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## Memo

To: Rayne Marr, Homeless Services Coordinator County of Santa Cruz

From: Jenny Panetta, Executive Director Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz

Date: January 26, 2018

Subject: Board of Supervisors Homeless Policy Proposal Regarding Voucher Portability

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Dear Rayne,

Thank you for providing information about action taken on Agenda Item 12 from the January 9, 2018 Board of Supervisors meeting. This memo addresses the following Board directive, which relates to the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program.

*In order to obtain the information requested under #6 on November 14<sup>th</sup>: Direct the CAO to report back in two weeks with policies and procedures for Housing Navigators, including the requirement to explain voucher portability and provide clear information on the typical length of time it takes to secure subsidized housing in Santa Cruz County compared to the length of time in at least 3 other counties. Also provide the Board with the written information housing navigators provide to clients.*

As the administrator of the Section 8 program, the Housing Authority provides information about voucher portability to all voucher holders, including information about the eligibility and process for porting a voucher to another County. Voucher portability is sufficiently complicated that we wish to remain the *primary* source of information for voucher holders. However, the Housing Authority will offer training to Housing Navigators that includes all of the information they need to assist our shared clients in successfully leasing up with their voucher, including information about portability.

Over the past year (CY 2017) the average number of days that it took voucher holders to find a unit in Santa Cruz County was 76 days. However, there were many outliers, with some people finding housing within a week, and others in excess of 250 days. Please note that average search time varies seasonally, and also varies depending on the amount of search time that a Housing Authority allows. For example, while HUD requires that HAs provide a minimum of 60 days of search time, our HA provides 180 of search time to begin with, and routinely allows extensions up to 270 days (or sometimes longer as a reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities). Average search time also only reflects those who are successful in finding housing. Many others are not successful in finding housing, and they are not reflected in this data. It may be difficult to collect average search time from other HAs, or to make an “apples to apples” comparison, since the data is not collected by HUD, is measured differently by different agencies, and reflects different voucher search time policies.