



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of June 13, 2009**

**DATE:** May 22, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Extension of the Buckingham Villages Apartments Tenant Assistance Fund (TAF).

**C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Extend the time period for the Buckingham Villages TAF from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 (1-year extension).
2. Authorize the County Manager to continue implementation of the TAF of up to \$125,000 and to execute all documents related thereto, subject to approval by the County Attorney.

**ISSUE:** County Board approval is needed to extend the Tenant Assistance Fund (TAF) to assist income eligible, vested households at Buckingham Villages.

**SUMMARY:** The Buckingham Village Tenant Assistance Fund (TAF) provides rental assistance to help income-eligible vested tenants remain in the Buckingham Village apartments (Villages 1 and 3). Funded through a FY 2007 \$125,000 Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) allocation, the TAF has helped 11 households remain in Buckingham Villages. The TAF was developed as a short-term program to help tenants during the initial redevelopment phase for a two-year period. Staff recommends extending the TAF for another year to continue assistance for 9 households, as there are sufficient funds to cover anticipated costs (i.e. no additional funds are needed). Extending the TAF for another year will help the current households remain in the Buckingham Village apartments.

**BACKGROUND:** The Tenant Assistance Fund continues to benefit current tenants. Tenant information gathered from surveys showed a need for rental assistance to help households earning approximately 35% to 50% of the AMI (or approximately \$23,000 to \$50,000/year); approximately 25% of the households reported incomes in that range. Households earning more than approximately 50% of the AMI earn enough income to afford the current rents and households earning less than 40% of the AMI are eligible for other rental subsidy programs, such as Housing Choice Vouchers (federal program) or Housing Grants (County program).

Funding for the TAF came from the County's Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) and is used to reduce the rent burden and any additional rent burden that occurs from annual rent increases. This fund is designed to help existing tenants remain in Buckingham Village 1 and 3.

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: David Cristeal and Eric Timar, Housing Division, DCPHD

On June 9, 2007, the County Board allocated up to \$125,000 from the AHIF to create a Tenant Assistance Fund (TAF). The following criteria are used to determine household eligibility:

1. Must be a vested Buckingham Village tenant (Village 2 tenants who received a 120-day notice in 2006 and Village 1 and 3 tenants with leases on June 9, 2007);
2. Must pay more than 35% of their gross monthly income on rent;
3. Must annually earn less than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI), which is currently \$47,250 for a household of four; and
4. Must not receive Arlington County Housing Grants or federal Housing Choice Vouchers.

Staff worked with the developer and tenant representatives to implement the TAF program, including a process to inform and identify tenants, determine eligibility, arrange a payment structure, and establish a methodology to monitor and report on progress.

The Buckingham TAF program is administered by the property manager (Paradigm Management Co. at Village 1, Telesis [as of April] at Village 3) and the BU-GATA Tenants Association, as described by the Buckingham Village Apartments Tenant Assistance Fund (TAF) Program Agreement of April 4, 2008, and also by the contracting agreement between the County and BU-GATA of September 4, 2007.

BU-GATA processes applications from potential participant households, determines eligibility, calculates assistance amounts, and provides supporting information to the County and to Paradigm or Telesis. The County then provides the rental assistance directly to property management (i.e., funds do not go to the tenant).

Staff, the applicant and community representatives periodically review the TAF program to evaluate its success. The funds for the TAF are maintained in a County reserve account until needed.

Unless extended by action of the County Board, the TAF will end on June 30, 2009, although any participants with a 12-month lease in place as of that date would continue in the program until the expiration of that lease.

**DISCUSSION:** The TAF has been successful, helping 11 households maintain their tenancy in the Buckingham area.

Participants currently in program: 9

Average monthly rent assistance amount: \$394

Date assistance began for first participant: January 2008

Total funds expended, through May 2009: \$34,694

Total expenditure projection without renewal of program: \$61,810

Additional expenditure projected for a 1-year extension: \$56,272

Total expenditure projection, 1<sup>st</sup> year + extension: \$118,082

The TAF-Buckingham program has sufficient funding to pay all anticipated rent assistance for an additional year without any addition of funds to the original \$125,000.

The Compliance Officer of the Housing Division has monitored tenant files, the progress reports from BU-GATA, and the monthly invoices from Paradigm and Telesis.

Staff has met with and consulted tenant representatives and the developer to discuss options as the initial TAF program is coming to the end of its 2-year period; i.e., do nothing and let TAF expire; extend TAF for another year or until funds run out; or increase TAF funding and extend for longer period of time. The stakeholders reached a consensus to extend the TAF for another calendar year and not add more AHIF funds.

**Community Process:**

Buckingham Villages Working Group (BVWG): The BVWG met on May 5th to discuss extending the TAF. Though no vote was taken, BVWG agreed that extending the TAF for another year was a reasonable option to recommend, in order to continue helping income-eligible tenants remain in the Buckingham Community.

Housing Commission: The Citizens' Advisory Commission on Housing will meet on June 4, 2009 to consider the recommendation and will submit a letter regarding their position to the County Board. In 2007, they voted 10-1 in favor of the proposed TAF.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None. The County Board has already allocated funds for the TAF.