

## Final Randolph Relocation Report

In May 2013, PHC was asked by the City of Des Moines to evaluate the current tenants of the Randolph Hotel in hopes of identifying tenants, any barriers they may face and any community resources they were connected with. 82 rooms were screened in the first assessment and a multitude of barriers were discovered, many of which were criminal history, evictions, income and utility arrearages. A final report was provided to the City for their review.

In August 2013, Sherman Associate requested that PHC provide relocation assistance to the tenants of the Randolph with a final relocation date of October 24, 2013. PHC and Sherman Associates collaborated and completed a relocation plan to meet the needs of the clients. PHC spent 10 days evaluating new tenants of the Randolph and gaining new Releases of Information from clients who were assessed in the first screening. At the time of the secondary report, 83 rooms were screened and many of the same barriers were identified.

With the secondary assessment complete, all clients were assigned a case manager on September 4, 2013. Clients who did not complete an intake with PHC during the first or second assessment were given an opportunity to re-engage with PHC throughout the relocation process. Many clients, who had not previously engaged, did so by the end of the relocation process. The role of the case managers was to meet with clients and complete a housing placement plan to better identify housing needs. Case managers promptly began to look for housing with the help of the housing navigator as identified in the relocation plan.

All clients were relocated from the Randolph by the deadline of October 24, 2013 at 12:00PM. PHC relied on the housing navigator early on in the relocation process to identify rent

reasonable units and were also able to use the relationships that PHC case managers had built with community landlords to find suitable housing. 36 clients were housed in an efficiency unit with the average cost being \$485. Included in the average cost per unit were five clients who received rental assistance to go to an extended stay motel. These five clients knew the average cost per unit at an extended stay motel is over market rate rent. When these five clients are removed, there were 31 clients housed in efficiency units with an average cost of \$464 per unit. The market rate rent for an efficiency unit in Polk County is \$503 and seven clients or 19% were housed in efficiency units over market rate rent. This statistic does not include the five clients who went to long term motels. While 19% of clients paid over market rate rent, many clients are now paying less rent than when they were living at the Randolph, providing clients with more space and autonomy.

29 clients were housed in a one bedroom apartment with the average cost per unit being \$502. The market rate rent in Polk County for a one bedroom unit is \$605. Only one client was housed in an above market rate rent apartment as other rent reasonable housing was not available due to an extensive background.

4 clients were housed in a two bedroom apartment that accommodated their needs as stated in their housing placement plans. The average cost per unit was \$592 with no clients living an apartment above market rate. The market rate rent in Polk County for a two bedroom unit is \$750.

36 different apartments, landlords, or rental companies were used with 12 landlords taking more than one client. PHC's ability to find new landlords was in large part due to the

housing navigator, who was checking housing websites daily and calling all new landlord contacts to ask about housing availability. PHC was able to build multiple relationships with landlords who were willing to work with the clients at the Randolph and the barriers they faced.

12 clients chose to receive a \$200 gift card from Sherman Associates and did not receive any other financial assistance. Of the clients that left with a gift card, five client's whereabouts are unknown, one went to an extended stay motel, another is staying with a friend, two moved to another city, and three moved into permanent housing. 11 tenants left with no case management help and did not receive a gift card. The location of 10 of the clients is unknown with one client currently residing in the Polk County Jail.

PHC was able to help 68 residents be placed in apartments in the Des Moines metro area. Most of the clients were placed in apartments with private landlords. One client was housed in a subsidized unit in Warren County and another client was housed at Unity Place as they would accept a rent voucher from General Assistance.

PHC offered multiple services over the course of the relocation with the major services being case management, housing search assistance, rental assistance and deposit assistance. The other services provided were application fees, transportation, utility assistance, moving assistance, and bed assistance. All financial assistance provided was based on a tier system in the relocation plan as well as immediate need to move into housing. The cost for each client fluctuated with many clients using less financial assistance than allowed by the tier they were in. In the end stages of relocation, Sherman approved several clients to receive more financial assistance than their tier provided based on multiple barriers and more money needed to

imminently house them. This was done on a case by case basis and was approved by the project manager.

61 clients received rental assistance throughout the process. Multiple clients had a large number of barriers to housing and landlords were willing to work with clients if first and last month's rent and deposit were provided. Deposit assistance was provided for 56 clients in conjunction with rental assistance. 23 clients were able to benefit from application fee assistance.

All clients were offered case management and housing search assistance services throughout the process. Case management services offered to clients were to help clients identify their housing needs and begin working on their Housing Placement Plan, brainstorm how to overcome housing barriers, assist clients in furnishing their apartments, getting utilities in their name, or to help them get a therapy pet. 74 clients took part in at least one case management service while living at the Randolph. Some of the housing search assistance services provided were a housing navigator searching for listings, providing the listings to clients, case managers assisting clients in calling landlords, or taking clients to look at housing. 61 clients were assisted with housing search assistance. The remaining clients that were housed, who did not partake in housing search assistance, were successful in finding suitable living quarters.

