



Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kayrine Brown
Deputy Executive Director

January 11, 2023

HOC AT-A-GLANCE:

December 2022

December's highlights:

- HOC Broadband Initiative
- FY2022 FSS Grant Award
- Legislative Updates
- Highlights from our Resident Services Division
- Updates from our Housing Resource Division
- Information Technology Division updates
- Real Estate Development activities



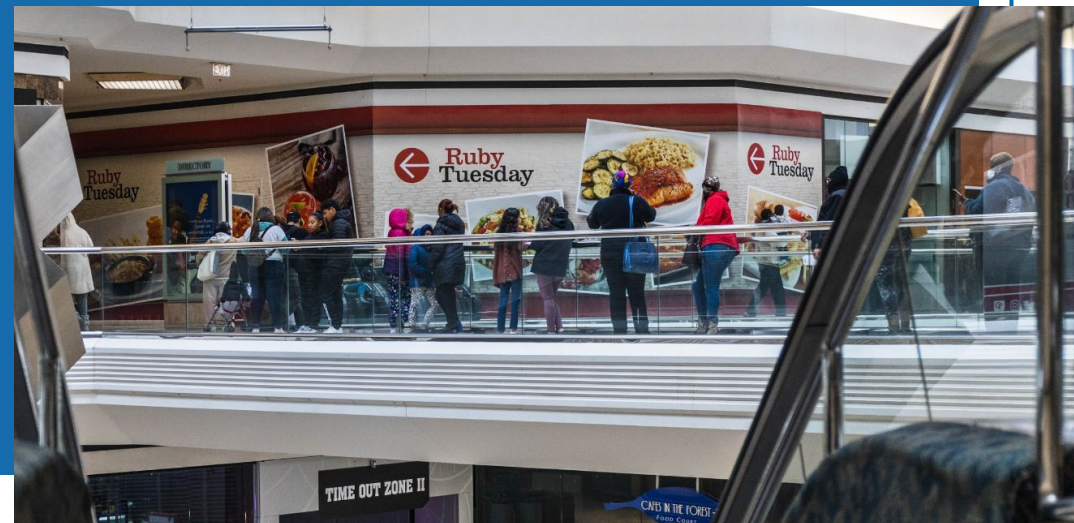
HOC BROADBAND INITIATIVE

- HOC partnered with Montgomery Connects to provide free computers to qualified County residents and enroll them in the ACP for up to \$45 credit in internet services
- Two-day event held on December 3 and December 10 from 11 am to 1 pm
- **December 3: (Gaithersburg Library):** HOC and Montgomery County staff assisted customers in applying for ACP broadband credit and pre-registering to pick up a free computer
- **December 10: (Lakeforest Mall):** Free computers distributed to the HOC customers



HOC BROADBAND INITIATIVE (cont.)

- 153 households received assistance with the ACP broadband credit application, of which an estimated **114 were HOC customers**
- Distributed free computers to 382 customers, of which **287 were HOC customers** (representing **186 households**)
- 93% of the HOC customers who received a free computer reported not having a laptop prior to the distribution event
- 74% of customers were using their smartphone as a computer



FY2022 FSS Grant Award

- HOC received a one-year renewal grant from HUD for the FSS Program, an initiative designed to assist HCV participants in increasing their earnings and improving their overall financial health
- Award total: **\$547,483**
- Award Coverage period: **Jan. 1, 2023 - Dec. 31, 2023**
- HOC customers enrolled in FSS: **353**
- Grant fully funds five FTEs, marking the first time in more than 15 years that HOC does not need to supplement the positions with funding from other sources



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

General Updates

- Maryland General Assembly will convene with the swearing in of members on Wednesday, January 11, 2023, beginning the 90-day session that will adjourn on April 10, 2023
- Inauguration of Governor-Elect Wes Moore and Lt. Governor-Elect Miller will be held Wednesday, January 18, 2023
- County Council will return from its winter recess and resume weekly Council sessions on Tuesday, January 17, 2023

