

Moving to Work Plan

DRAFT

SPARTANBURG HOUSING

Date Submitted: TBD
Board Approved: TBD



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*Spartanburg Housing (also known as the Housing Authority of the City of Spartanburg) *

I. Moving to Work Plan for Spartanburg

A. Vision for Spartanburg Housing

Spartanburg Housing is the fourth largest housing authority in South Carolina and serves over 6,500 residents within Spartanburg County. Our agency operates in a capacity that supports the counties efforts to promote collective impact, while being a pillar in the community. Spartanburg Housing is eager to participate in the MTW (Moving to Work) Demonstration Program. As a public service provider, we recognize the barriers that families experience and the lasting impact that hinders self-sufficiency. Our vision continues to surround improving the quality of life through housing by enhancing economic mobility for the families we serve, strengthening communities, and creating strategic partnerships.

Our challenges include the following impediments identified through a collaborative partnership in 2017 for our area of which will greatly benefit from a MTW designation: Impediment #1: Lack of Geographic Diversity in Affordable Housing Choices; Impediment #2: Neighborhoods Need Placed-Based Community Investments; Impediment #3: Need for Continued and Expanded Fair Housing Activities; Impediment #4: Affordable Housing Planning Lacks Equity Focus; Impediment #5: Limited Housing Options for People with Disabilities and Impediment #6: Weak Jobs-Transit Connection. Becoming an active participant in the MTW Demonstration Program will allow our agency to further assist with providing opportunities that reach beyond leasing and property management. We value the importance of addressing the health, education, employment, and safety needs of the community we serve. If selected, Spartanburg Housing will leverage the flexibility to operate in a manner that continues to further our vision in creating more affordable housing options and promoting operational efficiency while implementing the best practices to leverage our resources. Such granted flexibilities will tremendously assist our organization with

addressing economic mobility and assisting families with achieving self-sufficiency.

The Moving to Work Program would drastically assist our agency in our initiative to improve our landlord relations with our current and future property owners. Our goal is to introduce a new staff position that would work directly with our landlords. The “Landlord Liaison” will be tasked with establishing quarterly engagement meetings where our landlords will be invited to hear presentations from community partners, share ideas with other landlords, and also assist our agency in the recruitment of future landlords. Landlords will be recognized on an annual basis with a luncheon to highlight our appreciation for their participation in housing our families. Based on the number of units they have in the program; they will receive a yearly bonus between \$100 to \$300 and be eligible for other activities and gift drawings if they take part in activities throughout the year. Through the use of the additional Cares Act Funding, our agency presented current landlords with incentive payments ranging from \$100 - \$300 based on the number of families served and it was well received! Countless voicemails, calls, and email messages were received from landlords expressing their sincere appreciation for the incentive.

Participation in MTW will allow us to further incentivize a vital partner for a public housing authority and the private homeowners that allow our participants to rent their properties. As such, we are more than eager to participate in the Moving to Work program and below is the Spartanburg Housing team with primary responsibility for the administration of our local program.

Description of Experience and Skills:

Shaunté Evans, Chief Executive Officer, has over 20 years of experience as a housing professional. This includes nearly 13 years of experience administering a MTW program while serving as the Executive VP of Administrative Operations at the Charlotte Housing Authority (now Inlivan). Shaunté helped create the overall program structure; collaborated with staff for MTW planning

and reporting; engaged the residents and community; established baselines, benchmarks, and program research structure; and served as the MTW liaison with HUD.

Jessica M. Holcomb, Chief Operating Officer, has over 10 years' experience at Spartanburg Housing where she has served in multiple capacities including Property Administrative Associate, Property Asset Manager, Project Manager, Deputy Special Assistant and Deputy Director of Asset Management and Special Projects. Jessica provides oversight to both the Asset Management and Housing Choice Voucher Departments and manages the Information Technology function. Her primary responsibility for the administration of the MTW program would be direct oversight to the HCV department and overseeing the implementation of any needed upgrades in the Yardi system of record.

