

Magnolia 2 – the N/NE Preference Policy Experience

First and foremost, we are happy to report that the lease up of Magnolia 2 went very smoothly. We met our lease up goals and completed move-ins 2 weeks before our deadline. Magnolia 2 is a 50-unit addition to the Magnolia Apartments – it is located on the corner NE MLK Jr Blvd and NE Fargo.

The building has 1, 2- and 3-bedroom units and a mix of 30%, 50% and 60% AMI restrictions. Three of the units were set aside as Permanent Supportive Housing units, the remaining 47 units participated in the N/NE Preference Policy.

The following are some notes and items of interest from both the lease up and subsequent turns:

- Early and clear communication between IHI, PHB and our property management company, IPM was vital. The weekly tracker, while it was challenging sometimes to have a “living document” being passed around, it was key to keeping everyone in the loop and spotting errors.
- There were a several clerical errors on the lease up tracking form. Some names were accidentally removed, and incorrect preference policy ranks were assigned. These errors were corrected quickly, but perhaps a more sophisticated system could have prevented that from happening.
- The lease tracker/referral list that was provided by PHB did not include household size, which made it more difficult to sort which units were available due to occupancy standards. Especially at the end of the process when there were fewer units available.
- By far the biggest criticism of the process was having to wait for a perspective resident to “resolve their application” before moving onto the next perspective household. The waiting time, while usually minimal, created an uncertainty that was both challenging to applicants and staff and not in line with IHI’s Trauma Informed Care goals.
- Current Magnolia 2 residents have expressed that they often did not know if they should ask PHB or management when they had questions about the processor or the building itself. They have also let us know that the process took too long and they pricing of the available units was confusing.
- Since lease up we have not turned any N/NE preference policy units. We do have one unit on notice and have recently reached out to PHB for an updated referral list. We were told that household size has been added to the referral list which will make it easier to match perspective tenants to available units.