group, LLC (AMA), Lake Mary, Florida
2. CVR Associates, Inc. (CVR), Tampa, Florida
3. Milwaukee County Dept. of Health & Human Services Housing Services, Milwaukee, WI
4. Nan McKay and Associates, Inc. (Nan McKay), El Cajon, CA
5. Pivotal Property Management MKE, LLC (Pivotal), Milwaukee, WI
6. Quadel Consulting and Training, LLC (Quadel), Indianapolis, IN

A recommendation for selection of the contractor is tentatively scheduled to go to the HACM Board of Commissioners for review at their October 2024 meeting and additional information about the selection process and recommendation will be available at that time.

Regarding the 100% participant file review, the results of the review will be submitted as required to HUD. While details that may contain personally identifiable information may need to be redacted, summaries of the overall results of the review will be available as part of responses to our Corrective Action Plans.

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