Stacey Henderson, Director of Leased Housing, has worked in the housing industry for over 11 years. She currently manages the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) and administers a Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program with funds totaling \$400,000 from Spartanburg County. Stacey has a formidable team of certified HCV Specialists providing excellent case management and customer service to families which has led Spartanburg Housing to being a High-Performance agency consistently for several years. The HCV team communicates well with landlords and tenants, provides information in a timely manner, while making sure inspections are completed on time to ensure the families move process is smooth and timely.

Cierra Fowler, Director of Resident Services and Community Engagement, provides individuals we serve with resource information, referrals for services, on site community initiatives, and supports a team of service coordinators. Cierra has 10+ years in service and engagement coordination, community events, case management, and corporate fundraising. Cierra has coordinated with agencies within our community for job training, employment opportunities,

educational resources, and employment screenings for individuals we serve.

Ashley Campbell, Community Health Worker, assists with the daily operational duties surrounding the implementation of youth development programs and activities. Ashley has over 5 years of experience advocating for adequate housing options for program participants. She has served as a committee member, strategizing with local partners to enhance the delivery of services within our community which has prompted the ability to assist families with obtaining necessary resources.

Statement of Fair Housing

In March 2017, the City of Spartanburg, Spartanburg County, and Spartanburg Housing entered a collaborative partnership to prepare an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) Study. Spartanburg County's Community and Economic Development Department lead the effort in support of the Spartanburg Housing Authority and the City to select consultant Mosaic Community Planning, LLC to prepare the study. Over a course of nine months, the three partners gathered information from stakeholders, over 250 resident surveys, and six public meetings. The completed document, the Joint Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, was submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Fair Housing Division for review. The completed document provides the partners with six (6) impediments outlined in our vision above that should be addressed over the next 3-5 years.

B. Future Community/Resident Engagement

Community engagement remains a top priority and presents the opportunity to stay actively engaged with stakeholders and the broader community. Spartanburg Housing will continue to maximize all communication methods among community partners, to ensure our dedication in delivering valuable services to families, hosting community events, and workshops.

Spartanburg Housing held two resident/participant meetings on June 17, 2021, and again on July 29, 2021, to discuss the Moving to Work Application with the desire to receive public input on the plan development. Our agency will continue to stay connected with the public through mass newsletter delivery, social media engagement, via phone, and face-to-face interactions, when possible. Our organization will exhaust all measures to seek feedback from the community on effective strategies and the best practices that will contribute to successfully implementing and developing the MTW program in Spartanburg County. Properly held site meetings will serve as an additional measure to share information and encourage feedback from the public.

Spartanburg Housing has hosted Community Stakeholder meetings to discuss the work of the organization and will continue (in person or virtual) hosting these meetings at least twice per year. Stakeholder meeting attendees include, but is not limited to, residents, elected officials, staff from the City of Spartanburg and Spartanburg County, partner agencies, and local funders. These meetings are beneficial in engaging a broader audience to assist with promoting desired outcomes with active involvement from the public. We will increase engagement of HCV participants through the production of a newsletter and through social media platforms. Spartanburg Housing will continue to take affirmative steps to communicate with people who need services or information in a language other than English. We have an available resource that can translate information for persons with limited English proficiency. We will be intentional in our efforts to engage racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and families with children and groups representing such person.

We recognize families may have barriers that limit their ability toward employment. Our Resident Services department will continue to make referrals to local partners and agencies to address their basic needs toward a self-sufficiency standard in our community. Our agency currently provides

the following workshops quarterly to those we serve: financial literacy, financial goal setting, developing a savings account, and gaining and maintaining employment. The MTW designation will allow Spartanburg Housing more flexibility and the ability to offer additional incentives with our sponsored events and workshops.

