

August 29, 2016

To: MPHA Board of Commissioners, & Executive Director Cora McCorvey

 Minneapolis Public Housing Authority

 1001 Washington Ave North

 Minneapolis, MN 55401

 Michele K. Smith, Field Office Director

 Department of Housing & Urban Development

 920 2nd Ave S # 1300

 Minneapolis, MN 55402

Maurice J. McGough, Director

US Housing & Urban Dev Department

Ralph Metcalfe Federal Building
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604

From: Defend Glendale Campaign

 P.O. Box 14616

 Minneapolis, MN 55414

**RE: An Addendum to Formal response and complaint regarding MPHA FY2017 DRAFT Moving To Work (MTW) Annual Plan process and meeting**

On August 23, 2016, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) held a public hearing about MPHA FY 2017 Draft MTW Annual Plan. Residents are asking to extend the comment process and public hearing to evening meetings at Glendale Townhomes and other sites. In order for MPHA staff to explain the draft plans thoroughly, since the process has been confusing and short, majority of residents could not attend the meeting or alternatively could not understand the impact these policies will have on their lives and housing status. Below are several of the many reasons why the public hearing and comment process must be extended.

Lack of interpreting services

MPHA staff did not provide interpreters for Somali, Oromo, or Hmong residents from Glendale Townhomes and other sites that attended the meeting. The residents had concerns and comments to express, and they were not able to express these without interpreters present. Only one resident who was there with another bilingual resident was able to receive some interpretation as both tried to participate in the meeting, and the bilingual resident was not a professional interpreter. This resident stated she did not understand what was going on. Executive Director Cora McCorvey told the board members that an interpreter was available, but no staff member bothered to check to see if residents needed interpreters, and no one tried to explain to residents what was going on after or during the meeting. The interpreter that was pointed out by McCorvey was bilingual staff who was not an independent professional interpreter, and therefore at risk of being biased towards MPHA.  As a result, a lot of information was missed, and large portion of the residents who attended the meeting did not receive the information.

Public hearing during work day

The meeting was held at 1:30 p.m. on a Wednesday. It was a small meeting, and not a lot of residents attended because it was in the middle of the work-day.  Public hearings are important for MPHA Commissioners and residents. As a result, hearings should be held in many locations and during different times to accommodate residents as well as board members. Specifically, more than one hearing is necessary, and some of these should be in the evenings.

Staff to explain MTW goals, the budget strategy &  Public Housing Statement of Policies.

Residents from scattered sites and Defend Glendale found hidden unexplained key policies in the MTW draft. If approved by MPHA Board September 2016, the draft policies below will have an extremely negative financial effect on residents and put families in an undue economic hardship. MPHA leaders such as Cora McCorvey and Bob Boyd who approved such policies need to explain thoroughly and in detail the reasons behind these policies and their impact.  Majority of residents have no idea about these changes.

Part I Definitions  page 22: *“Insert new language in #4. Annual Income (24 CFR 5.609) - #17: The incremental earnings due to employment during a 24 month period following the date of the initial hire, “the first 12 months will be a 100% disregard and the following 12 months will be a 50% disregard” for families*:”

*“Insert new language for #6 – Assets: “Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property. Where the family has net family assets in excess of $5,000, annual income shall include the greater of the actual income derived from all net family assets or a percentage of the value of such assets based on the current passbook savings rate, as determined by HUD. MPHA shall obtain 3rd party verification of assets upon admitting a family and at least every three years thereafter. During the intervening years MPHA may accept the families declaration of assets where the combined total is less than $5,000.”*

*Part X, pg. 29.  “5. Verification of Tenant’s Statements and Income – addition of language as follows: For asset income verification MPHA will seek third party verification of bank accounts “annually” when the total value of all assets is over $5,000 “and every three years for assets when the combined total is less than $5,000.  Because banks do not timely provide 3rd party verification for bank accounts and other assets,” MPHA will review the “official” documents “provided by Tenants” to determine asset values*.”

It is clear if the MPHA Board approves these policies, families and residents of MPHA will be forced into permanent poverty, will face major financial barriers to move out of public housing, and will not be able to save for their children's, education, or buy a home.

Other sections of the Policy draft changes include:

Part II: Requirements for admission,

Part IV: Preferences

Part V:  Waiting list assignment plan & designation of buildings, etc.

**http://preview.tinyurl.com/MPHA-MTW2016-mtng**

Sincerely,

Defend Glendale Campaign

**Learn more:**

**defendglendale@gmail.com**

[**facebook@defendglendale**](https://www.facebook.com/DefendGlendale/info)

[**twitter@defendglendale**](https://twitter.com/defendglendale)[**http://defendglendale.weebly.com/**](http://defendglendale.weebly.com/)

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