



News Release

San Antonio Housing Authority
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SAHA's Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program Receives "High Performer" Designation

SAN ANTONIO – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has designated SAHA a "high performer" for the agency's administration and management of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV –Section 8) program.

As a federally-funded agency, SAHA's Section 8 program is reviewed annually by HUD, using the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) scoring system to assess the performance of the program. SAHA recently secured a score from HUD of 90 percent on the SEMAP, an increase of 4 percent from 2009 and 11 percent from 2008.

SEMAP uses 15 performance indicators, such as adherence to policies when selecting applicants for admission from the waiting list, enforcement of housing quality standards, and voucher utilization, to objectively measure a housing authority's performance and identify management capabilities and weaknesses.

"A number of changes have been implemented over the last couple of years to improve the performance of Section 8 and responsibly house families in need of assistance. A score of 90 percent indicates a tremendous improvement and deserves a celebration of our entire staff," said Lourdes Castro Ramírez, SAHA President and CEO.

Many steps have been taken by SAHA's Assisted Housing Department to improve the management of the HCV program, including:

- **Greater focus on customer service** – Because of SAHA's designation as a Moving to Work agency, SAHA has the ability to develop policies and guidelines based on local needs, versus following all standard HUD policies. For example, select documents can now be verified by SAHA staff rather than being sent to an outside organization for verification. Changes such as these allow SAHA to streamline processes and provide quicker, more efficient service to clients.
- **Increasing staff capacity** – More frequent training and providing staff with resources to increase their knowledge enables them to more effectively and efficiently serve clients.
- **Strengthening program integrity** – A number of steps have been implemented to improve the program's integrity, such as implementing more sophisticated reporting systems, improving management oversight and ensuring our clients are residing in safe, quality, affordable housing by enforcing Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections accurately, fairly and consistently.

"We're very proud of this accomplishment and sincerely appreciate our employees' hard work and commitment to improving the quality of life for our clients," said SAHA Board Chair Ramiro Cavazos.

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