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HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY LAUNCHES ITS JOBS PLUS INITIATIVE AT CUNEY HOMES

HOUSTON – (September 22-23, 2015) – The Houston Housing Authority (HHA) launched its JOBS PLUS initiative at the Cuney Homes public housing development in a two-day program which brought together elected officials, local community partners and stakeholders, community residents, and visting representatives from U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Washington D.C.



Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Houston) leads an address at the ribbon cutting for the opening of the JOBS PLUS Resource Center. Joining the Congresswoman and Cuney Homes residents are (l to r) – HHA Board of Commissioners Chair Lance Gilliam and Vice Chair LaRence Snowden, HHA President/CEO Tory Gunsolley, HUD Public Housing Director Jerryl Bennett, and Houston Area Urban League President/CEO Judson Robinson III.

The end product of securing a \$3M grant from HUD, the JOBS PLUS initiative is designed to develop locally-based, job driven approaches to increase earnings and advance employment outcomes through work readiness, employer linkages, job placement, educational technology skills and financial literacy for residents of public housing. In addition, the HHA will partner with private and public organizations to assist Cuney Homes residents with job training and career counseling over four years, as well as other necessities for workforce development such as child care, transportation, after-school care and supplies. Food scholarships as incentives will be provided by the Houston Food Bank.

Other partners in JOBS PLUS will include the Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation, Career & Recovery, the Cuney Homes' Resident Council, Workforce Solutions, Neighborhood Centers, Houston Community College, Texas Southern University, and United Way THRIVE. In total the combined resources of these partnerships, the HUD grant, contributions and leveraging make up a total budget of \$8.4 million for the program.

The multi-day program included planning sessions and panel discussion between HHA leadership and resident leaders from Cuney Homes, where information on the implementation of the program was discussed. Project Lead and HHA Director of Client Services Cheryl Rivers also gave a tour of facilities to the visiting HUD representatives and local stakeholders.



HHA leadership and local stakeholders at the newly opened JOBS PLUS Resource Center. Pictured (l to r) - Attorney Christopher Tritico, Workforce Solutions Sr. Planner Omar Fortune, U.S. HUD Field Office Director Edward Pringle, HUD Houston Office Director Lorraine Walls, HUD Public Housing Director Jerryl Bennett, HHA VP of Public Housing Operations George Griffin III, Workforce Solutions Director Mike Temple, Houston Food Bank Creative Partnerships Manager Reginald Young, Career and Beyond Life Coach Earnest Dyer, Houston Food Bank President/CEO Brian Greene, and Houston Community College Adult Education & Literacy Program Director Dr. David Joost.

Tory Gunsolley, President and CEO of the Houston Housing Authority said, "HHA is excited to be selected for this innovative new program that will provide residents at Cuney Homes an opportunity to achieve their education and training goals to get to self-sufficiency. Along with HUD and our partners, we will use this opportunity to make the lives of Houston families better every day."

Ultimately, JOBS PLUS will help the HHA build a new culture at Cuney Homes where "working families" will be becoming the norm. Workforce Solutions will establish an on-site career center with Job Developers working directly with the business community to identify and create employment opportunities, along with Case Managers assigned to work one-on-one with residents to guide them through the employment process, help develop skills, and facilitate linkages to supportive services such as transportation, child care, health and mental health and other services that support continued employment.

ABOUT HHA:

The Houston Housing Authority provides affordable homes and services to more than 58,000 low-income Houstonians, including over 17,000 families housed through the Housing Choice Voucher Program and another 5,700 living in 25 public housing and tax credit developments around the city. HHA also administers one of the nation's largest voucher program exclusively serving homeless veterans. More information about the Houston Housing Authority can be found at www.housingforhouston.com.

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