

# MONTHLY REPORT TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

## Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee

### Housing Choice Voucher Program

April 11, 2025

#### **OVERVIEW:**

This report details the activities currently under the direction of the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

#### **SYNOPSIS:**

CVR Associates, Inc. began its management of the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee's Housing Choice Voucher Program effective January 2, 2025. At project inception, the program has a SEMAP rating of Troubled and is in shortfall. CVR has taken immediate action to begin to address backlogs in every area of operations including but not limited to annual recertifications, interims, late HQS inspections, program enforcement, and leasing and move-ins. The information below highlights the current status of our efforts at increasing staffing, compliance, addressing inherited backlogs, and overall operations.

#### **Staffing Update**

Below is the staffing breakdown, along with key HR improvements implemented at HACM since the project's inception on January 2, 2025. These figures include staff hired in December 2024 before the official start date (three Customer Service Representatives and one Admissions Supervisor). The following represents active hires and retention by month:

- 17 Employees transitioned from HACM with official start dates of January 2, 2025
- 5 New Hires in January
- 9 New Hires in February
- 12 New Hires in March

CVR interviewed HACM's staff to determine suitability for continued employment with CVR and offered qualified staff positions with CVR under the new contract. CVR's onboarding of prior HACM staff resulted in less tenured staff than expected during RFP response due to:

- Unqualified staffing levels
- Staff rejection of offers for employment
- HCV staff shifting to other positions at HACM outside of the Rent Assistance Department

As a result, CVR quickly ramped up additional recruitment and hiring efforts to onboard new employees. As of April 1, 2025, we have successfully onboarded and retained 43 FTEs, achieving 88% of our staffing target for the first quarter. This includes both converted and newly hired employees.

## Remaining Vacancies:

- HCV Director – A candidate was identified but withdrew; the search is ongoing.
- 4 Housing Specialists – Of the 15 Housing Specialist roles, only four remain unfilled post-Q1.

## HR Initiatives & Improvements

Since project launch, we have implemented several key HR initiatives to enhance staff engagement, compliance, and operational efficiency:

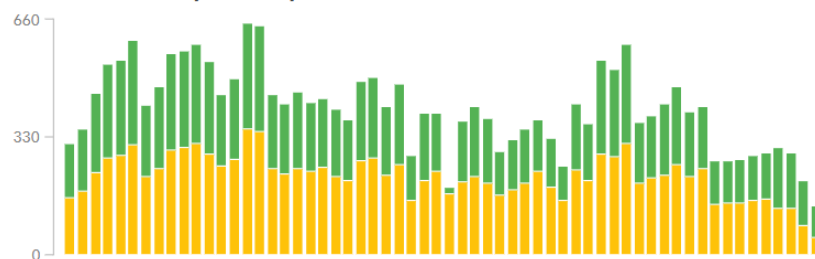
1. New Hire Orientation: Developed and launched a CVR/HACM onboarding presentation, ensuring clear expectations and a structured introduction on day one.
2. Call-Off Line: Established a centralized employee absence reporting system to streamline communication and reduce scheduling disruptions.
3. Business Casual Dress Code: Implemented a professional dress standard to align with workplace expectations and improve overall presentation.
4. Attendance Policy Implementation: Enforced CVR's Corporate Attendance Policy to set clear attendance expectations and improve workforce reliability.
5. Progressive Discipline Policy: Rolled out CVR's Corporate HR Progressive Discipline Policy, ensuring consistent accountability across all levels of the organization.
6. HR-Employee Engagement: Fostered a culture of transparency and trust through an open-door leadership approach, strengthening communication and responsiveness to employee concerns at the facility level.

These initiatives have been instrumental in stabilizing the workforce, improving operational efficiency, and fostering a positive and accountable workplace culture.

