

HOPE VI Community & Supportive Services Best Practices – Section 3 King County Housing Authority

Employment Opportunities in Section 3 Increase as Residents Hone their Skills

The Greenbridge redevelopment project is centered in the White Center area of King County, which has the highest concentration of low income families in the county. The local Section 3 hiring practice targets residents in the Park Lake/Greenbridge project. All categories of Section 3 qualified candidates live in Park Lake and the surrounding area. The King County Housing Authority (KCHA) aims to create opportunities for employment and self-sufficiency to ensure success for all residents.

To help achieve this goal, since 2005, KCHA has required that contractors and their subcontractors submit their contracts with explicit Section 3 goals. A KCHA Resident Services staff member attends each pre-bid and pre-construction conference and works with contractors to ensure that all parties make a good faith effort to comply with Section 3 requirements and meet the Section 3 goals. Individual construction contractors can face penalties if they are found to be non-compliant. KCHA supports the program by dedicating one of their staff to conduct outreach and attract interested applicants for construction and construction related opportunities.

A KCHA staff person also works to develop relationships with contractors in an effort to increase employment opportunities. Because language is often a barrier (30% of potential candidates spoke a language other than English and 12% had little to no construction experience), KCHA engaged service providers to prepare participants to succeed in the interview process. Additionally, the YWCA worked extensively with residents to help them compile and submit resumes to contractors. Local organizations, including the Highline Community College and Neighborhood House intensified their ESL training classes to help Park Lake/Greenbridge residents improve their English speaking skills.

KCHA also works collaboratively with the White Center Construction Clearing House and the YWCA Career Center to prepare potential candidates for the interview process. These organizations focus on recruiting eligible Section 3 workers and provide case management, supportive services and training/development of enrolled participants in the construction industry. To date, eighty-three Section 3 defined hires have obtained employment through KCHA's Section 3 efforts.

The King County Housing Authority received an FY 2008 \$20,000,000 million HOPE VI Revitalization grant for Park Lake Homes II.

For more information on this Best Practice contact:

Rickie Robinson * (206) 574-1352 * rickier@kcha.org