

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: February 20, 2012
To: Lynne De Bruin, Vice Chair, Committee on Finance and Audit
From: Jerome J. Heer, Director of Audits
Subject: Status Report – Audit of Rent Assistance Program (File No. 10-217)

At its meeting on June 17, 2010, the Committee on Finance and Audit passed a motion to receive and place our audit report, "Better Management Oversight Needed for County Administered Federal Rent Assistance Program," on file with a six-month status report on the progress toward implementation of the audit recommendations.

Status reports were presented to the Committee on the dates noted below. The corresponding actions taken by the Committee are also noted.

12/09/10: Receive and place on file, future status reports due as recommended by the Department of Audit.

07/21/11: Report was informational, no action taken.

09/22/11: Report was informational, no action taken.

The current status report is attached for your review. As indicated by DHHS management, five of the nine recommendations have been fully implemented and it anticipates the remaining recommendations will be implemented by mid-2012.

This status report is informational.



Jerome J. Heer

JJH/PAG/cah

Attachments

cc: Finance and Audit Committee Members
Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive
Patrick Farley, Director, Department of Administrative Services
Hector Colon, Director, Department of Health & Human Services
Terrence Cooley, Chief of Staff, County Board Staff
Steve Cady, Research Analyst, County Board Staff
Carol Mueller, Chief Committee Clerk

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENT OF AUDIT REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit Title: Better Management Oversight Needed for County Administered Federal Rent Assistance Program **File Number:** 10-217

Audit Date: May 2010 **Status Report Date:** 02/08/12 **Department:** DHHS – Housing Division

Number & Recommendation	Deadlines Established		Deadlines Achieved		Implementation Status		Comments
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Completed	Further Action Required	
	<p>1. Review Rent Assistance program protocols for possible revisions to better align verification efforts for earned income with applicable 120-day and 60-day HUD standards.</p> <p>2. Establish specific, continuous training and procedural refresher sessions for program staff, including proper interpretation of CARES and EIV systems, as well as consistent follow-up and documentation of efforts to reconcile differences between system-reported data and participant-reported income.</p>	X				X	

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENT OF AUDIT REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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	3. Perform more detailed case reviews on a sample of at least 30 cases per quarter and follow-up individual errors with reinforcement during training and procedural refresher sessions previously recommended. Particular care should be taken to ensure consistent application of all program policies.		X				

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	4. If mandatory furlough days continue to reduce available staff hours, work with the Department of Administrative Services to identify additional resources (e.g., temporary help, student intern positions, etc.) sufficient to provide relief to Housing Program Associates for needed training.	X					

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	5. Petition the State of Wisconsin for enhanced access to the CARES system, thus sanctioning past program practice.	X				X	
6. Identify resources within the department to make the purchase of a relatively inexpensive scanner/copier (approximately \$1,000) for the Rent Assistance program a priority.		X			X		Auditee: A scanner is in place as part of a Housing Division copy machine.

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	<p>7. Update the Administrative Plan, including a specific section on Program Integrity that formalizes the program's quality control measures to prevent and detect staff errors and omissions. Specific policies and procedures should be established for fair and consistent treatment of cases involving intentional misreporting, abuse and fraud.</p>	X					

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	8. Develop a dialogue and working relationship with the District Attorney's Office to guide the program in identifying appropriate cases of suspected fraud for referral to the District Attorney.					X	
9. Work with Department of Administrative Services to utilize the County's Tax Intercept Program to recoup program overpayments when participants refuse to sign or honor repayment agreements.	X					X	Auditee: The Division has talked with DAS and is compiling the data and back up documentation of debts in the required format so as to implement the tax refund intercept program in Q1 2011. This recommendation will be pursued for completion during the third quarter of this year as temporary help has been identified to follow up on this recommendation. 8/22/11: During the third quarter, we will be assigning a temporary help employee to work with the necessary departments to figure out the best way to implement this Intercept Program. 2/8/12: The Program Coordinator has discussed this option with other community Program Coordinators and has met with Thomas Burant (DAS) in regards to Tax Intercept collection implementation requirements. We are in the process of determining the staffing needed to implement the Intercept Program. We are developing a plan to determine suitable cases for submission. The information will be used to establish a new protocol regarding forms and required documentation in anticipation of possible collection efforts. The Division anticipates having this in place by June 1, 2012.