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## **Houston Housing Authority Launches Trailblazing Heat Relief Initiative**

***A program that ensures A/C access for all residents in HHA affordable housing properties***

**Houston, TX**--With scorching summer temperatures reaching unprecedented levels of over 100 degrees, Houston is facing the hottest summer ever recorded. The effects of climate change make life without air conditioning not only unbearable but also perilous. In response to this urgent call for action, The Houston Housing Authority (HHA), under new leadership, has taken a historical step forward by introducing the Heat Relief Initiative. This unprecedented program provides air conditioning for every resident living in HHA public housing properties.

"I may be new to Texas, but it didn't take long to realize that people living without air conditioning is not acceptable. It's not a luxury, it's a necessity. So, I knew we had to take action, fight for the money, and fix this issue," said HHA President and CEO David A. Northern Sr.

Despite no current mandate for air conditioning provisions in housing agreements from The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the absence of any state or city laws requiring public housing to have A/C, HHA recognized the problem and secured over \$2 million in crucial funding for the Heat Relief initiative from HUD.

"While HUD has not mandated it, we fought tirelessly to secure funding, and our persistence has paid off. Our commitment to our clients means they should never have to endure such intolerable conditions and I'm grateful to our local leaders who have supported our work and helped to make this happen," said Northern.

"Over twenty years ago, I started the Beat the Heat Program, along with a local foundation, in the 18th Congressional District to help improve the quality of life of many of our low-income families, elderly and families with children. The need was extensive. That is why I am so proud of this new initiative of HHA that really focuses on the health and safety of their residents. This Initiative sets a remarkable precedent and a milestone in HHA's commitment to its residents' quality of life. It serves as a shining example of what can be achieved through determination and compassion. The heat has been unbearable; people have lost their lives. This program is truly needed. I am proud to be able to use federal funds to support this initiative and to be able to work with HHA to bring this vital service to the residents of HHA," said Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.

The Heat Relief Initiative is a transformative program that marks a significant stride towards creating safer and healthier living environments for some of the city's most vulnerable communities. "With record-high heat indexes becoming the new reality in Houston, the work we do today will bring relief to current and future residents alike. Our hope is that we have set a new standard, becoming a model for other housing authorities to pursue the well-being of their residents." said HHA Chair LaRence Snowden.

“This achievement showcases a proactive approach to ensuring the well-being of vulnerable residents, and I challenge other housing authorities across the state and nation to follow suit. As temperatures continue to rise, so does our determination to ensure that no one within our city is forced to endure the dangerous conditions of extreme heat without respite. I applaud the leadership at HHA for recognizing that regulations do not solely mandate progress but are driven by our societal values. This initiative is a milestone in building a more equitable and resilient Houston. Let us continue to work hand in hand, federal and local leaders united in building a future where every individual can thrive in an environment that values their dignity, health, and safety,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner.

HHA will begin installations of over 1600 units at three housing properties throughout the summer and expects to have the units in place over the next several weeks. Cuney Homes, Irvington Village, and Kelly Village will be the recipients of these new A/C units.

“We recognize the talent within the local business community and invite Houston's business community, specializing in air conditioning installation, to submit bids immediately” added Northern.

Detailed guidelines for the job can be found on our website using solicitation number IFB 23-4 <https://housingforhouston.com/doing-business-with-hha/current-solicitations/>

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