

HOUSING SERVICES SECTION

PROGRAM MISSION

To help meet Arlington's housing needs by ensuring community awareness and use of the County programs and services regarding rental housing, home ownership and housing quality.

The **Housing Services Section** provides and coordinates direct service to tenants, landlords and prospective first time homebuyers in the County, and consolidates all housing information, referral, and counseling activities in one unit. The Section provides the following specific services:

- The **Housing Information Center** provides a “one-stop shop” for information and referrals regarding the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords; rent assistance programs and available committed affordable units; maintenance and code enforcement; opportunities for first-time home buyers; and relocation resulting from redevelopment of rental property.
- The **Tenant-Landlord Program** provides information and referrals regarding tenant-landlord laws and practices, dispute resolution services, and support for the Tenant-Landlord Commission. Staff conducts the annual rent and vacancy survey, and updates the Apartment Guide, Tenant-Landlord Handbook and other materials. Staff provides advice, referrals and counseling to assist residents in maintaining current housing or with finding new housing, as well as coordinating and monitoring activities of non profits under contract to provide housing services.
- The **Home Ownership Program** develops strategies to increase home ownership opportunities and fosters first-time home ownership by providing a broad range of information and guidance on homeownership. Staff seeks partnerships with condominium developers and the participation of the real estate industry and lending institutions in facilitating home ownership for low and moderate income and minority households. Staff markets the County's Live Near Your Work Program, VHDA's reduced interest rate first trust mortgage products and the enhanced Moderate Income Purchase Assistance Program. Staff facilitates outreach activities such as the Home Ownership Fair and workshops for residents being affected by redevelopment and conversion to condominium. Staff monitors the activities of two non-profits. The program coordinator (1.0 FTE) is funded through the CDBG Program and is included in the section on Special Revenue Funds (**Section N**). The General Fund supports the housing specialist (1.0 FTE) working with the program.
- **Relocation Services** ensures that developers/landlords comply with the federal Uniform Relocation Act, the state Condominium Act or the County Board's Tenant Relocation Guidelines during any re-development, conversion or rehabilitation projects where residential tenants may be displaced. Staff provides technical assistance and monitors adopted relocation condominium conversion plans for compliance.
- The **Field Team** provides additional housing services for the four Neighborhood Focus Areas (NFAs) of Buckingham, Columbia Heights West, Nauck and Pike Village Center and three Neighborhood Enhancement Areas (NEAs) of Arlington View, Long Branch Creek and Radnor-Ft Myer Heights. Staff undertakes systematic inspections to assess the environmental conditions; provides technical assistance and referrals to improve housing and neighborhood conditions; conducts workshops regarding tenant rights and responsibilities; and provides counseling and technical assistance to enable residents to meet their housing needs. This program is funded through the CDBG Program, which is included in the section on Special Revenue Funds (**Section N**).

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- Housing information regarding tenant-landlord rights and responsibilities and/or available services is provided to residents to help them resolve their housing problems. Some may not want staff to intervene or neglect to take appropriate action themselves.
- Live Near Your Work, VHDA's below market rate interest first trust mortgage programs, SPARC and HOMESTRIDE, being marketed by staff, have increased the number of low and moderate income first-time homebuyers purchasing homes in the County. The proposed development of affordable committed condominium units and conversions to condominium is expected to increase the number.
- Customer Measures were established in FY 2004 and data collection commenced in FY 2005.
- Monitoring of relocation plans usually carry over into a second or third year. A significant amount of staff time is spent providing information and assistance to developers and tenants of condominium conversions and by-right projects that do not have approved relocation plans.