C. Operating and Inventory Information

Today, after over eighty years of service, Spartanburg Housing is a real estate owner and property management company that serves over 3,596 families under its various housing programs. With approximately 40 employees, Spartanburg Housing contributes economically to the City of Spartanburg through our employment base and management and through the maintenance of our housing operations. The organization infuses over \$12 million dollars annually into the local economy directed toward the purchase of goods and services, payroll, rents to property owners, and development of new housing. Spartanburg Housing has identified in its Strategic Plan efforts to reposition its public housing portfolio over the next several years.

Spartanburg Housing's Public Housing program consists of 527 units. Of the 527 Public Housing Units, 70% are below 30% of the median income with an overall average annual income of \$12,228 per household. The number of employed public housing residents is 24% of all households and 47% of households are non-elderly and non-disabled. In addition, the agency manages 345 units of Affordable, Multifamily, HOME, and PBRA programs.

Spartanburg Housing's Housing Choice Voucher Program consists of 1,715 HCV Vouchers, 150 Mainstream Vouchers, 273 PBV Vouchers, 367 RAD Vouchers, 24 Tenant Based Rental Assistance, and 5 VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) Vouchers. Participants that have tenant-based vouchers have an overall average annual income of \$12,764 per household. The number of employed participants is 25% of all households and 46% of households are non-elderly

and non-disabled. The agency strives to better align the number of employed households with the number of employment eligible households through the MTW designation.

Spartanburg Housing has a waiting list for both the Voucher and Public Housing Programs. Households of various races and ethnic groups of families on our waiting lists for Asset Management account as 25.14% White, 72.24% Black, .49% Asian, .33% American Indian and 1.8% Hispanic. Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program waiting lists total as 21.2% White, 70.6% Black, 5.9% Hispanic and other 2.3%. There are approximately 19,154 families between the waiting lists for Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher.

Spartanburg Housing has successfully implemented two HOPE VI Revitalization Grants, each in excess of \$20 million. The organization has also successfully applied for, received, and implemented additional grants and programs including Capital Fund Recovery Grant, ROSS (Resident Opportunity and Self Sufficiency) FSS (Family Self-Sufficiency Grant), DOL YouthBuild Grants, DOL Faceforward grants, Elderly and Disabled Grants and many others. Through the FSS Program, Spartanburg Housing has graduated over 30 participants in the past 5 years. Through strategic service coordination and programming our graduates received escrow incentives totaling over \$100,000!

Spartanburg Housing is designated as a High Performing Agency by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the Section 8 (HCV) Program and Standard in the Public Housing Program.

D. Plan for Spartanburg Housing's MTW Program

Statutory Objective: Cost Effectiveness

The following section describes the selected initiatives proposed for Spartanburg Housing's local MTW Program. Each initiative developed for our agency seeks to promote cost effectiveness from

an administrative perspective, enhance self-sufficiency opportunities for our families, and aid in creating more housing choices for program participants. In addition, our reasoning for implementing each selected initiative is outlined, which contributes towards identifying and addressing the needs of our community. We will implement our program using an equity lens as we develop policies and promote in Equity in Housing. Spartanburg Housing will focus on implementing initiatives that aid in reducing costs and achieving greater cost effectiveness.

Statutory Objective: Self-Sufficiency

Spartanburg Housing, in collaboration with our community partners, will support families as they move toward self-sufficiency.

Economic Mobility: Spartanburg Housing would like to use MTW flexibility to help address economic mobility. The families we serve often have the fewest opportunities to move up the economic ladder. We will work with our community partners to provide more targeted education and workforce preparation and collaborate to help families gain greater mobility.

Cliff Effect: Spartanburg Housing will work with the United Way of the Piedmont, and other partners, to determine how to address the Cliff Effect which impacts many of the families we serve. United Way of the Piedmont’s Financial Stability Taskforce has identified the cliff effect as one of the primary barriers to economic self-sufficiency in our community. The cliff effect occurs when a family begins to earn above the limits set by the state and becomes ineligible for subsidies on food, housing, childcare, and other benefits. However, the family’s increased income from wages does not equal or exceed the loss in benefits, creating a significant gap in their basic needs budget.

