

Houston Housing Authority Addresses Concerns and Outlines Future Initiatives October 7, 2024

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The Houston Housing Authority (HHA) is one of our nation's most prominent housing authorities, providing affordable homes and services to more than 87,000 Houstonians. Additionally, we administer one of the nation's largest voucher programs exclusively serving homeless veterans. In addition to investing more than \$250 million in providing safe, affordable homes to Houstonians, HHA also offers a host of programs to help our residents, citizens, and voucher holders increase their education, live healthier lives, and reach their economic goals. And, we create hundreds of millions of dollars in local economic impact by partnering with Houston area contractors and small business owners to provide critical services that assist us in doing our important work.

As a dedicated servant of the community, HHA prioritizes transparency and accountability. We are committed to openly addressing community concerns by providing clear, factual information to the public. In this spirit, we want to address the concerns raised by a former HHA contractor regarding our Heat Relief Initiative, which were brought forward during public comments at the HHA Board meetings on December 19, 2023, and March 20, 2024. We take these claims seriously and are committed to conducting a thorough review of the claims to ensure the integrity of our programs and to ensure that we maintain the trust of the community we serve. We have determined the contractor's claims do not fully present the facts of the situation, particularly concerning the termination of the contractor's agreement and their subsequent actions. HHA has been steadfast in its commitment to looking into these claims and, as a result, we are finishing an internal investigation.

Additionally, both during and following the completion of the Heat Relief Initiative, HHA's executive leadership took proactive steps to enhance internal processes. This included making strategic staffing changes to ensure that future construction projects are managed with greater efficiency and oversight. Our

commitment to continuous improvement remains unwavering as we work to better serve the community. As part of our commitment to improve, we are actively enhancing our oversight and accountability measures and recently implemented a rigorous vetting process for all contractors and partners, including background checks and verification of required contractor documentation. The HHA board, executive staff, and extended leadership team are committed to partnering with contractors who value, and operate with, the high degree of integrity our community deserves.

Finally, HHA is also proud to highlight several new initiatives that demonstrate our commitment to providing safe, affordable housing and fostering community development:

1. In January 2024, the Houston Housing Authority was awarded the Older Adult Home Modification Program (OAHMP) grant—one of the largest grants of its kind in the United States. These programs aim to support a significant portion of our community by offering modifications that empower residents, particularly older adults, to “age in place” and remain safely in their homes.
2. The Housing Mobility-Related Services Grant, awarded in March 2024, is designed to improve housing opportunities for low-income families by assisting them in moving to areas with better access to economic opportunities, high-quality schools, healthcare, and safer environments.
3. In early June 2024, we proudly launched the HHA Fellowship Program to nurture the next generation of leaders in affordable housing. Through hands-on experience and educational opportunities, young professionals will gain valuable insights into housing programs, positioning them for successful careers in community development.
4. Awarded in June 2024, the Emergency Solutions Grant for Stability and Growth (ESSG) strengthens our ability to prevent homelessness and promote housing stability. By funding rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention services, the grant directly supports some of Houston's most vulnerable populations, helping them secure permanent housing and break the cycle of homelessness.

5. In July 2024, HHA secured additional funding through the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. This crucial grant enables us to provide housing assistance and supportive services to low-income individuals living with HIV/AIDS, ensuring stable housing, improved health outcomes, and enhanced quality of life.
6. On August 15, 2024, HHA opened The Lawndale, a mixed-income housing community in Houston's East End. This development blends affordability with modern living, offering a welcoming environment for individuals and families of diverse incomes.
7. Awarded in September 2024, the Foster Youth Independence (FYI) Grant is specifically designed to support young people aging out of the foster care system by providing them with stable housing and the resources they need to transition into independent living. This program targets vulnerable youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who have exited foster care without a permanent home, offering them a critical safety net as they navigate early adulthood.
8. With a transformative \$50 million Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant awarded by HUD in September 2024, HHA is spearheading the redevelopment of Cuney Homes. This ambitious project will not only revitalize the Third Ward but also significantly expand affordable housing options, fostering economic growth and community resilience.
9. Recently, HHA celebrated the opening of two vital housing developments: 2100 Memorial, a senior living community rebuilt after Hurricane Harvey, and The Standard on the River, a dynamic new addition to the East Downtown (EaDo) area, which represents our third major development in this district.

HHA thanks our residents, landlords, contract partners, and stakeholders for their continued support and engagement. Together, we will create a better future for all Houstonians.

For more information, please contact:

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