



San Antonio Housing Authority
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News Release

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SAHA ASSISTING FAMILIES AT SERENTO APARTMENTS

All units failed inspections conducted by SAHA

SAN ANTONIO, TX (December 13, 2010) --- The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) has notified the owner of Serento Apartments, 2515 Clara Lane, on San Antonio's near north side, that attempted repairs to the 40-unit apartment complex have again failed to comply and/or meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS). SAHA is working with all affected families, and will provide other housing assistance and resources as needed.

On September 2, 2010, SAHA notified the California-based owner receiving housing assistance at the property, that the property was in poor condition and did not meet federal housing quality standards, citing such items as: rotten/rusted support beams at carports, unsecure and missing handrails, pest infestations, exposed electrical connections, and deteriorating fascia boards and soffits.

In October, additional inspections resulted in more failures and SAHA began issuing Housing Choice Vouchers to all 38 resident families to relocate to another home. To date, 14 families have utilized their voucher to relocate to an approved home.

In November, the management of Serento Apartments was given an opportunity to appeal SAHA's decision and submit a plan to cure the cited deficiencies. Their plan was submitted on November 29, 2010.

SAHA has determined many of the attempted repairs to be unacceptable --- only patching the problems, rather than making appropriate, sustainable repairs, in accordance with widely accepted construction standards. These continuing HQS violations indicate an inability on the part of the owner to comply with the program requirements.

"Because SAHA is committed to safe, decent, and affordable housing for the citizens in our community, we cannot allow families to reside in units that could potentially jeopardize their health or safety," said SAHA Spokesperson Melanie Villalobos. "However, we deeply regret the hardship this will place on these families, and have dedicated resources to assist them through the transition to other properties of their choosing," she added.

(more)

SAHA has notified the owner of his opportunity to appeal SAHA's decision to terminate assistance at the property, and is assisting the remaining residents with the following:

1. Since the contract with the owner will not officially terminate until the conclusion of the owner's appeal process, rental assistance for remaining occupied units and the option for housing voucher assistance will continue throughout the duration of the appeal process.
2. For families that choose to move to another unit, SAHA will provide a relocation allowance packet up to \$1,000 based on bedroom size.
3. SAHA will provide a case manager to assist residents with housing search assistance and their relocation needs.

SAHA has conducted several resident meetings throughout this process and is having another resident meeting today.

"Ensuring the safety of our residents is essential and we will make every effort possible to assist them through this process," Villalobos added.

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