Statutory Objective: Housing Choice

The Moving to Work Landlord Incentives will open the doors to additional opportunities for housing for our families. One of Spartanburg Housing’s strategic priorities is to preserve and

develop the housing portfolio. Our short-term goal is to develop 200 units by 2023. We will utilize the MTW funding flexibility to create more housing opportunities to meet our goal and aid in decreasing the affordable housing need in Spartanburg. In collaboration with community partners, we plan to implement initiatives that will expand housing opportunities for families in Spartanburg County.

E. Proposed Use of Funds

Spartanburg Housing will use the public housing and housing choice voucher funding flexibility to best meet the local need and implement our initiatives. Some of the planned uses include: 1) Leverage funding for developing or preserving affordable housing units, 2) Offset costs associated with research for the MTW program, 3) Implement workforce development and training, 4) Develop strategies related to addressing the cliff effect, economic mobility, and equity in housing, 5) Provide supportive services, 6) Implement Landlord Incentives, 7) Increase Payment Standards, and 8) Non-traditional activities.

F. Evidence of Significant Partnerships

Spartanburg Housing continues to be a pillar in the community and believes in the importance of collaborative partnerships to achieve desired outcomes for the MTW program. Spartanburg County is one of our key partners in our efforts to provide housing solutions throughout Spartanburg County via the Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program.

Our agency is an active partner of the United Way of the Piedmont's (UWP) Financial Stability Task Force and Opportunity Housing Collaborative (OHC). The goal of the Task Force is to decrease the number of people in our community living below self-sufficiency by 10% by 2030. The Task Force forms partnerships with local nonprofit and social service organizations, city and county governments, and corporate employers to implement solutions and leverage resources to

address the root causes of our community's unmet needs including financial literacy education, affordable housing, reliable transportation, workforce development opportunities, and mentors and coaches. To address local housing challenges, UWP convened the OHC focused on quality, affordable housing for lower-income residents. The OHC is currently developing a housing action plan to identify and implement specific housing strategies to address issues of affordability, accessibility, and equity.

Spartanburg Housing has coordinated efforts with the City of Spartanburg and SC Works of the Greater Upstate to assist with the implementation of our work program. The City of Spartanburg's Office of Equity and Inclusion will provide Life Skills and Soft Skills training for participants. Through assessments of individuals unemployed the case manager will be able to identify if an individual will require both trainings or only soft skills training to prepare for the workforce environment. If an individual has not worked in over a year, they will need to attend both trainings. If an individual loses a job more than twice not due to reduction in the workforce, they will also need to attend both trainings. The City of Spartanburg has received a grant to provide the needed courses and will allot several slots through our MTW program.

Spartanburg Housing currently has a Memorandum of Understanding agreement with SC Works of the Greater Upstate. Through this partnership the agency provides workshops on resume building, employment search, interviewing skills, and individual career counseling for Spartanburg Housing residents. We have an established referral form to better serve families and track success. Our goal is that by implementing the work requirement there will be an increase in participation to engage individuals in the benefits of improving their skills, allow them to gain additional knowledge and find paths that will meet their needs. Our local agency currently has the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program which is designed to develop a

skilled workforce that meets the needs of business and industry to compete in a global economy by helping jobseekers access training, education, and employment. They will assist in training, employment, and supportive services apart of our shared vision for MTW.

