



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

June 7, 2018

**SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP
DESIGNATED AS CENTER TO PROMOTE FINANCIAL
SELF-RELIANCE FOR FAMILIES THAT RECEIVE
FEDERAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

*U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Dr. Ben Carson
announced the EnVision Center locations today*

SAN DIEGO, CA — A San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) partnership has been selected to serve as one of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) new EnVision Centers to promote financial self-reliance among federal rental assistance recipients and public housing residents.

“Housing assistance should be more than just putting a roof over someone’s head,” HUD Secretary Dr. Ben Carson said in a [news release](#) today. “These EnVision Centers offer a more holistic housing approach by connecting HUD-assisted families with the tools they need to become self-sufficient and to flourish.”

SDHC is collaborating with the City of San Diego and San Diego Workforce Partnership for the [EnVision Center](#) in San Diego, with the support and leadership of Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer.

“This EnVision Center designation is a recognition of the work the City and the San Diego Housing Commission have been doing to create additional housing opportunities for low-income San Diegans, which is also important to reducing homelessness in our community,” Mayor Faulconer said. “This is all about providing the support folks need, and we’re committed to helping individuals and families by identifying skills gaps and creating job training opportunities so they can become more financially self-sufficient.”

HUD identified 18 EnVision Centers in 17 communities across the country (two centers are located in the City of Detroit).

“We’re proud of this designation. It is a recognition of the needed and effective San Diego Housing Commission programs that assist families with low income. The federal EnVision Center demonstration program aligns with an important part of our mission: to provide opportunities to improve the quality of life for the individuals and families that we serve,” SDHC Chairman of the Board Frank Urtasun said.

The EnVision Center demonstration program focuses on empowering individuals and families to leave HUD-assisted housing through self-sufficiency to become responsible homeowners and renters in the private market, so that HUD will be able to help more individuals and families in need.

“The EnVision Center designation is a natural next step for the SDHC Achievement Academy, which has a proven record of successful collaboration with community partners to achieve positive results for the families the San Diego Housing Commission assists. I thank Mayor Faulconer, the City Council and our Board of Commissioners for supporting our program

innovation and execution and look forward to working with the San Diego Workforce Partnership,” SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry said.

Through the EnVision Center program, federal agencies, state and local governments, nonprofit and faith-based organizations, and private businesses will come together in a centralized location to provide comprehensive resources for low-income families that receive federal rental assistance.

“Housing and job security are basic needs that everyone deserves,” said San Diego Workforce Partnership CEO Peter Callstrom. “Unfortunately, even in a healthy economy, too many San Diegans are struggling to secure these things for themselves and their families. Bringing an EnVision Center to San Diego County is an exciting opportunity to deepen our partnership with the San Diego Housing Commission and align housing and workforce services in our region.”

EnVision Centers will offer services in four areas:

- **Economic Empowerment** – including connections to employers, job placement and counseling;
- **Educational Advancement** – including GED training courses, technology skills, and financial literacy;
- **Health and Wellness** – including healthcare and clinical services; and
- **Character and Leadership Development** – including volunteer and mentorship opportunities.

Programs and services will be provided at the SDHC Achievement Academy, 1045 11th Avenue, and the South Metro Career Center, 4389 Imperial Avenue. HUD will develop tools to track and measure resident outcomes of EnVision Center participants and services to monitor progress against the program’s goals.

The SDHC Achievement Academy is a learning and resource center and computer lab located at SDHC’s headquarters in downtown San Diego. It provides programs that emphasize career planning, job skills, and personal financial education to help individuals and families become more financially self-reliant.

SDHC Achievement Academy programs and workshops are available at no charge to families that receive federal Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance or reside in public housing units.

The average annual income of SDHC rental assistance households rose 25 percent from 2011 to 2017.

The SDHC Achievement Academy is a Moving to Work (MTW) initiative. SDHC is one of only 39 housing authorities nationwide, out of 3,400, to receive the MTW designation from HUD.

As an MTW agency, SDHC has the flexibility to implement a variety of innovative, cost-effective approaches to provide housing assistance in the city of San Diego

Current SDHC Achievement Academy programs include:

Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS)

- A voluntary, two-year program that includes job training, career planning, and financial literacy education, such as budgeting, saving, and establishing good credit.
- Participants may earn up to \$10,000 in an interest-bearing escrow account as they achieve educational and employment-related goals.
- When they graduate from FSS, participants may use these funds as they wish.
- To graduate, FSS program participants must achieve all of the goals in their career plan, no longer receive government cash assistance, and work at least 32 hours a week.

Reading for Success

- The SDHC Achievement Academy is participating in the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, which encourages reading among children in low-income families.
- Approximately 1,500 children's books have been donated to the SDHC Achievement Academy Children's Library, a lending library for children living in households that receive Federal rental assistance or reside in public housing.
- In addition, SDHC established a partnership with the San Diego Public Library and created a summer reading program with incentives, provided by the library, for rental assistance and public housing families.

Power of One

- Power of One is a yearlong program specifically designed for single parents with children 16 and under who are currently receiving federal rental assistance.
- Participating families receive access to career and financial planning resources and workshops.
- This program also provides support such as matched savings, back-to-school supplies, family-oriented holiday celebrations, flexible class schedules, and one-on-one case support.

2Gen San Diego

- Provides participating families in the San Diego community of City Heights with opportunities in four key areas:
 - Financial Stability
 - Health & Wellness
 - Education & Employment
 - Social Capital

UPDATE: This news release was updated on June 11, 2018, to clarify that programs and services will also be provided at the South Metro Career Center.

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Media Contact:
Scott Marshall
Vice President of Communications
San Diego Housing Commission
619-578-7138
scottm@sdhc.org