

## **MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

### **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Statement Housing Choice Voucher and Family Unification Program**

As required by Section 808(e)(5) of the Fair Housing Act

Equal housing opportunity for all persons, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, familial status, marital status, or disability, is a fundamental policy of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). MSHDA is committed to diligence in assuring equal housing opportunity and non-discrimination to all aspects of its housing financing activities. As a state created housing finance agency, MSHDA has an ethical as well as legal imperative to work aggressively to ensure that MSHDA financed housing programs comply fully with all state and federal fair housing laws required by Section 808(e)(5) of the Fair Housing Act .

Reasonable steps are always taken to affirmatively further fair housing in MSHDA's Housing Choice Voucher Program.

- 1) The MSHDA Housing Choice Voucher Program ensures that all buildings and communications that facilitate taking applications and service delivery are accessible to persons with disabilities. If requested, services can be provided at other locations. TTY telephone communications are available at all locations.
- 2) MSHDA prominently displays the Equal Housing Opportunity poster in its two central offices and requires that all contracted partners display the same documentation in their local offices. It is the policy of MSHDA to fully comply with all federal, state and local nondiscrimination laws and in accordance with the rules and regulations governing Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity in housing and employment.
- 3) Applications to the MSHDA HCV FUP Program (waiting list) will be received directly from the Michigan Department of Human Services (the state of Michigan Public Child Welfare Agency PCWA), case workers who are working directly with the identified MDHS eligible youth aging out of foster care. MDHS case workers will provide certification of eligibility for these youth for placement on the appropriate MSHDA FUP Waiting List. MSHDA will place eligible youth on the waiting list in order of first come, first served. Likewise, MSHDA will provide a list of eligible youth aging out of foster care that are on the MSHDA HCV waiting list to the appropriate MDHS case worker for certification of eligibility and addition to their caseload. Due to the length of MSHDA waiting lists, eligible applicants will be pulled from the waiting list using a preference given to youth identified as FUP eligible for the HUD specified FUP vouchers.
- 4) MSHDA provides referrals to individuals and families covered under the Fair Housing Act by informing them of the many programs offered through MSHDA. The means of communication to raise awareness of these programs include newspapers, television, website, radio, service provider

contacts in all 83 counties of Michigan, and the annual Affordable Housing Conference held in the State's capital of Lansing.

- 5) MSHDA implemented a web-based housing locator service through a website, [www.michiganhousinglocator.com](http://www.michiganhousinglocator.com) in an effort to overcome the barrier of finding safe and affordable housing. The website encourages landlords in all 83 counties to list their vacant units and real time data shows that over 5,500 properties and over 178,000 rental units are currently listed in Michigan. MSHDA contracted Housing Agents and MDHS case workers will work with applicants (including FUP applicants) to identify safe and affordable housing units along with other wrap-around services that will provide them with opportunities for self-sufficiency.
- 6) MSHDA provides all HCV participants with fair housing information at their Initial Briefing including how to find a safe and affordable unit, and leasing provisions that are prohibited under law. Information is provided during the initial briefing on how to file a Fair Housing Complaint. Local telephone numbers are provided for the tenant to call to submit a fair housing complaint along with the telephone numbers for the Housing Discrimination Hotline, 1-800-669-9777 and the federal Information Relay Service line at 1-800-887-8339.

The Housing Discrimination Complaint form (HUD-903) is distributed to voucher holders and participants which provides information on what housing discrimination is and the steps the tenant should take to submit a detailed report to HUD.

- 7) A detailed plan of outreach is outlined in MSHDA's Office of Housing Voucher Programs Policy and Procedure Manual that staff and contracted Housing Agents must follow when waiting lists are to be opened or closed.
- 8) Detailed policy and procedure on Reasonable Accommodation are outlined in MSHDA's Office of Housing Voucher Programs Policy and Procedure Manual and are explained to HCV applicants at the time of the initial briefing.
- 9) Appropriate MSHDA staff review fair housing requirements of 24 CFR Section 903.7(o) by examining current and proposed programs to ensure compliance and identify impediments to fair housing choice within these programs. MSHDA has a commitment to work with local communities on addressing identified impediments to fair housing within its available resources.
- 10) As outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the MDHS (the PCWA) and MSHDA (PHA), MDHS case managers will be working with MSHDA staff and contracted housing agents to ensure that FUP Voucher participants have access to supportive services. The supportive services will assist FUP voucher holders in becoming self-sufficient and independent prior to the end of the FUP voucher term of assistance.

- 11) MSHDA staff and contracted partners actively participate with the local Continuum of Care bodies. Through this active participation, staff and contracted partners become aware of support services in their communities that may be accessed by disabled or non-disabled HCV applicants and participants when requested. Such support services could include providing housing search assistance, and/or identifying public or private funding sources to assist participants with disabilities in covering the costs of accessibility features that are needed as accommodations.

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority's primary function in promoting fair housing choice is education.

To counteract the impediments to fair housing choice identified in its "2008 Update to Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice" the Authority shall implement the following actions:

- ✓ Implement fair housing requirements for all recipients of MSHDA and federal funds.
- ✓ Train all MSHDA staff and grantees on Fair Housing regulations and requirements.
- ✓ Provide opportunity for staff to attend cultural/racial diversity training.
- ✓ Support and participate in fair housing educational programs hosted by local communities.
- ✓ Provide fair housing literature that describes applicable federal and state fair housing laws and regulations.
- ✓ Support state and local Fair Housing Month (April) activities.
- ✓ Support state and local fair housing testing.
- ✓ Encourage affirmative marketing plans for various programs which include reasonable accommodation and accessibility policies.
- ✓ Increase marketing efforts to advertise program benefits of utilizing HUD programs to contractors and users.
- ✓ Increase marketing efforts in advertising units created through a wide variety of programs to potential tenants.

As a state agency, MSHDA encourages education of partners, grantees, and recipients of its programs by using its resources available to advertise and promote various housing programs through outreach and advertising. For example, MSHDA uses its resources to announce opening and closing of waiting lists for HCV vouchers and project-based voucher units; promotes use of the statewide Michigan Housing Locator tool which is a web-based tool for locating rental units; and makes resources available for advertising and to promote use of CDBG dollars in communities/neighborhoods, and downtown development.

MSHDA maintains records reflecting its efforts to further fair housing through application reviews, quarterly reporting of furthering fair housing opportunities in the HCV program, compliance monitoring of grantees, and equitable distribution of funds throughout the state. Fair housing accomplishments are also required to be reported at grant close-out.