
Q & A Session following virtual RAD Conversion meeting held with residents of Latimer Manor on October 5, 2021.

Should I start looking for a new unit now?

Do not move, do not start looking. This is the very beginning of the RAD conversion process. When it is time for you to move, you will get a formal written notice that gives specific instructions next steps.

In order for us to be in the RAD conversion process Columbia Housing is required to have a meeting with residents to tell explain what the RAD program is and how the conversion will impact everyone.

If this is not happening right now why are you informing us about something that will happen in a couple of years?

HUD requires CH meet with the residents to explain the RAD program and tell you what is going to happen as we go through the process over the next several years. This is the first of two initial meetings to begin the process of applying to convert the property to the RAD program.

What sort of time frame is going to be involved from starting to finish?

CH will submit an application to HUD in November should get the go ahead from HUD at the end of the year, which says you've been approved to move forward with the RAD process. Staff will come back to with the plan for what we're going to do.

Financing will have to be finalized, under the RAD process financing is done through private investors. CH will go out and borrow money from a lender, through tax credits which provides investors incentives to develop the community.

Financial closing should occur sometime mid-2022. Once financial plans are in place the process of relocation can begin.

When it is time for families to move, will they be limited to Richland County and the City of Columbia?

Everybody will be provided with a Housing Choice Voucher and will be able to take the voucher where they determine is best for their family. If you take your voucher and go somewhere outside of Richland County, then you will have to tell us that you are going to permanently move and you do not want to come back to Latimer Manor.

If you want to come back to Latimer Manor, then you would have to stay within the County. Current residents have a guaranteed right of return to the new community, and you will not be rescreened or have to reply to come back.

What about families who have not been there a year?

It does not matter how long you have lived at Latimer Manor. If you live there at this point in time, then you will be eligible to be able to participate in the RAD program.

Do I have to stay in compliance with my lease to participate?

If you violate your lease, you could jeopardize your benefits under the RAD program. That is very important to remember; you must pay your rent and you must comply with all other provisions of your lease.

What will happen to the residents as that transition gets underway?

Nothing will happen right now. Everyone will stay living at Latimer Manor and continuing to comply with your lease. CH will continue to manage the property and as the process begins, more meetings will be held about the specifics.

At the next meeting on October 19th more will be shared about the specific plans of what will be rebuilt on Latimer Manor site. There will be a relocation specialist based at Latimer, Manor who will be available to assist you with questions or concerns related to the relocation process.

As far as the relocation process itself will Columbia Housing help residents move and pack? Will there be someone available to help families find units?

Yes, there will be a relocation specialist at Latimer Manor to assist everyone.

CH will give residents options when relocation begins. You may look at properties that CH is building elsewhere in Columbia and Richland County. You may move to other public housing units temporarily or you could take a voucher and move outside of the area.

All moving costs will be covered by CH. CH will provide packing materials. Residents will have the options of doing a self move, or we will have a moving company assist you. CH will assist with packing if a resident is elderly or disabled.

This is just a really preliminary meeting to notify residents of CH's intent to submit an application for the RAD program and explain what the RAD program is and how it will impact the community.

Can participants get a sneak peek at what the new community is going to look like?

The conceptual plans are still very much in the design phase right now. And so at our next meeting on the 19th, we will try to have a rough conceptual plan that we can share with you. Resident input will be important during the process and meetings will be held about site design, the process to finalize those plans could take at least six months.

What about residents who are at zero income or paying flat rents? How will the RAD conversion affect them?

If you are at zero income, the RAD conversion will have no impact on you. Rent calculation for the project-based voucher program is the same formula as public housing. Rent would continue to be based on 30% of income, if a resident has no income 30% of zero is zero.

If you are paying public housing flat rent it is most likely because the flat rent is less than 30% of your income; it is important to remember that the voucher program does not have a flat rent - you always

pay 30% of your income. It is possible that if you are paying flat rent your rent could change. Any increases would be phased in over a three-year period - not be done all at one time

Everyone on the call is concerned about the condition of the property. Can you address those concerns? And if they have concerns about specific issues, what should they do?

Thank you. First of all, I want to say that we are aware of conditions of Latimer Manor and that's why we are embarking on this journey to do this RAD conversion, so that we can build a new community.

If residents have any emergency issues right now report them through the work order system and to the property managers.

If you do have emergency situation, you can, you can call the Medcom number 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And that number is (803)251-2747.

Are residents with zero income going to be eligible to receive a voucher during this process?

Everyone will be eligible to receive a voucher will be provided with all the assistance necessary to help you through that process.

When it's time for vouchers to be issued, residents will go through a class called a briefing and that class will explain how the voucher works. The briefing will cover the size unit a family qualifies for and how much subsidy they will receive.

What if there are concerns about the conditions of a unit? Will staying another year be dangerous to my health?

Currently there are no conditions that are of specific concern but if residents have concerns, please make sure that you contact the maintenance and the property management. If units are identified to have safety issues they will not be re-occupied and residents will be relocated to other units. Resident safety is CH's primary concern and all issues will be addressed to ensure units are kept in the best condition possible until relocation begins.

There may be an influx of people trying to find a place when relocation starts. What if folks have a hard time getting a landlord to accept vouchers when we get to that that point?

CH is working with landlords every day to create more housing prospects. Finding affordable housing is a challenge right now because the rents are high. CH raised the rents for the voucher program to the maximum and is trying to obtain permission to increase them further if needed.

No one will be left without housing and will be assisted in locating new housing when the time comes.

There are concerns about about mold, someone says, she's in a hotel because issues in her unit are so bad. What do these folks need to do?

They need to be in communication with their property manager. There have been some units at Latimer with mold and those units will not be re-occupied going forward. It is critical residents work with their manager, if they are unable to return to their unit at Latimer another unit will be identified but keeping everyone in a safe environment is critical to CH as the process moves forward.

Is CH running credit reports to issue a voucher?

CH will not run a credit report but private landlords who take vouchers may as part of their application process.

If a resident is self-employed and their income changes will that impact their voucher?

If you are self-employed, the documentation you would have to provide are income tax records to determine your portion of the rent. Self-employment does not impact someone's ability to participate in the program.

Can the voucher be used outside of Richland County and is there a time frame to use the voucher once it's been issued?

Yes, residents can use your voucher outside of Richland County. That's called portability. That's when you take your voucher someplace else. When you port to another jurisdiction, they become responsible for administering your voucher.

The voucher will initially be good for 90 days, but because this is a relocation, you will continue to retain your voucher and CH will continue to work with you until you make a decision on what you want to do.

When do we anticipate starting to issue vouchers?

The soonest would be probably next to July, 2022. The latest could be fall of 2022. There is a process with HUD and a number of approvals have to be secured from HUD before we will be able to allow anybody to move.

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