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

County Bill 33-22

- Capital Improvements Program – Affordable Housing Feasibility Study – Required (Sponsor: Friedson)
- Under current law, County Executive (“CE”) is required to complete an affordable housing assessment for each applicable capital project as part of facility planning
- Bill would require the CE to submit to the Council an affordable housing feasibility study prior to facility planning, development of the program of requirements, site selection, or land acquisition of any eligible capital project
- Council would have 30 days to approve or disapprove of the CE’s analysis and conclusions. This bill was introduced in November, and the Public Hearing is scheduled for January 17, 2023

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming

Cider Mill:

- Distributed gift cards to customers to provide holiday assistance
- Continued to facilitate the Street Outreach Network (“SON”) program at Cider Mill
- Assisted Property Management staff to address rent delinquencies
- Attended Watkins Mills Cluster Collaboration meeting on December 2 to share information and determine the best ways to assist students living at Cider Mill and the surrounding communities.

Seneca Ridge:

- “SON” kicked off the Safe Zones program at Seneca Ridge by hosting a Christmas party and by distributing gifts for families on December 16



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Workshops:

- Facilitated the Fundamentals of Housing workshops on December 21 and December 22
- Facilitated Resource Sharing workshops on December 27 and December 29



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

- **Dec. 9:** Facilitated a “Holiday Shop” event offering food, music, games, holiday activities and an opportunity for over 50 youth from Magruder’s and Seneca Ridge to purchase donated gifts for their parents



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Town Centre Place Gift Distribution

- **Dec. 15:** In partnership with Olney Moms, distributed gifts to families from Town Centre Place



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Bauer Park Holiday Luncheon

- **Dec. 10:** Facilitated a holiday luncheon for customers at Bauer Park Apartments



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Residences on the Lane Holiday Party

- **Dec. 16:** Facilitated a holiday party for customers at Residences on the Lane



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Arcola Holiday Luncheon

- **Dec. 16:** In partnership with Arts for the Aging, facilitated a holiday luncheon for customers at Arcola Towers



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Forest Oak Towers Holiday Dinner Party

- **Dec. 18:** Facilitated a holiday dinner party for customers at Forest Oak Towers



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Emmanuel Brinklow Church Bicycle Distribution

- **Dec. 17:** Referred families from various properties to receive bicycles through Emmanuel Brinklow Church Bicycle Distribution



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Tanglewood Christmas Party

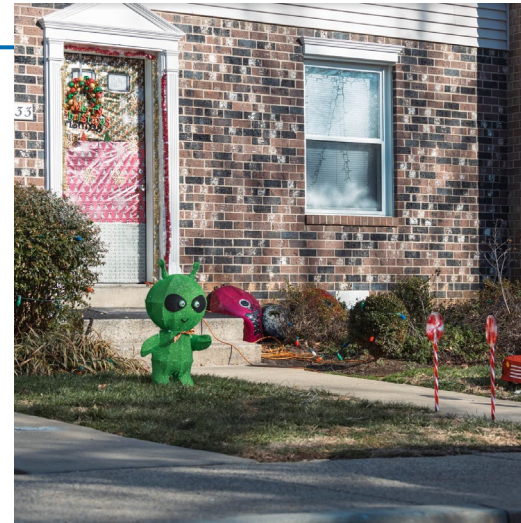
- **Dec. 20:** Facilitated a family photo booth and a Christmas party for families at Tanglewood



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Washington Square Door Decorating Contest

- **Dec. 22:** Facilitated an ice cream social and holiday door decorating contest for customers at Washington Square



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Relocation and Re-Certification Assistance:

- Assisted customers on an ongoing basis with relocations and other needs for RAD and renovation projects at Residences on the Lane, Stewartown Homes, Shady Grove Apartments, Willow Manor Apartments, Bauer Park Apartments, Town Center Olney, Sandy Spring Meadows, Willow Manor and Georgian Court
- Provided continued outreach and assistance to customers who have failed to submit all required documents for re-certification by the stated deadline

