

STAFF REPORT
City of Lancaster, California

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05/22/07
RSL

Date: May 22, 2007

To: Mayor Hearn and City Council Members

From: Elizabeth Brubaker, Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization Director

Subject: **Approve Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles and the City of Lancaster**

Recommendation:

Approve Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles and the City of Lancaster for the Fiscal Year 2007-08.

Fiscal Impact:

Total costs for programs are estimated to be \$116,340 to the Community Development Commission, Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles for a total appropriation of \$232,680 for the following staff to administer the Housing Choice Voucher Section 8 Tenant investigations. Funding for the program is included in the proposed Fiscal Year 2007-08 Budget.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Projected Service Period</u>	<u>Case Production</u>
Part-time Investigator (32 hours/week)	\$ 80,000	July 2007 through June 2008 (12 months)	20-25/month
Part-time Investigator (32 hours/week)	\$ 80,000	July 2007 through June 2008 (12 months)	15-20/month
Investigator Supervision	\$8,000	July 2007 through June 2008 (12 months)	support
Part-time Analyst (32 hours/week)	\$ 50,000 (Includes start-up & overhead costs)	July 2007 through June 2008 (12 months)	support
Part-time Hearing Officer (as needed)	\$ 14,680	July 2007 through June 2008 (12 months)	1 - 2 hearing days every month
Total:	\$232,680		

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Background:

In 2005, Michael Antonovich, Supervisor 5th District and staff met with the Robert S. LaSala, City Manager, and staff to discuss the growing problem of problematic Section 8 tenants affecting the quality of life for citizens of Lancaster.

After the meeting the City of Lancaster and the County of Los Angeles decided to share the cost for an additional Section 8 Investigator to work within the City of Lancaster, assuming this would deter or eliminate the problematic Section 8 tenants. The County of Los Angeles and the City of Lancaster decided that each would pay the Housing Authority of Los Angeles \$50,000 for a total of \$100,000 to increase the investigations of Section 8 tenants in the City of Lancaster.

Because of the increase in staff and increase in the number of investigations, the Los Angeles County Housing Authority discovered that the City of Los Angeles was not screening their potential section 8 tenants' criminal history. The Section 8 tenants, who had criminal records and were approved by the City of Los Angeles to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, were crossing over into the County of Los Angeles' Section 8 program and many were moving to the City of Lancaster. The Los Angeles County Housing Authority took a very aggressive position and the City of Los Angeles can no longer approve potential Section 8 tenants with a criminal history to participate in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

City Staff and County staff assumed that correcting the screening of the Section 8 tenants in the City of Los Angeles and hiring an additional Section 8 Investigator would deter or eliminate the problematic Section 8 tenants in the City; however, it did not, and complaints from the citizens of Lancaster increased.

According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Housing Choice Voucher Program is the Federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments. The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

On of November 7, 2005, there were 2,047 Section 8 households containing 7,037 persons of which 4,100 were minors and as of February 1, 2007, there are 1,878 Section 8 households containing 6,359 persons of which 3,618 are minors. Although the number of Section 8 tenants has decreased, citizens are encountering more trouble with problematic Section 8 tenants. The complaints from the citizens and the analysis of documentation supports the County of Los Angeles and City of Lancaster increase funding to obtain more services from the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles to remediate the many problems surrounding Section 8 tenants.

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The public places a high priority on the commitment and ability of local agencies to maintain neighborhoods, protect property and property rights, and preserve the value of public and private investments. The City of Lancaster has a substantial interest in maintaining neighborhoods, protecting property and property rights, and preserving the value of public and private investments. The City is committed to sustaining and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhoods within the City of Lancaster. Staff recommends that the City Council approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Housing Authority and the City of Lancaster.

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