

Community Highlights



Transforming Lives & Communities

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Customer Service Hotline
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We value your feedback. Comments and article ideas are welcomed for the Community Highlights newsletter. Please include your name and phone number with your submission. Email submissions to njones@housingforhouston.com

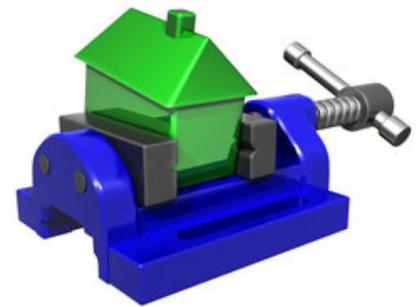
The mission of the Houston Housing Authority is to improve lives by providing quality, affordable housing options and promoting education and economic self-sufficiency.



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HHA Housing Choice Voucher Program works to manage budget shortfall in federal funding

Over the past weeks, the Houston Housing Authority (HHA) has taken active steps to reach out to Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program participants, applicants, property owners, and partner organizations to provide advisory and updates in lieu of news that the agency must rescind vouchers from individuals whose selected units have not yet passed the required safety inspection. Thousands of current voucher recipients who depend on affordable quality housing will not have their vouchers rescinded.



Per instruction from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the agency has discontinued its issuance of vouchers for the remainder of the year due to a shortfall in funding for Housing Assistance Payment contracts. While the HHA is one among many public housing authorities across the country rescinding vouchers, it is the first time such a situation has occurred in Houston. The change also comes in the midst of U.S. Congress' review of its funding for federal programming, which includes considerable cuts at HUD, the primary source of HHA's budget.

The decision to revoke vouchers was not an easy one. "It's been a very trying situation for the families we serve," said Mark Thiele, Vice President of the voucher program, "It has also been a challenging situation for our staff. We have been working hand-in-hand with clients to help ensure everyone is not only well aware of what's going on, but also equipped with the right information to handle this situation as we move forward."

HHA has set up a dedicated phone line at (713) 260-0600 and email address at HCVPinfo@housingforhouston.com to manage all questions and concerns regarding rescinded vouchers.

When funds do become available, HHA will serve the affected families first," share Thiele. "And this time," he said, "we'll be able to finish the job."

Houston Housing Authority Summer Reading Program



The Houston Housing Authority (HHA) and Houston Public Library (HPL) have partnered to create a Summer Reading Program to improve literacy outcomes and ensure youth, regardless of background, have the tools needed to reach their full potential.

programming that will improve the educational outcomes of HHA participants and residents.

HHA and HPL will host a Summer Reading Program Kick-off on Friday, June 2 at Kelly Village Community Building (3118 Green - Houston, 77020) from 2-4pm. The HHA Housing Choice Voucher Program will began distributing one book per child during the family's annual recertification appointment.

The goal of the program is to distribute diverse and high quality books to children living in HUD assisted housing, as well as establish partnerships between the HHA and HPL to develop and deliver ongoing

More on this program can be found in the Opportunity Center at the HHA Central Office.

MyGoals Update...

Since beginning of the enrollment period in late February of 2017, the HHA **MyGoals for Employment Success** program has enrolled more than 150 participants. Because MyGoals is a study, half of the participants are randomly assigned to receive direct program services while the other half make up the comparison group. **MyGoals** is a three-year demonstration study being conducted by MDRC, a nationally recognized non-profit research organization, to take a look at the effect of combining an “**executive skills**”-informed workforce development coaching strategies with **financial incentives**, and **motivational interviewing** techniques on **employment outcomes** for recipients of HUD Section 8 rent assistance.

Along with direct coaching support, participants can also qualify for reward payments for staying engaged with their coach and for finding and keeping a fulltime or part-time job. All told, participants can receive up to **\$5,000.00** over the course of the three-year program.

To be eligible for **MyGoals**, individuals must meet these criteria at enrollment:

- Age 18-56;
- Unemployed;
- Able to legally work in the U.S.;
- Member of an HHA Housing Choice Voucher Program Household;
- Not a current HHA Family Self-Sufficiency Program participant;
- Limit one **MyGoals** participant per household.

To find more about **MyGoals**, call (713) 260-0590 or email MyGoals@housingforhouston.com.

MyGoals Orientation sessions are held at 10:00 a.m. every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in Suite 200 of the HHA Central Office at 2640 Fountain View Drive (Houston, 77057). Additionally, walk-ins are welcome anytime and individual sessions can be arranged.

- FSS Success Profile - New graduate Angela Albert-Scott shares her story of a brighter future



A single mother of three children and grandmother of four, Angela Albert-Scott’s early adult years were filled with rejection and the absence of a normal life. Attracted as a teen to criminal activity, she was stamped a felon, thus making it difficult to find work and make ends meet. After being accepted as a voucher recipient, she became aware of the HHA Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program and took steps over a 5-year journey to overcome adversity, acquire new skills, and become a productive, hopeful citizen. Her story is truly one of success and perseverance.

How long have you participated in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program?

I began in 2012, and have worked with Mr. Garcia ever since. When I started, I was unemployed and wanted to find full-time work.

Were you able to successfully find full-time employment?

Yes — it was hard having a record in my past, but I pushed through and was finally able to get hired! I work now as a Quality Assurance Agent for Conduent, formerly Xerox. I’ve been there for a year and two months.



FSS Coordinator Hector Garcia with graduate Angela Albert Scott.

What would you tell people about the FSS Program?

It is wonderful support system...it helps get you independently ready for making a better life for yourself. FSS connects with workshops and training that improves your literacy and talents for the workplace. The coordinators are there for you whenever you need them.

Now as graduate of the program, what’s your next steps?

I am really just beginning FSS’ Homeowner process, but I am very excited at the idea of qualifying for my own home. I don’t even know for sure where I would want to look — maybe on the Southwest side of Houston.

Most importantly for me, I am so very happy that a new beginning has opened for me, and the chance to have a better life.

Click [here](#) for more information about the HHA Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program Recruitment Orientation

“Think about where you want to be in 5 years...”

Are you sick of living paycheck to paycheck?

Are you interested in buying a home?

Do you want to further your education?

If the HHA closed tomorrow, would paying bills force you to move from your home?

If you answered **YES** to any of these questions then the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is for you! Please join us as we discuss the benefits to the FSS

Change your future by attending one of our Recruitment Orientations!

All orientations are held the 3rd Thursday of each month starting at 10 a.m.

June 15th

July 20th

August 17th

Where: Houston Housing Authority
2640 Fountain View Dr., Ste. 330
Houston, TX 77057

Space is limited. To RSVP, please email: EWashington@housingforhouston.com

IMPORTANT DATES:

JUNE

6/20 Board of Commissioners Meeting @ 2100 Memorial Drive Apartments at 3 p.m.

JULY

7/4 Independence Day holiday — **HHA closed**
7/18 Board of Commissioners Meeting @ Kelly Village at 3 p.m.

AUGUST

8/22 Board of Commissioners Meeting @ Cuney Homes at 3 p.m.