Rental Assistance:

- Continued to provide outreach to customers to provide information on, and assist them in applying for rental assistance through, the CDBG and ERAP programs

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

- The Resident Services Division develops and implements programs that provide meals, educational, recreational and enrichment opportunities for HOC's customers
- Provided food resources and other support with the help of Manna Food Center, Emmanuel Brinklow Seventh Day Adventist Church, Montgomery County Senior Nutrition Lunch Program, Capital Area Food Bank's Senior Brown Bag, and My Groceries To Go Programs
- In December, 375 HOC customers were provided with food. The Resident Services staff also continued to facilitate the Senior Nutrition Program, which provides meals and opportunities for seniors to socialize

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

HOC Academy

Youth Education/Enrichment:

- **Dec. 16:** HOC Academy staff hosted an iFLY Family STEM Night for youth and their families including indoor skydiving, dinner and STEM-themed gear
- Participants in the First-generation College Bound program continued to work with their coach
- The “STEAMsational” Lab program focused on activities, challenges and a Gingerbread House STEAM project



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

HOC Academy (cont.)

Adult Education and Workforce Development:

Small Business Strategy Course (“SBSC”) alumni continue to report their progress and new business ventures. Below are highlights from the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP):

- Krystal Rodriguez reported new employment at Gabes
- Twenty-three (23) TAP participants successfully completed the fall 2022 academic semester at Montgomery College and other educational and training institutions

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Financial Literacy

Financial Literacy Coach continued to work with HOC's customers and individuals on the Housing Path waitlist:

- Provided one-on-one financial literacy coaching to 17 HOC customers and 8 individuals from the HousingPath waitlist
- Coaching sessions covered topics including: creating a working budget, reading one's credit report, and creating and accomplishing monthly financial goals



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

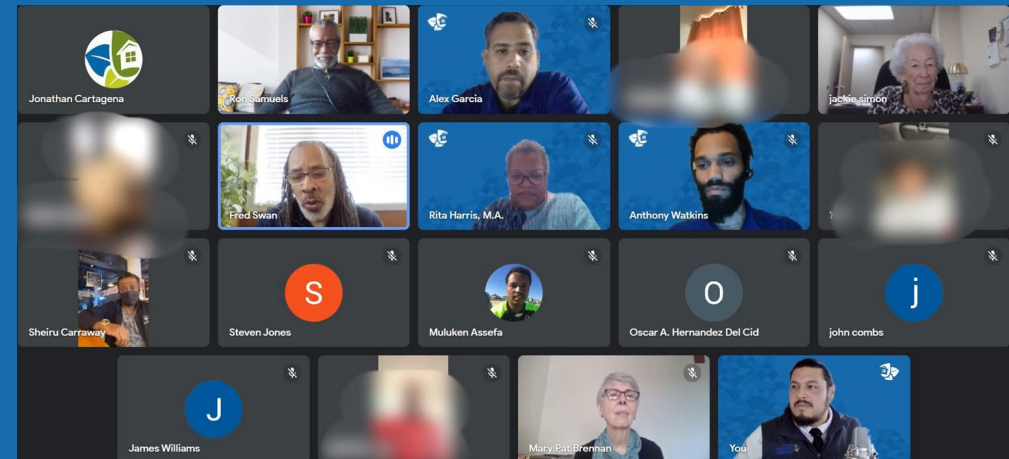
Supportive Services

- Program **served 230 participants** by conducting home visits with program participants, providing case management services, and paying rent and utilities
- Continued to help Emergency Voucher recipients secure housing by providing housing location services, as well as financial assistance for application fees, security deposits, moving expenses and household items
- Program staff continued to implement the RSP, which provides a shallow rental subsidy (up to \$600 monthly) to county residents, including a large number of seniors on fixed incomes
- Program staff exceeded the target number of 275 participants, serving 278 families