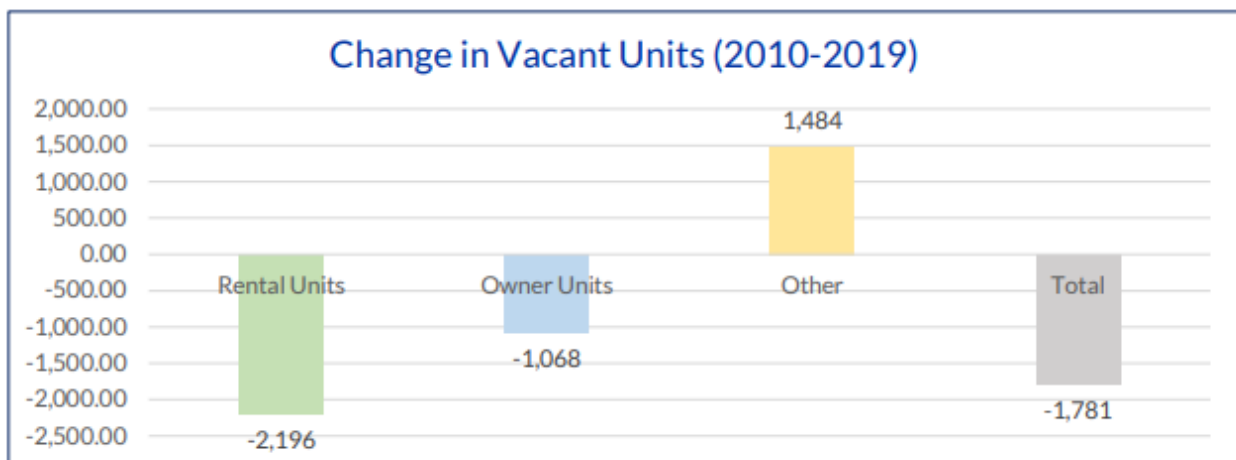
In addition, our agency will continue to partner with the Spartanburg Academic Movement. The Spartanburg Academic Movement focuses on economic mobility anchored in academic achievement county-wide cradle to career. We actively participate in the Out of School Time Collaborative (OST), a network created to provide equitable high-quality afterschool and summer programming. We have an agreement as a partner in this collaborative with other great community partners to provide services to our youth. Spartanburg Housing recognizes the importance of out of school time programming for the youth and the entire family as we continue to promote work and self-sufficiency.

II. Landlord Incentives Activities Information

A. Landlord Needs Assessment

Since 2010, the population of the County of Spartanburg has grown by approximately 3,750 per year. The average household size in the County is 2.74 people per household. That means an additional 1,360 units need to be made available annually to maintain the current housing market. There are currently approximately 129,604 units in the County, an increase of 8,467 since 2010. The number of additional units is approximately 4,000 units less than is required to maintain the housing market.

In Spartanburg County, nearly 30% of occupied units are occupied by renters. This is an increase of 2.1%, or approximately 3,600 occupied units since 2010. Approximately 10% of the total housing units are currently vacant. Vacant units may provide an opportunity for expansion if they are safe and affordable. Unfortunately, the number of vacant units has decreased by 1,781 units since 2010. Units that are specifically allocated for renters saw the most substantial decrease during that time. There are over 2,000 fewer vacant units classified as “For rent” or “Rented, not occupied” in the County.



Source: 2015-2019 ACS

Rental Prices: The median rent in Spartanburg County has steadily increased over the last 10 years. Rental units, unlike owner-occupied units, tend to increase in price even during slumps in the housing market. Despite an increase in renter occupied units over the last decade, median rent prices have increased by nearly 28 percent. The increase in rent costs for the average renter household has led to over 45% of renters in Spartanburg being housing cost burdened (housing costs are more than 30% of household income). Over 36% of Spartanburg renters are severely cost burdened (housing costs are more than 35% of household income).

The housing needs of a community cannot be met simply by providing one housing unit per household. Each household has varying demand for size, location, and type. In Spartanburg County, the most common housing type for renters is single-unit structures, which make up 40.3% of the County's units.

