



August 4, 2021

I was honored to join longtime friend and colleague Lourdes Castro Ramirez, California's Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, for a roundtable discussion she held last week in San Diego regarding the State of California's investments in solutions to homelessness and the housing crisis, as well as San Diego's ongoing efforts in these areas.



Richard C. Gentry SDHC President & CEO

This important discussion included San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, City Council President Jennifer Campbell, City Councilmember Raul Campillo, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) Commissioner Eugene "Mitch" Mitchell, Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) CEO Tamera Kohler, Voices of Our City Choir Director of Advocacy John Brady, Affirmed Housing President & CEO Jim Silverwood and Affirmed Housing Director of Asset Management Jonathan Taylor.

The Secretary spoke about California Governor Gavin Newsom's focus on housing and homelessness in his state budget, approved by the California legislature. The budget includes \$10.3 billion for affordable housing initiatives and \$12 billion over two years for programs to address homelessness.

She also discussed the [Community Action Plan on Homelessness for the City of San Diego](#) serving as an example for communities throughout the state and the importance of measurable outcomes and ensuring that people have safe, quality affordable places to call home. SDHC led the creation of this action plan.

I was pleased to share information about SDHC's leadership role in addressing homelessness in the City of San Diego, which includes budgeting more than \$127 million for homelessness programs out of SDHC's total Fiscal Year 2022 budget of \$604 million.

SDHC looks forward to continuing to collaborate with the State of California, as well as local and federal leaders, developers, service providers and community organizations to address homelessness and create and preserve affordable housing in San Diego.

I invite you to read more below about additional recent SDHC activities.



Housing and Homelessness Roundtable Discussion July 30, 2021

## More Funding for COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program

As families continue to experience financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic that may affect their housing, the San Diego City Council has authorized SDHC to expend additional funds for the COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program to help more families with low income.

As of August 2, 2021, SDHC has disbursed payments totaling more than \$63.6 million to help 7,986 households with low income experiencing a financial hardship due to the pandemic. SDHC has fully expended all of the federal funds previously allocated directly to the City of San Diego for assistance payments and has expended or obligated all of the federal funds the State of California allocated to the City for assistance payments through this program.

However, additional applications are submitted each day, requesting help from the COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program, which launched on March 15, 2021. SDHC has received more than 16,400 applications for help from this program, of which more than 94 percent are from households reporting income at or below 50 percent of San Diego's Area Median Income.

On July 27, 2021, the City Council authorized an additional \$60.1 million for assistance payments and administrative expenses for this program. This includes federal American Rescue Plan Act funds allocated directly to the City and additional federal funding allocated by the State.

My thanks to San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, City Council President Jennifer Campbell and the entire City Council for their ongoing support of this program.

These funds will enable the COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program to continue to help households with low income experiencing financial hardship.

## U.S. Senators Recommend Expanded Use of Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Funds

Changes in state and federal regulations regarding the allowable spending of federal emergency rental assistance funds have proved necessary to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On July 1, 2021, California's U.S. Senators, Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla, sent a letter to U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, recommending that the Treasury Department allow the use of federal emergency rental assistance funds to help households pay down their housing-related personal debt, such as high-interest credit cards or payday loans they used to remain current on their rent during the pandemic.

I made a similar request in a May 26, 2021, letter to Secretary Yellen. SDHC has received feedback from applicants, community-based organizations, members of the San Diego City Council, and service providers that many households experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 remained current with their rent payments by incurring this type of personal debt. However, they do not qualify for federal emergency rental assistance to cover their debts incurred to keep their rent current because they do not have past-due rent.

I thank Senators Feinstein and Padilla for their support of this requested change to regulations. If implemented, it would maximize the utilization and impact of these funds and address an additional housing challenge resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## SDHC Earns National Procurement Award

For the fifth consecutive year, SDHC has received an Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award from the National Procurement Institute, Inc.

This prestigious national award honors organizations that receive a high score based on standardized criteria that measure innovation, professionalism, productivity, e-procurement and leadership attributes of the organization.



[SDHC Website](#)



[Previous SDHC Email Updates](#)



[SDHC Annual Reports](#)

### 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 San Diegoans experiencing homelessness.

