



WASHINGTON GORGE ACTION PROGRAMS

The Community Action Agency for Skamania and Klickitat Counties

P.O. Box 805, 115 W Steuben Street Bingen, WA 98605 509.493.3954 | 800.755.1192 | www.wagap.org

August 2022 Board Report

Skamania County Housing Programs

Submitted by Curt Gray, Skamania County Housing Program Director

As an introduction to the monthly report we routinely submit, I'm including this narrative to provide additional insight.

- **Rental Assistance:**
With the recent decision to establish a conservative monthly budget for awarding ERAP 2.0 rental assistance and the expiration of the ESG-CV program, the number of households served this month is nearly the same as last month. However, the number of bed-nights provided has decreased primarily because we are being more conservative with the amount of rental assistance we are providing per household in order to preserve the remaining rental assistance funds.
- **HEN Housing:**
There has been a very significant increase in the number of households that have been HEN certified in the last month. Several of the new additions would qualify for HEN housing benefits. Two households are in the midst of enrolling in this benefit with at least two others being screened for program entry, funding permitting.
- The Emergency Shelter remains full.
- **Emergency Cooling Shelter:**
Reacting to the release of an Excessive Heat Warning for our local area by the National Weather Service, the cooling shelter was activated on Monday, July 25 and operated daily from 11 A.M. until 7 P.M. through Saturday, July 30. Daytime temperatures continued to be high on Sunday, July 31, but did not reach the thresholds required to keep the cooling shelter open an additional day. Because we had only received inquiries about the cooling shelter operations between Monday and Saturday and experienced no physical utilization of the shelter, it was decided to put the cooling shelter staff "on standby" on Sunday rather than open and staff the cooling shelter for that additional day. We received no calls whatsoever on Sunday.
- **MCHA Housing Vouchers:**
Four of our Emergency Shelter households now have housing vouchers. Finding affordable housing continues to be the most significant obstacle to obtaining permanent housing.
- **Denied Services:**
Three households were denied rental assistance because they had received the maximum benefit allowed by the funded programs. All three were referred to MCHA and encouraged to apply for rental assistance under their program (if still funded).

Denial of services in the past has been extremely rare, but as programs wind down, funds become depleted, and some clients have reached maximum benefits. The few households that are denied services are put on a waiting list in the event that sufficient additional funds become available which would allow us to reconsider offering those clients additional support. We are nearly always able to deliver some other kind of assistance or alternative support to those households.

- COVID-19:

One of our emergency shelter residents contracted a mild case of COVID. That client was immediately isolated in place and all other residents were tested, all with neg findings. Isolation/Quarantine measures were implemented resulting in no further spread of the virus and a quick and uneventful recovery of the infected individual.