



CITY OF IOWA CITY COUNCIL ACTION REPORT

March 21, 2023

Resolution amending the budgeted positions in the Neighborhood Services Division of the Neighborhood and Development Services Department and the AFSCME pay plan by adding one full-time Public Housing Technician position, grade 12.

Prepared By:	Rachel Carter, Housing Administrator
Reviewed By:	Tracy Hightshoe, Neighborhood and Development Services Director Erika Kubly, Neighborhood Services Coordinator
Fiscal Impact:	The annual cost of the position including salary and benefits is expected to be \$104,403. The Housing Authority Enterprise Fund and Special Revenue Funds would cover the increased staffing costs.
Staff Recommendation:	Approval
Commission Recommendations:	N/A
Attachments:	Resolution

Executive Summary:

The City owns and manages 86 scattered site Public Housing units and 21 affordable units. The requirements to maintain the units, meet HUD compliance standards for the public housing program, and provide the necessary property management have been challenging based on existing staff capacity. Neighborhood Services is requesting one permanent full-time Public Housing Technician position, AFSME Grade 12, to focus on the maintenance and occupancy of the Public Housing units and assist with the additional affordable housing units managed by the City.

Background / Analysis:

The Public Housing Program through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides annual funding for public housing authorities to operate subsidized rental units and improve those units through capital funds, as allocated under the Public Housing 5-Year Plan. The City owns and the Housing Authority manages a total of 107 housing units, including 86 Public Housing units. The Housing Authority relies on one full time Public Housing Coordinator, utilizes an outside vendor to provide simple maintenance and address after hours maintenance calls, and has recently hired a part time student intern to assist with various duties. The dedicated full time Public Housing Coordinator is responsible for managing all properties, performing tenant rent subsidy and income calculations, leasing, completing all procurement and supervision of capital improvement contracts, and meeting HUD's regulatory requirements.

The number of affordable units, which are not Public Housing units, maintained by this

position has grown by 21 units since 2005 with no changes in dedicated personnel. Before these acquisitions, it was difficult for one Public Housing staff member to meet HUD's compliance requirements, maintain the properties, manage tenants, and improve units eligible for capital improvements. The homes continue to age and need various improvements making it more challenging for one full-time position to complete all necessary program duties.

HUD monitors the occupancy rate of Public Housing units to ensure allocated funds are used appropriately and expects occupancy to be above 96% annually. When occupancy rates fall below 90%, Public Housing programs are considered substandard performers, and additional monitoring and reporting is required. The City's Public Housing program was recently given the substandard designation at the last monitoring meeting due to an 88% occupancy rate.

Staff recently completed a survey of other Housing Authorities in Iowa with public housing units. The results show that typically one FTE is present for every 30 to 40 units to keep units occupied and appropriately maintained. The City currently has one FTE for 86 public housing units as well as an additional 21 City owned units. Based on invoices from the previous month, the maintenance vendor bills about 20 hours per week or 0.5 FTE for our City owned housing. If you include their time, it is still not sufficient to effectively maintain and lease 107 units.

Review of Public Housing Staffing Levels in Housing Authorities in Iowa

Housing Authority	# of PH Units	# of Staff
Fort Madison	134	3.5
Central Iowa	132	4
Southern Iowa Regional	125	3
North Iowa Regional	121	4
Centerville	100	3.5
Iowa City	86	1
Area XV	84	3.5
Shenandoah	79	4
Clarinda	74	2.75
Chariton	72	2.5
Sioux Center	71	4

An additional FTE is necessary to decrease the length of time units are vacant between tenants due to necessary repairs. This will also help to maintain our units long term by completing capital improvements such as new roofs, new HVAC, bathroom and kitchen updates, driveway replacements, and other significant upgrades. The focus of the position is procurement and rehabilitation, but the position will also help us place clients on the waiting list into a unit faster and decrease our response time to maintenance and ongoing rehabilitation needs. The Public Housing Technician position will coordinate maintenance, rehabilitation, and assist with leasing of City owned units.

Staff reviewed the cost allocation for Housing Authority staff. It will be revised to reflect

actual work in each program. The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) has acquired over 200 specialty vouchers in the last several years, which has necessitated additional staff time and provided additional administrative funding for staffing. Revising the cost allocation plan to reflect actual work completed provides additional funding for public housing operations.

The annual budget increase for this staffing change is expected to be \$104,403. The position would be funded and maintained through the Housing Authority Enterprise Fund through a revised cost allocation of Housing Authority staff, federal public housing operating funds, and rents generated from the non-Public Housing units.