

NEWS RELEASE

January 21, 2009

HUD grants will help move low-income California residents into workforce; S.D. Housing Commission receives largest allocation

SAN DIEGO – The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) awarded \$5.2 million to 49 California housing agencies to fund locally operated Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) programs. Of these grants, the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) received \$396,000 – the highest allocation in the state. The funding will enable SDHC to continue to help clients of affordable housing programs gain the training and job skills needed to achieve economic independence.

“This is about breaking the cycle of poverty – helping families become self-sufficient so that they no longer need public assistance,” said Oscar Laffaye, assistant director of housing programs for SDHC’s Workforce & Economic Development department.

HUD’s FSS grants make it possible for housing agencies such as SDHC to provide a comprehensive array of resources to help clients develop the skills and experience needed to obtain jobs that pay a living wage. SDHC provides these services in partnership with community service providers, businesses, government agencies, schools, and others.

SDHC is one of California’s largest housing authorities, with one of the most extensive FSS programs. SDHC’s FSS program serves individuals participating in SDHC’s Rental Assistance Program (formerly known as “Section 8”). In addition to providing career development resources, the FSS program also helps families save money through “Escrow Savings Accounts.” Normally, under the Rental Assistance program, whenever a family’s income rises, the rent portion goes up as well. In the case of FSS participants, a portion of that rent increase is deposited into the Escrow Savings Account. Once the family meets all the program requirements, the funds can be used for asset-building related goals such as paying educational expenses, starting a business, or purchasing a home.

*The **San Diego Housing Commission** is a public agency working to expand affordable housing opportunities in the City of San Diego. Each year, the agency helps 80,000 low-income individuals with affordable housing through award-winning programs that benefit the city's economy and revitalize neighborhoods.*

#