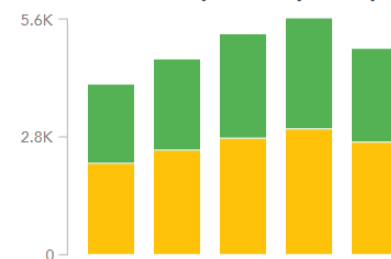
## Call Center and Ticketing System

CVR began taking customer support calls on January 2, 2025 relative to the HCV and PBV programs and in the first quarter of 2025, handled 12,700 live calls and call backs during this period. During the transition from CVR Corporate call center support to in-office support, CVR experienced a brief decline in the number of calls addressed due to HACM networking limitations that CVR was able to work with HACM IT to resolve.

Handled Conversations by Direction by Date



Handled Conversations by Direction by Weekday



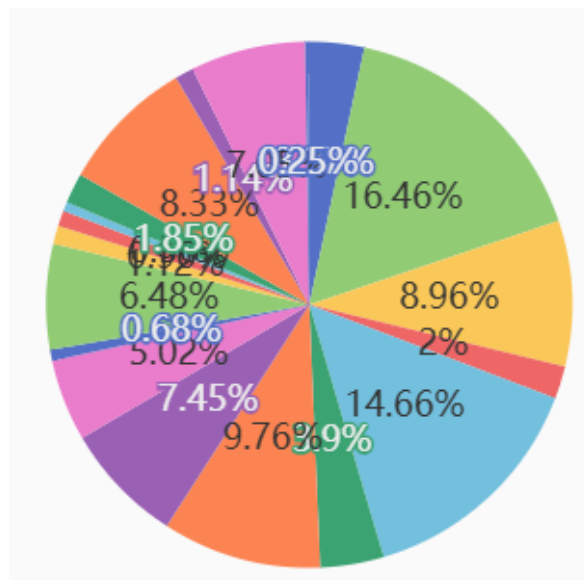
6,042 tickets were created in CVR's Ticketing System during this period, which were categorized and assigned to a staff member to return the inquiry. 16.46% of tickets created were relative to the waiting list, and 14.66% of tickets were relative to annual recertifications, which represented the two highest categories for this period. CVR also received 427 inquiries through the [HCVsupport@hacm.org](mailto:HCVsupport@hacm.org) mailbox. Below is a detailed breakdown of the ticket categories that were received in this period.

CVR has received a multitude of escalations and inquiries from participants that were not assisted prior to CVR's contract inception, spanning multiple years in many cases. CVR is working diligently to address all cases as quickly as possible and immediately deployed additional corporate staffing to assist.

### Categories

- 204 - Rent Cafe
- 996 - Waiting List
- 542 - Move/Portability
- 121 - Owner Services
- 887 - Annual Re-exam
- 236 - Interim Re-exam
- 591 - Other
- 451 - General Questions

- 304 - Owner Payment
- 41 - Termination/Hearing
- 392 - Inspections
- 68 - Rent Calculation Que...
- 58 - High Profile
- 34 - Utility Allowance Pa...
- 112 - Rent Increase
- 504 - Section8Leasing Mai...
- 69 - Customer Service Esc...
- 427 - HCV Support Mailbox
- 15 - RFTA/HAP Contracts



## Lab In-Person Assistance

CVR's team continues to hold lab hours each Wednesday for applicants and participants to receive in-person assistance in morning and afternoon sessions. On average, 20-25 persons are assisted in each session. The main reasons for assistance include:

- Rent Café credential resets
- Assistance in completing the annual recertification process

CVR experienced a spike in visitors requesting assistance in the month of March due to the HACM Public Housing Waiting List opening effective March 5, 2025. CVR coordinated with HACM's Public Housing department to ensure these families received assistance in submitting an application.

CVR is installing a kiosk in the front reception area of the HCV lobby so that visitors would have access to scan and upload documents to their Rent Café account outside of lab days in early April 2025. In the second quarter of 2025, CVR will also be installing a walk-in ticketing system in the lobby.