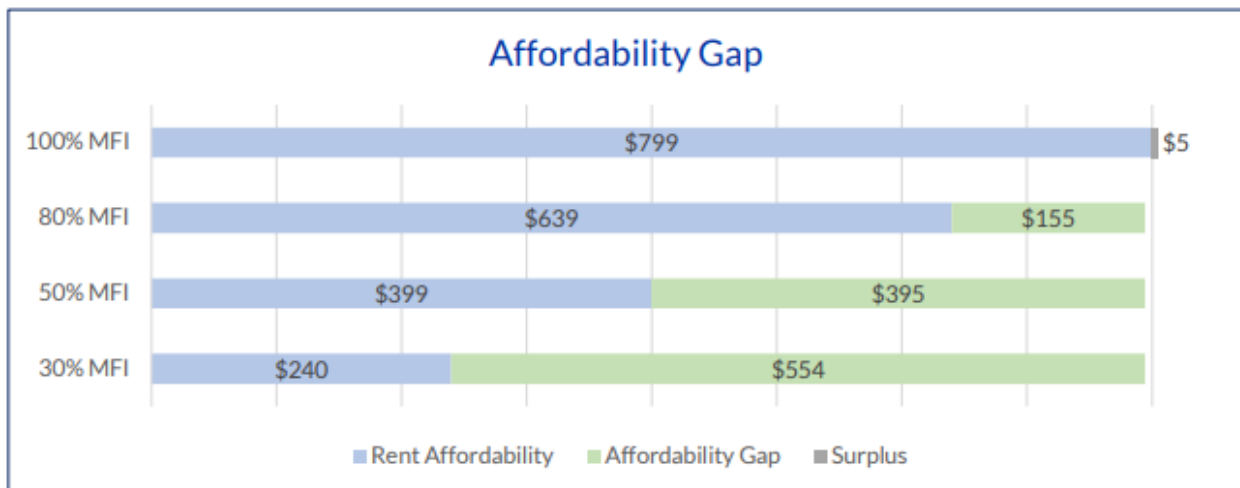
Housing Demand: Housing types that are between 2 units and 10 units per development are called the "Missing Middle" because many communities lack these important units. "Missing Middle" units tend to be less expensive than 1-unit detached and can increase density in a community. Households with access to these units can find less expensive options, as well as housing options in walkable communities. In Spartanburg County, 26.3% of rental units are classified as "Missing Middle", a slight decrease from 26.8% in 2010.

When there is a lack of different housing types available in a community it reduces the likelihood that a household will find one that meets their needs. For renters, the availability of units with more than three bedrooms is limited. Only 4.3% of rental units have four or more bedrooms which is significantly less than owner-occupied units where nearly 25% have four or more bedrooms. In Spartanburg County, there are approximately 1,500 rental units with four or more bedrooms and nearly 2,900 renter households with five or more people. Nearly half of all families with five or

more people are unable to find housing units that are not overcrowded. The availability of large rental units has decreased since 2014.

Affordability: The presence of the perfect number of housing units of the perfect type fails to meet the County’s demands if the units are not affordable. Housing affordability is the single-most prominent housing problem in the United States, and Spartanburg County is no exception. In 2019, there were 13,902 renter-occupied households that were cost burdened. A cost burdened household is one in which 30% or more of the household income is spent on housing costs. In many cases, significantly more than 30% is spent.

In Spartanburg County, the median rent has increased by 27.9% since 2010 from \$621 to \$794. During that same period, the median household income for renters has increased by 31.9% from \$24,237 to \$31,958. Despite the relative growth in income compared to median rent, there is still an affordability gap for many renters.



If every renter were able to be matched with an affordable home, there would still be over 5,000 low-income households in need of housing. There are approximately 8,000 units affordable to households earning 80% or less of the County median family income but there are 13,000 households in that income range.

Types of landlords in the local market: Spartanburg County has a great need for additional affordable rental units. There is not only a lack of units in general, but there is also a lack of units in a variety of sizes and types to meet the needs of the population. Most importantly, the units in the County are unaffordable to a significant segment of the population. Low-income households are unable find housing that does not require being cost burdened or living in an overcrowded unit. The County is growing and if current trends continue, it will be increasingly difficult for renters to find affordable housing. Efforts to expand the reach of the Housing Authority such as, participation in the Moving to Work program, is an important opportunity to address the needs of the community and provide affordable, safe, and secure housing for renters throughout the County. Spartanburg Housing’s landlord portfolio consists of 395 property owners. When we analyzed the data of the number of units our current landlords have, more than 90% had fewer than 9 units in the program. In addition, we serve 9 PBV properties.