Over the course of the relocation, case managers transported 36 clients by vehicle to see housing, get bed vouchers, to turn on utilities and any other housing needs. While 36 clients were provided with vehicle transportation, staff provided this service 93 different times.

This shows that clients were either transported to look at multiple apartments prior to being accepted, to furnish their apartment or to turn on utilities. Multiple other clients benefited from bus tokens that were given by case managers for housing search. Due to the large amount of tokens requested, not all tokens were documented per client. It is noted that two boxes of tokens were purchased for housing search assistance.

Per the relocation plan, Sherman Associates would fund the moving costs of all clients. PHC and Sherman began a business relationship with A1 Getter Done moving, which was willing to lower their normal three hour minimum cost of \$275.00 to two hour minimum with gas included at a price of \$175.00. Case managers were in contact almost daily with A1 to set up moving times for clients. If A1 was unable to move a client due to scheduling difficulties, Heavenly Haulers, a moving company with whom PHC had worked before, was also used to help move clients. In total, 37 clients were assisted with moving to new apartments. Also included as part of moving assistance was the pick-up and transportation of new beds, funded by Polk County General Assistance. The total cost of moving assistance, funded by Sherman Associates, was \$6,055.

At the beginning of the case management process, Polk County General Assistance (PCGA) asked PHC how they could assist in the relocation project. PCGA was willing to assign a worker to specifically serve all Randolph clients who came in needing assistance. 38 clients were able to receive a bed voucher that paid for either a full or queen size bed from the Family Discount store. PCGA was a tremendous help as they were able to streamline client assistance

for bed vouchers. Many clients were appreciative and happy to receive a brand new bed for their apartment as many had not owned their own bed for a significant length of time.

After the secondary tenant assessment was complete, 22 clients had reported utility arrears. We had anticipated that this would be a major barrier to client's housing as many owed large amounts of arrearages. As stated in the relocation plan, any client with utility arrears would first need to seek financial assistance from community resources and then would be eligible to receive Sherman funding for the remaining amount based on the tier they were in. Many clients with utility arrears were housed in apartments where utilities were included in their rent and did not seek financial assistance from community resources or Sherman Associates. Three clients received assistance with utility deposits and they were not asked to seek community resources prior as this is not something that community resources provide and PHC could verify this information with Sherman Associates.

PHC initially asked Sherman Associates to make \$118,500.00 available in financial assistance for clients. Financial assistance included rental payments, deposit assistance, utility assistance, application fees, and transportation and documentation reproduction. The total amount of financial assistance used by PHC for client relocation was \$68,879.50. This total does not include moving expenses that were budgeted by Sherman Associates. With a total of 81 clients receiving some financial assistance from Sherman (to include clients who received gift cards), the average amount of assistance per client is \$864.43.

When the relocation plan was being created, PHC was asked to estimate the total cost of case management services for relocation efforts. PHC estimated that the total cost of case

management services would be \$111,750.00. PHC spent an estimated 1,363 hours through October 19, 2013 on case management for a total of \$104,823.06. Donations from the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines (\$25,000) and the United Way (\$25,000) funded a portion of the case management costs for the relocation project. PHC billed Sherman Associates for the remainder of case management services on a monthly basis in the amount of \$54,823.06.

The Randolph Relocation project was a learning experience for both PHC and the community as a whole. One of the surprising lessons learned throughout this process was the availability of efficiency and one bedroom apartments in the Des Moines metro. PHC learned of many new landlords who provided housing at or below market rate rent. We still believe that there is need for more decent, safe and affordable housing in Des Moines going forward. During this process we learned that landlords are willing partners and often want to be of assistance in helping place clients in a better environment than they were previously. This project could not have been completed without help from the landlords of Des Moines.

This project brought to light the importance of the client dictating their housing needs and the power of having a case manager to help them translate their needs into a plan to find housing. Each client had the right to choose housing that met their needs and wants and each case manager respected the choice of the client.

The Randolph Relocation project was truly the meaning of collaboration as the provider community of Des Moines stepped up early on to provide assistance. As stated earlier, Polk County General Assistance was invaluable with their assistance with bed vouchers.

Collaboration from the following community providers made this project possible: Community Foundation of Great Des Moines, United Way, Polk County Housing Trust Fund, Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency, Unity Place, Anawim Housing, and Home Inc. The provider community has consistently shown that they have care and concern for vulnerable populations in Des Moines.

PHC had the honor of relocating the residents of the Randolph to more suitable housing that met their needs in a short time frame. In the future, we believe that it would be beneficial to have a more extended time frame for relocation as there would be more apartment availability and clients would have more time to save money towards relocation. Over the short period of time for Randolph relocation, PHC saturated and depleted the affordable apartment selection to house our clients. It is our hope that should future relocations be necessary, that any parties affected would receive more time to find appropriate relocation housing. The funding providing for relocation of residents was one of the key requirements for making this project successful and we note that it would be necessary for all future relocations.