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Fatherhood Initiative

- Dec. 2: Program graduated 13 fathers from the November cohort
- For the month of December, 35 fathers were enrolled for the cohort that will begin in January 2023



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Housing Choice Voucher (“HCV”) Program

- The utilization rate has increased to 96%
- Currently, 193 families with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent; and 103 contracts are pending execution. Two-hundred and ten (210) families were selected from the HCV waitlist last month
- During December, the Division received one request for a voucher extension beyond the initial 90-day period



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

RENTCafé Used to Support Online Annual Recertifications

- HOC introduced use of RENTCafé to assist with annual recertifications
- Customers with recertifications effective December 2022, required to submit electronic annual recertifications
- Staff enlisted the IT Division to provide technical support to customers requiring assistance with the submission of recertification materials
- Overall, 473 of 728 customers submitted their paperwork electronically
- Ninety-four (94) customers were recommended for program termination effective December 30, 2022. Resident Services worked with the Housing Resources Division to assess client needs and to determine why recertifications were not being completed

HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

RENTCafé Used to Support Online Annual Recertifications (cont.)

Resident Services Counselors assisted eighty-five (85) families with the recertification requirement and overturned the termination. Termination proceedings will continue for nine families for the following reasons:

- 2 - Deceased
- 2 - Skip
- 1 - Evicted
- 4 - Failed to respond to Counselor outreach

Housing Resources Division will continue to work collaboratively with Resident Services to assist customers facing termination

HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Emergency Housing Vouchers (“EHVs”)

HOC has an allocation of 118 Emergency Housing Vouchers:

- Ninety-two (92) families have successfully leased units
- Fifteen (15) families with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent
- Staff are reviewing two (2) certification packets to determine program eligibility
- HOC requested nine (9) additional referrals from HHS for the EHV Program



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Family Self Sufficiency (“FSS”)

- Four (4) new families enrolled in the FSS program, resulting in a total of 362 program participants
- Forty (40) current FSS families expressed interest in changing to the new FSS Contract of Participation, approved by HUD in November 2022
- Staff met with members of Emmanuel Brinklow Church to establish the calendar of financial literacy seminars, with the first anticipated to commence in February 2023



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE:

Yardi PHA Client Portal for RENTCafé

Below are recent statistics which reflect participation from November 29, 2022 - January 5, 2023

Status of HCV Participant System Enrollment and Recertification	11/29/2022	1/5/2023	Rate of Increase
Completed enrollment	2,176	2,489	+14.4%
Contacted for enrollment	641	283	-56%
Completed annual recertification online	1,798	1,650	-8.2%

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE:

Yardi PHA Client Portal for RENTCafé (cont.)

- Sixty-six percent (66%) of enrolled participants have completed annual recertification online through the portal. November 2022 - April 2023 are presently available for enrolled participants to complete their online annual recertification
- Written and electronic communications continue to be sent to the members of the first and second cohorts of HCV program participants who have not registered or have registered, but have not started their online annual recertification process for follow up
- One hundred twenty-two (122) requests for extended technical assistance were fielded by User Technical Support in the Information Technology Division for December 2022

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:

The Metropolitan Apartments, Bethesda, MD

- Work continues at the 308-unit Metropolitan Apartments development and includes green roof repairs, excavation of existing soil and waterproofing removal
- Staff held a RFP pre-proposal conference on January 4, 2023 to identify a general contractor to provide larger renovations to the property
- Contractor selection estimated to occur between Q1-Q2 2023



REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:

Heritage Emory Grove Community Event

- **Dec. 19:** Staff met with representatives of the Heritage Emory Grove United Methodist Church Development Committee at the site of Main Street Inclusive Apartments
- Meeting was held to discuss Emory Grove redevelopment plans, HOC's background and role, as well as the community's role in the project and path forward
- Meeting was well attended by members of the community, church, and other key stakeholders



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

THE END

