



January 21, 2021

The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) closely monitors legislative activities at the local, state and federal levels of government to identify emerging issues and legislation that could affect the individuals and families our programs help.

We also engage with elected leaders and stakeholders to advance policies consistent with SDHC's mission.

Continuing these important efforts in the New Year, I submitted written testimony for a joint hearing this morning of the California State Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development and the Assembly Budget Committee's Subcommittee on State Administration.

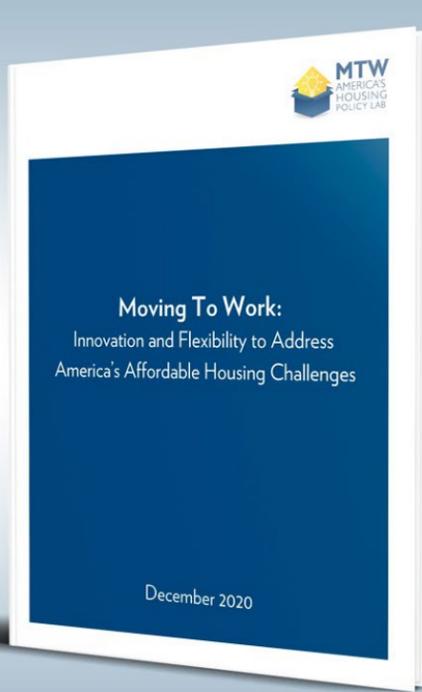
As the hearing focused on the state's role on homelessness, I provided information about the state emerging as an essential financial partner in collaborative efforts to address homelessness through its Project Homekey, Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP), and Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program.

I am pleased to share with you my written testimony, as well as updates about legislative advocacy initiatives related to the federal Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher program and the Moving to Work demonstration program.



Richard C. Gentry SDHC President & CEO

Read the California State Assembly Testimony



Moving to Work (MTW) Policy Paper MTW Collaborative December 2020

'Moving To Work: Innovation and Flexibility to Address America's Affordable Housing Challenges'

In consultation with other Moving to Work (MTW) public housing authorities across the country, SDHC led the creation of a new policy paper from the MTW Collaborative that recommends extending MTW flexibilities to virtually all public housing authorities nationwide.

This paper, "Moving to Work: Innovation and Flexibility to Address America's Affordable Housing Challenges," also recommends continuing several regulatory waivers the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specific examples of successful MTW initiatives across the country are highlighted in this paper, demonstrating the MTW program's positive impact in communities throughout the nation.

I shared this paper on December 22, 2020, with staff for California's two U.S. Senators and San Diego's Congressional delegation.

The MTW Collaborative is a nonprofit membership organization established in 2018 that advocates on behalf of MTW communities, educates on MTW issues, and works to broaden the MTW program. I serve as the Vice President of the organization's Board of Directors.

SDHC is one of 39 public housing authorities, out of approximately 3,400 in the nation, that has received an MTW designation from HUD.

Read the MTW Policy Paper

Appropriations Bill Includes SDHC-Recommended Changes to VASH Program

The Consolidated Appropriations Bill of 2021 passed by Congress and signed into law in late December included important changes to the VASH voucher program that SDHC advocated throughout the year.

This legislation will help public housing authorities nationwide, including SDHC, to maximize use of VASH vouchers to help veterans experiencing homelessness.

The appropriations bill directed HUD and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to consult with one another about necessary changes.

For example, historically, the program requires the VA to refer veterans to public housing authorities before a VASH voucher can be used. The legislation directs HUD to provide a way that allows public housing authorities to use unleased VASH vouchers for eligible veterans without a referral from the VA.

For their work to enact this legislative action, I thank the U.S. Representatives Mike Levin and Scott Peters and the members of their respective staffs, staff from the Senate and House Appropriations Committees, and Dr. Keith Harris, the VA's National Director of Clinical Operations for Veterans Affairs Homeless Programs, who worked with us to resolve issues with the program in San Diego and supported our efforts in Washington, D.C.

Virtual Groundbreaking Celebrates New Construction of 95 Affordable Apartments

A new development that will provide 95 affordable rental apartments, including 10 studios for veterans experiencing homelessness, celebrated its groundbreaking virtually with an online video on January 12, 2021.

I joined California State Senate President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins, San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, County Board of Supervisors Chair Nathan Fletcher, the developer Community HousingWorks and additional development partners by providing recorded remarks for the video.

SDHC awarded a \$7 million loan and authorized the issuance of more than \$34 million in tax-exempt Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds to support this development, Ulric Street Apartments.

In addition, SDHC awarded 10 VASH vouchers to help pay rent for the residents who are veterans who previously experienced homelessness.

View the News Release



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We're About People

Established in 1979, the San Diego Housing Commission provides a variety of award-winning affordable housing programs and services that stimulate the local economy, revitalize neighborhoods, and impact the lives of low-income and homeless San Diegans.