## Continued Occupancy

CVR acknowledges that due to the number of new hires needed, there is an increasing backlog of recertifications due while new hires are trained to enter their positions. CVR implemented communications to tenants and landlords to acknowledge this backlog via the call center IVR messages and emails to let them know we are prioritizing these as quickly as possible, and their rental assistance will not be affected.

<b>Recertifications</b>	<b>Jan-25</b>	<b>Feb-25</b>	<b>Mar-25</b>
Beginning Bal [Late]	616	1014	1383
Reexams Due*	529	579	595
Processed Current**	228	280	89
Processed Late			335
Processed Future			12
Processed as 9-Search	27	9	23
<b>Ending Bal</b>	<b>1014</b>	<b>1318</b>	<b>1618</b>
<b>Interims</b>			
Processed	47	155	362
<b>Moves</b>			
Move Ins Processed (action 2 -11b, 12b, 15a =Y)	53	56	33

## Family Self-Sufficiency Reconciliation

CVR is in the process of reconciling former and current FSS participants. CVR started with participants who had already graduated from HACM's FSS program, totaling 13 participants. To complete the FSS reconciliations, CVR needed the Contracts of Participation (COP) to verify contract effective dates. While CVR could not obtain them directly, CVR was provided the COP dates in order to proceed.

CVR gathered the required 50058 forms from Visual Homes. Upon reviewing the data, CVR found some duplicates in Yardi and discrepancies requiring verification. Additionally, some participants exceeded a year without an annual review, requiring further checks to ensure no missed accruals.

For each participant, CVR created a worksheet with transaction-specific tabs aligned with approved Visual Homes/Yardi records. CVR also verified income limits before finalizing. Throughout the process, CVR documented findings, resolutions, and a detailed escrow breakdown. After a final review to ensure accuracy, CVR submitted the reconciliations for approval.

First Name	Last Name	Enrollment Date	Graduation Date	Escrow Earned
		5/1/2019	6/20/2023	\$27,318.33
		5/1/2019	5/5/2023	\$0.00
		1/15/2019	7/14/2023	\$0.00
		1/1/2022	8/22/2024	\$6,082.00
		4/1/2019	4/25/2022	\$10,398.00
		9/1/2017	7/28/2023	\$4,635.75
		6/16/2020	6/20/2024	\$6,167.52
		1/1/2019	10/20/2023	\$17,520.72
		7/1/2018	7/17/2023	\$19,032.00
		1/1/2016	11/1/2021	\$4,305.59
		10/1/2017	9/30/2024	\$2,112.00
		3/1/2017	2/29/2024	\$8,524.81
		3/1/2016	2/28/2023	\$9,838.00
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$115,934.72</b>

The reconciliation for current FSS program participants is ongoing in Q2. These participants will have their FSS records reconstructed in Yardi for all past records during their FSS participation so that future records will be able to be maintained for future transactions and escrows properly calculated.

### **Recertification Backlog**

CVR deployed a team to immediately begin processing late recertifications that were not completed timely. CVR's team has completed 125 of these late recertifications and this work continues.

### **Enforcement**

In March 2025, CVR began implementing a Tracker for enforcement cases to track the process from proposed termination, through hearing request and final determination. CVR will continue to roll out this tracking system in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2025.

CVR reinstated more than 50 participants who were incorrectly terminated from program participation prior to contract initiation. The work continues to identify and address additional instances.

CVR has received 17 hearing requests, which will be scheduled with a hearing officer to ensure that the program processed the proposed termination correctly prior final termination determination. CVR has received inquiries from participants who were terminated in prior years by HACM and is also reviewing these cases to determine which need to be reinstated in the program.

CVR has also determined that there are 151 families whose property owners are not receiving housing assistance payments (HAP) due to participant income resulting in the participant covering the entire portion of the contract rent to owner. Many of these cases exceed 180 days with the property owner not receiving funds from HACM. CVR is reviewing these cases to determine if proposed termination notices were properly sent after 180 days of zero HAP assistance. If the participant and landlord did not receive a proper proposed termination in accordance with the Federal Regulations, CVR is initiating this process, which will affect voucher utilization under the HCV program, and PBV HAP Contract units if the participant is living in a unit under a Project-Based Voucher HAP Contract.

