



San Antonio Housing Authority
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News Release

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SAHA AWARDED \$86 MILLION FOR HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM *Self-Sufficiency Program Also Receives Funding*

SAN ANTONIO – The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) is receiving \$86 million for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program (also known as Section 8) from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the 2010 calendar year, an increase of \$1.6 million from last year.

“This funding allows us to provide housing assistance to over 12,000 San Antonio families,” said SAHA President and CEO Lourdes Castro Ramirez.

Castro Ramirez explained that, in addition to helping families secure housing, the HCV program provides consistent income for landlords and adds money to the local economy.

“This is a challenging economy; however, property owners participating in our programs receive steady income in the form of rental payments, helping to sustain a significant portion of the San Antonio rental market,” Castro Ramirez added.

SAHA estimates that the housing developments it manages and the housing units rented with SAHA-funded assistance comprise approximately 12 percent of the total renter-occupied units in San Antonio.

In addition to the HCV funding, SAHA has been awarded \$122,495 to support the salaries of three coordinators for the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS). The FSS program helps participants establish goals, such as securing a steady job, obtaining an education, getting out of debt or buying a house.

The five-year FSS program involves a community-wide network of agencies in health, social services, education, skills training and other supportive programs that help participants overcome barriers to achieve their goals. An interest-bearing escrow account is set-up for program participants. Whenever a participant’s rent increases due to their income increasing, the difference is deposited into the account.

Since 2001, graduates from the Public Housing FSS program have received more than \$351,000 from their escrow accounts and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) FSS graduates have received nearly \$900,000.

Virginia Castillo, a recent FSS graduate said, “The program gave me a chance to earn a degree I started years before but couldn’t finish because of money. I didn’t want to take the opportunity for granted.”

While in the FSS program, Castillo graduated from the San Antonio College Law Enforcement Training Academy. She is now a law enforcement officer for the City of San Antonio Park Police. She has moved from public housing into a private rental apartment and is saving money in addition to the \$9,000 she received from the program to purchase a home.

“The FSS program allows you to get a degree, learn job skills or whatever you need to get a full-time job so you can take care of your family and yourself,” Castillo said.

SAHA provides housing assistance to over 65,000 children, adults and senior citizens. SAHA owns and manages 6,177 public housing units at 70 properties and owns/or manages 6,399 affordable housing units at 42 properties. SAHA is ranked seventh on the *Affordable Housing Finance Magazine’s* 2010 list of Top 50 Housing Developers.

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