

Customer Profile

The Marietta Housing Authority (MHA) is “Making Housing Work” by offering housing programs that lift up the community and setting the foundation to empower families to take charge of their future. MHA provides quality housing opportunities to home seekers, while fostering their economic independence. The Housing Authority is committed to promoting family self-sufficiency, demonstrating responsible stewardship of public and private funds, and partnering with cooperative agencies that provide training, education, apprenticeships and moral support.

Industry

MHA is one of over 4000 housing authorities in the U.S. These quasi-governmental agencies provide quality, affordable housing assistance to eligible families, primarily by administering programs established and funded by HUD and other federal agencies.

Location

MHA serves the city of Marietta and Cobb County, GA.

Project

FileVision provided the MHA with their document and process-centric Electronic Tenant Record (ETR) Solution. FileVision’s ETR solution provides for virtually paperless automated processing of the application approval, recertification and interim processes. The solution incorporated document workflow, electronic signatures, and electronic checklists and was tightly integrated with their Yardi housing management system.

Benefits

- Productivity gain of 25%
- Elimination of files and storage
- Added 36% more vouchers with no increase in staff



Case Study Marietta Housing Authority

Business Overview

In 2012 when conversations started between MHA and FileVision, MHA had 2500 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV). They were just completing demolition of most of their old public housing stock, with the exception of some units that they were converting under HUD’s RAD program. In mid-2014, MHA took over administration of roughly 900 vouchers from the City of Marietta, bringing their HCV total to approximately 3400.

Challenges

Like all housing authorities, MHA faced multiple challenges.

“The federal government has been squeezing housing into urban development. While there has been recognition of dwindling income, there has been no reduction in requirements to serve this population. At some point you have to look at reducing the cost to better serve the target audience.” – Jim Hartsfield

One of their immediate challenges was simply physical file storage; their file room was located over a basement with no room to expand. Physical expansion of the file room posed a potential risk due to structural constraints with MHA’s building.

Even more critical, MHA, like other

housing authorities, faced the funding challenges wrought by budget cuts and sequestration – most noticeable in the dramatic reduction in HCV admin fees. The government was providing fewer resources with no reform to diminish the regulatory overhead of operating a housing authority. MHA simply had to do more with less.

“Going Paperless”

For MHA, as for most housing authorities, the goal of “going paperless” was both economically and philosophically compelling. However, the big question is always “how do we get there”? That’s where FileVision’s deep experience and expertise came into play. MHA was impressed not only with the software solution, but also with FileVision’s understanding of how housing authorities operate and with FileVision’s success with other housing authorities.

Once the contract was signed, FileVision’s 3 phase discovery process began: (1) Technical/Infrastructure, (2) Document Standardization and (3) Process Definition – the “as is” and “to be”. FileVision interviewed key stakeholders to determine the best approach for transitioning from their paper-based processes to automated, electronic processes.

The complete implementation process



took 5 months from contract signing through 'go-live'. Working hand in hand with FileVision's consultants, MHA worked on standardizing their documents and defining their new processes. FileVision then configured the ETR solution to MHA's standards and processes. When complete, training and 'go-live' was scheduled. With 2 FileVision consultants on site for training and guidance, MHA's staff began live use of the system on the second day of the training/go-live week.

A 'day forward' approach was chosen as the preferred way to begin. Prior to a scheduled recertification, the tenant's permanent documents were scanned into the system simply by clicking on the document type. During the actual recertification, the 'paperwork' was all handled through FileVision's ETR system – including electronic signatures. From that point forward, that tenant was 'paperless'. In 12 months, all active tenant documents were in the ETR system.

"This software implementation was the easiest, smoothest installation the Housing Authority has ever seen. Everything FileVision said they could

do, they did and completed." – Jim Ratray

In addition to 'on the job' training, FileVision provided customized process manuals for individual job roles and tasks. This documentation enabled each person to see step by step how to carry out a specific part of their job.

Following go-live, FileVision scheduled bi-weekly conference calls with the MHA project leader to address new issues. While always available anytime for actual support calls, these proactive conference calls provided MHA with the opportunity to ask more general questions and discuss different nuances of the system. These calls continued until there were simply no more issues or questions raised by the MHA staff. The Housing Authority's long-term goal is to create landlord/tenant portals where individuals access their respective documents and information.

"This has been a year like no other, with a productivity gain of 25% after the software implementation was complete. The goal is to...have them develop more applications to meet all our business needs." – Jim Ratray

Perhaps a comment by another FileVision customer sums it up best. While several MHA staff were doing a reference site visit to this customer, they asked the then Executive Director Steve Beam what he would have done differently in implementing FileVision's ETR Solution. He replied, ***"I would have done it much sooner"***.

FileVision

FileVision is the leading provider of automated, paperless process solutions for housing authorities across the country. Far more than a simple scanning/imaging system, FileVision's Electronic Tenant Record (ETR) Solution is the proven standard for transforming costly, inefficient, paper-based processes into simple, efficient automated "paperless" processes.

FileVision also provides automated, 'paperless' modules for Accounts Payable, Human Resources, Policy Management and Contract Management.



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