CVR is also reviewing program information for other participants who were terminated but an End of Participation (EOP) Action 6 50058 was not entered in the system to determine if payments were stopped, if the termination was conducted appropriately, and

### **Reasonable Accommodations**

In March 2025, CVR began implementing a Tracker for reasonable accommodation and 504 requests to track the reasonable accommodation request, the review process and final determination. CVR will continue to roll out this tracking system in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2025.

CVR received has three remaining Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) cases to complete as of 3/31/2025.

CVR has also received 17 reasonable accommodation requests. Five of which were approved, five denied, and seven pending additional documentation from a qualified medical professional.

### **Repayment Agreements**

In March 2025, CVR began implementing a Tracker for repayment agreements to existing repayment agreements, payments received, demand letter notices, and proposed terminations for non-compliance with the repayment agreement process. CVR will continue to roll out this tracking system in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2025.

Active Repayment Agreements – 8

Non-Active Repayment Agreements 6 Months Delinquent – 13

Delinquent but Not Under Contract – 3

Sent to DOR (Department of Revenue) – 8

Final Reminders - 13

### **Quality Control**

CVR is also conducting quality control file reviews of the work completed in 2025 in CVR's QCMS system. In the first quarter of 2025, 87 quality control file reviews were completed of current work, so that management will be able to identify opportunities for subsequent training both on an overarching level of all staff, but individual training and training by topics the staff may be struggling with to improve over time.

In early April, CVR will also be conducting SEMAP reviews for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 11 to ensure quality control compliance with the preexisting HUD Corrective Action Plan. Information will be provided to HACM by April 15<sup>th</sup> for HACM's secondary review, prior to the review results being provided to HUD by May 1, 2025.

### File Scanning

In January 2025, CVR began a file scanning project to support the 100% file review process for years 2022-2023. There are approximately 6,800 files to be scanned. As of the end of March 2025, approximately 6,200 of these files have been scanned with approximately 600 files remaining.

### 100% File Review: 2022 – 2023

CVR contracted sub-contractor NKA Contractors, LLC to conduct the 100% file review process for years 2022-2023 effective March 15, 2025. CVR held three trainings for the Quality Control specialists to review the HACM Administrative Plan, policies, CVR's Quality Control Management System (QCMS) and expectations. File reviews for this component of the project start early April 2025 where the contractor is expected to review 300 files for the first month, and 500 files for every month thereafter. CVR will be conducting sample confirmatory QC reviews to ensure accuracy. CVR is exploring expansion opportunities in this area to ensure that these file reviews are completed by 12/31/2025.

### Intake and Leasing

Due to HACM being in shortfall, only Project-Based Voucher (PBV) units, administered port-ins, and VASH referrals are actively being housed.

### Project-Based Vouchers Reconciliation

CVR compiled the following PBV discrepancies regarding leased units on the HCV side of Yardi vs the property management's records to date. This analysis and reconciliation is ongoing. Thus far CVR has compiled the following:

Property	Total Occupied	Discrepancy	Comments
Becher	102	8	
Carver	51	1	
Cherry	110	3	
Covent	42	7	
Highland	64	1	
Holton	101	9	
Lapham	195	24	
Merrill	109	12	
Olga	33	0	
Scattered Sites	TBD	TBD	
Victory	TBD	TBD	
Westlawn 1	TBD	TBD	
Westlawn 3	TBD	TBD	
Westlawn 5	TBD	TBD	
Westlawn 6	TBD	TBD	
Westlaw 7	TBD	TBD	
West Lawn SS	TBD	TBD	

For participants who moved into a HACM-owned PBV unit, but were not properly admitted into the PBV program via a new admission (1) 50058, a new admission 50058 was created with a Date Lease End (DLE) of the day prior to the effective date of the new admission so that no payments would be generated, as CVR was advised by HACM that these retroactive payments would be written off as bad debt. Additionally, a recertification for 2025 was generated in Rent

Café to request current documentation from the family for future payments. Participants were offered a specified day to come into the computer lab to receive hands-on assistance with completing their recertification.