Table 1: Current Owners/Landlords by Number of Units in SH Tenant Based HCV Program

Total Units in Program	# of Owners/Landlords	% of Owners by Units in Program
1-9	357	90.37%
10-19	25	6.33%
20+	13	3.30%

As the following charts demonstrate more than 81% of our participants in our program rent units that are two-bedrooms or larger, almost 50% of the properties in which our participants rent were built prior to 1978, and only 28.69% of the families are residing in a single-family home.

Table 2: Distribution by Number of Bedrooms in SH Tenant Based HCV Program

Bedroom Size	% of Renters
Efficiency	2%
1 Bedroom	17%
2 Bedrooms	41%

3 Bedrooms	36%
4 Bedrooms	4%

Table 3: Distribution by Age of Property in SH Tenant Based HCV Program

Bedroom Size	% of Renters
Pre-1950	10.43%
1951-1978	37.45%
1979-1999	27.41%
2000-2010	19.15%
2011+	5.56%

Table 4: Distribution by Structure Type in SH Tenant Based HCV Program

Bedroom Size	% of Renters
Single Family Detached	28.69%
Multi-Family: Semi-Detached	33.07%
Multi-Family: Rowhouse/Townhouse	8.16%
Low-Rise	23.75%
High-Rise W/ Elevator	.22%
Manufactured Home	6.11%

Reasons why some landlords do not accept vouchers: Based on a survey administered to current and prospective landlords, it was determined that the top two factors that make landlords hesitant to participate in the program are 1) damages and security deposit concerns and 2) fair market rent. Survey respondents noted that participants often destroy the homes resulting in a greater cost to the landlord to repairs. In addition, it was noted that rents have increased in Spartanburg and the Section 8 rent is below what can be charged to a non-voucher tenant.

Program Strengths and Weaknesses: A PHA assessment of the HCV program has revealed the following strengths and weaknesses:

- Strengths: Staff, Team Collaboration; Customer Service
- Weaknesses: Paperwork requirements (i.e., requiring too many paystubs); Need for an additional inspector; Voucher allowances are too low for the market; Need to increase community involvement; Landlord Interaction

B. MTW Cohort #4 Activities

Vacancy Loss: Spartanburg Housing has a deep appreciation for landlords who continue to provide affordable housing to our residents. We understand the financial burden landlords experience as a result of having vacant property units in our jurisdiction. In our efforts to maintain a positive relationship with our landlords, Spartanburg Housing will implement a landlord vacancy loss incentive up to a one-month contract rent, as reimbursement for the time the unit spend vacant in between HCV participants. This incentive only applies when an HCV participant leave a unit and the next resident is also an HCV participant. In addition, if the unit is vacant for less than one month between HCV participants, Spartanburg Housing will pay up to the prorated share of the contract rent. This amount will be based on the number of days the unit was vacant. The results from the survey administered this summer, show that 80% of the landlords that participated stated that this incentive would likely influence their participation in the HCV program.

Damage Claims: When asked if Spartanburg Housing would reimburse for tenant-caused damages after accounting for any security deposit, would you be more likely to take part in HCV programs. One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents noted “yes”. Spartanburg Housing will pay a landlord reimbursement for tenant-caused damages after accounting for any security deposit. The amount of compensation will not exceed the lesser of the cost of damages or two months

contract rent. Spartanburg Housing will establish a standard of approved damages and average compensation to be incorporated into the Administrative Plan and as an addendum to the Landlord Agreement.

Other—Signing Bonus: There was also an overwhelming response in the affirmative when asked if offering a one-month rent “signing bonus” (73%) or paying up to one-month contract rent as reimbursement for vacancy time between participants (80%) would influence program participation. In our efforts to increase affordable housing options for our residents, Spartanburg Housing will provide a one-time bonus of \$500 to new landlords who have not participated as a landlord in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

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