



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

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“ONE-STOP” HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER GRAND OPENING *Housing Assistance for Families and Individuals, From Tenant Issues to Homelessness Prevention—Located in the San Diego Housing Commission Building Complex*

San Diego, CA— A “one-stop” housing resource center for low income individuals and families seeking a wide range of housing assistance, from tenant issues to foreclosures, held its official grand opening today at its new location within the San Diego Housing Commission’s downtown Smart Corner complex.

The housing resource center of the Housing Opportunities Collaborative (HOC) provides a variety of resources, services, and referrals including:

- Foreclosure prevention counseling and assistance
- First-time homebuyer education and assistance
- Affordable housing referral and assistance
- Temporary housing
- Landlord-tenant resources
- Access to legal and tax counseling
- Homelessness prevention
- Elder care and rights
- Fair housing education and assistance

After losing his construction job and struggling to find work, 54 year-old Mike Brown turned to the HOC to save his home.

“I attended one of their workshops and met with legal and banking professionals who took the time to listen to me,” said Brown, who is married and the father of two children. “I am in the process of having my mortgage loan modified and hoping it will all work out for us.”

The vision to add the housing resource center component to the Housing Opportunities Collaborative, which promotes “housing for all,” was the innovative idea of then City Council President Ben Hueso, now a State Assembly member, and supported by Council members Tony Young and Marti Emerald.

“This is a much-needed one-stop center for low-income families and individuals who often don’t know where to turn to in search of affordable housing, or resolving housing issues,” said San Diego City Council President Tony Young.

The San Diego Housing Commission, which provides affordable housing opportunities and services for residents in the City of San Diego, worked with the City Councilmembers to provide the office space for HOC’s center of operations.

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Last year, the three council district offices directed a total of \$180,000 from the City's Community Development Block Grant program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These federal funds were applied towards tenant improvement costs at 1100 Broadway Avenue of the Smart Corner Building, headquarters of the Housing Commission.

"HOC's housing resource center comes at a critical time when families are struggling to hold onto their jobs and keep their homes during this bad economy," said Myrna Pascual, Field Manager in San Diego for HUD. "They can come here and get valuable information and find solutions to their housing needs."

The five member HOC staff has been augmented with volunteer students from the University of San Diego School of Law and the Thomas Jefferson School of Law.

"The Housing Commission welcomes our new neighbor whose mission is very similar to ours, which is about helping people with their housing needs," said Richard C. Gentry, President & CEO of the San Diego Housing Commission.

More than 800 clients have been served since the HOC began setting up their offices last October:

- First-time homebuyer: 8.1 %
- Foreclosures: 18.1%
- Homelessness: 64.2%
- Tenant Issues: 9.6%

The population served:

- a. 42.0% White
- b. 34.7 Hispanic
- c. 11.0% Asian
- d. 7.1% African-American
- e. 5.2% Other

"Going from a mobile center to having our own center is a dream come true and our location next to the Housing Commission has made it possible to work even closer with the Housing Commission staff in keeping people from becoming homeless or becoming first-time homebuyers," said Vino Pajanor, President and Executive Director of the Housing Opportunities Collaborative. "The center will be the place where collaborative member agencies can truly work together to provide services to the public."

The Housing Opportunities Collaborative is an approved housing counseling agency by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

HOC was originally established in 2005 as a non-profit organization to provide foreclosure prevention information through clinics and workshops to educate and counsel homeowners.

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Since June 2007, 80 clinics have been conducted in the communities within the County of San Diego: San Marcos, Escondido, Oceanside, Chula Vista and El Cajon, with 4,545 individuals receiving one-on-one counseling.

In addition, through its 60 collaborative partners, HOC has provided foreclosure prevention counseling to 12, 452 low to moderate income homeowners with 2, 757 individuals contributing a total of 17,885 volunteer hours.

Partners of the housing resource center of the Housing Opportunities Collaborative include:

AREAA, Bayside Community Center, California Association of Realtors, CAL-VET Home Loans, Center for Financial Freedom, Center for Social Advocacy, Coalition of Neighborhood Councils, Community Housing Works, East San Diego County Association of Realtors, El Cajon CDC, Eveoke Dance Theatre, Fair Housing Council of San Diego, Faith Based Community Development Corporation, Faith Works, Filipino American Real Estate Professionals Association, Grid Alternatives, HOME START, INC., Jewish Family Services, LANHS, Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc., Mabuhay Alliance, Money Management International, Neighborhood House Association, North County Career Center, North County Lifeline, Novadebt, Operation HOPE, Pacific Southwest Association of Realtors, People Helping People Gateway Project, Price Charities, Regional Continuum of Care Council, San Diego Association of Realtors, San Diego Realist for Democracy in Housing SDCBA, San Diego Home Loan Counseling and Education Center, San Diego Housing Commission, San Diego North County, San Diego Organizing Project, San Diego Tenants Legal Center, San Diego Urban League, Second Chance, Senior Community Center, South Bay Community Services, Southern California Housing Collaborative, Southwest Center for Asian Pacific American Law, Springboard, Transcendance Youth Arts Project, UPAC, UCSD Legal Clinics, and Vista North County San Diego

The HOC housing resource center joins the Housing Commission and the Family Justice Center at the downtown Smart Corner complex, which runs along a transit corridor with trolley and bus service.

For more information, contact HOC at 619-283-2200

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