For Westlawn Renaissance V, 4 reconciliations of retroactive new admissions have been completed and the annual recertification process initiated for 2025.

For Westlawn Renaissance VI, 1 reconciliation of retroactive new admission was completed and the annual recertification process initiated for 2025.

CVR also identified instances where the participant moved out of the unit or the participant passed away, but the unit is still showing as occupied.

CVR also has a team that is addressing PBV rent increases, focusing first on the those that are backlogged and then moving to current.

### **Rent Café/Yardi**

CVR attends weekly meetings with Yardi representatives relative to Yardi and Rent Café configurations and troubleshooting. CVR identified that many of the letters and emails previously configured were intertwined between the HCV and Public Housing programs, creating confusion for program participants. CVR is working with Rent Café representatives to determine solutions that separate information and instructions for the HCV program from processes involving Public Housing. This includes HACM addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and forms included in existing workflows and templates. CVR will seek to work with Public Housing leadership and Rent Café representatives to determine the best possible configurations and options given limitations in the number of templates available in Rent Café that both programs must share.

CVR is also working with Rent Café representatives to finalize establishing the process so that participants can submit interim requests and reasonable accommodation requests directly through their Rent Café account.

### **Inspections**

The following tables reflect the various inspection statistics for the month of March 2025:

#### **Inspection Summaries**

**Start Date**                3/1/2025  
**End Date**                3/31/2025

#### **Results**

Result	Quantity	Percent
Pass	1468	53.27%
Fail	783	28.41%
No Show	490	17.78%
Vacant	15	0.54%



### Series Types

Inspection Series Type	Quantity	Percent
Annual	2152	78.08%
Initial	420	15.24%
Complaint	177	6.42%
Miscellaneous	6	0.22%
Quality Control	1	0.04%

### Inspection Types

Inspection Type	Quantity	Percent
Annual	1701	61.72%
Re-inspection	504	18.29%
Initial	342	12.41%
Complaint	92	3.34%
Emergency Re-inspection	61	2.21%
Emergency	50	1.81%
Additional Repairs	4	0.15%
QC	2	0.07%

### Inspectors

Inspector	Quantity	Percent
Ryan Kinsella-Alba	1168	32.58%
Tony Smith	1194	33.31%
Joshua Schumell	1214	33.86%
Mellena Hoppe	9	0.25%

### Abatement Counts

CVR determined that abatements to stop property owner HAP payments in instances where the property owner/agent did not maintain Housing Quality Standard (HQS) inspection protocols were not in practice prior to CVR's contract inception. CVR was advised by staff that HACM employees were "waiting on the CVR contract to start" to comply with program rules and process cases. Unfortunately, this is a common trend in nearly every component of program operations, where staff had previously stopped productively working, addressing applicant, participant, and landlord inquiries for several months prior to CVR's contract start. Now that abatements are being enforced under CVR's leadership, HACM should expect to receive complaints from property owners that were previously not required to comply with HQS regulations without enforcement.

Beginning Bal - Unresolved	12
Abatements Placed	19
Closed	1
Ending Bal	30



### **Areas of Opportunity**

CVR will be installing self-service kiosks in the front reception area of the HCV lobby so that visitors would have access to scan and upload documents to their Rent Café account outside of lab days. In the second quarter of 2025, CVR will also be installing a walk-in ticketing system in the lobby and add informational messages to the televisions available in the lobby.

### **Challenges and Impact**

CVR requested PIC and VMS access in December 2024; however, access to these systems has not been granted by HACM to date. This hinders CVR's ability to pull pertinent PIC reports relative to SEMAP.

Respectfully submitted by: **Tracey Sheffield**  
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