

February 14, 2023

The start of 2023 has provided opportunities for the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) and the many organizations that collaborate with us to celebrate new projects, acknowledge the successes of ongoing initiatives, and continue to explore options to address the ongoing housing and homelessness challenges in the City of San Diego.



Jeff Davis
SDHC Interim President & CEO

For example, the new year marked the 13th anniversary of SDHC's implementation of its Choice Communities Initiative. This initiative encourages mobility and helps Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance households to move to areas with more opportunities for transportation, schools, and employment.

SDHC's Choice Communities Initiative provides higher payment standards for rental assistance families who want to live in higher-opportunity ZIP Codes, where rental costs typically are higher. The payment standard is the maximum subsidy payment that the housing voucher would pay for an apartment or rental house, minus the applicable portion of the rent that the tenant pays. We also provide SDHC mobility counselors, who assist with pre- and post-moving counseling, housing search assistance and guidance about neighborhood features for families moving to higher-opportunity ZIP codes. In addition, SDHC proactively obtained waivers from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to allow for higher payment standards for households with Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers and Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs). SDHC has raised its payment standards in each of the past six years.

More than 6,200 SDHC rental assistance households have moved to higher-opportunity areas since the Choice Communities initiative launched January 1, 2010. Today, 50 percent of the more than 17,000 current SDHC rental assistance households reside in higher-opportunity ZIP Codes.

Our payment standards also have been one of the many reasons cited in recent news coverage about SDHC's unique success in utilizing EHV's, including a San Francisco Chronicle podcast.

New projects to start the year include the grand opening of a development with more than 110 newly constructed affordable rental apartments for individuals and families with low income and the announcement of a grant to support homeownership programs for people of color.

Even with these accomplishments, more work lies ahead. A shortage of affordable housing continues, and homelessness remains a challenge. Communities across the country are experiencing similar issues.

We continue to work in collaboration with elected officials, organizations, developers, landlords and the people we serve to identify and implement innovative solutions.

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



The Orchard at Hilltop
Grand Opening
February 9, 2023

Grand Opening Celebrates 111 New Affordable Apartments

The transformation of a formerly vacant property in San Diego's Chollas View community into 111 new apartments with rents affordable for households with low income was celebrated at the grand opening of The Orchard at Hilltop, developed in collaboration with SDHC.

SDHC Vice President of Multifamily Housing Finance Jennifer Kreutter joined San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria; Gloria Perlas Pulido, representing California State Treasurer Fiona Ma's office; the developer, Affirmed Housing; and additional partners for the grand opening.

Rents at The Orchard will remain affordable for 55 years for households with income of 30 percent to 60 percent of San Diego's Area Median Income.

SDHC awarded 25 federal rental housing vouchers that will help pay rent for some residents at the property. SDHC also awarded an \$8.3 million loan toward the development, consisting of federal and local funds SDHC administers—HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds that HUD awarded to the City of San Diego and the City's Affordable Housing Fund.

SDHC also authorized the issuance of more than \$27.8 million in tax-exempt Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds and \$3.4 million in taxable bonds to support this development, as approved by the Housing Authority of the City of San Diego.

[Read the News Release](#)

Grant Awarded to SDHC to Support Homeownership Programs for People of Color

A new grant awarded to an SDHC nonprofit affiliate will provide additional financial support for expanded efforts to help more people of color become homeowners in the City of San Diego.

The \$184,000 grant from the National Fair Housing Alliance will provide funding for programs to help households of color prepare for homeownership and/or purchase a home. These include activities such as debt reduction, credit counseling, peer mentors, homeownership navigators and community educators, as well as down payment or closing cost assistance grants and credit-building loans.

The grant was awarded to SDHC's nonprofit affiliate, SDHC Building Opportunities Inc., which supports programs that provide opportunities to improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income families in the City or County of San Diego. The grant aligns with the San Diego Homeownership Equity Collaborative's efforts to increase homeownership opportunities for people of color.

SDHC administers the first-time homebuyer and affordable for-sale housing programs for the City of San Diego and is a member of the San Diego Homeownership Equity Collaborative's Executive Committee.

[Read the News Release](#)



What San Diego Got Right About Housing Vouchers

Fixing Our City

News

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While the name of the podcast: Emergency Housing Vouchers rental subsidy program underscores how urgent finding housing is for at-risk groups, only a little more than half of the vouchers are in use in California. San Francisco has used 51% of its vouchers. But San Diego is seen as a standout success, having put more than 100% of its allotment to use on new leases. How did San Diego—the state's second-biggest city—manage this, and can other cities take a page out of its book? | Unlimited Chronicle access: sfchronicle.com/pod

Fixing Our City is part of the San Francisco Chronicle's SFNext Project: Got a tip, question, comment? Email us at sfnext@sfchronicle.com. Learn more about your ad choices. Visit megaphone.fm/adchoices.

SDHC Emergency Housing Vouchers
San Francisco Chronicle Podcast
January 24, 2023

Media Coverage Highlights SDHC's Utilization of Emergency Housing Vouchers

SDHC's successful utilization of 100 percent of its Emergency Housing Vouchers continues to receive positive attention.

The San Francisco Chronicle's podcast known as "Fixing Our City" featured SDHC's Emergency Housing Voucher program on January 24, 2023.

In addition, in San Diego, NBC 7 broadcast a story on January 18 about the program, featuring one of the people SDHC helped to obtain housing with one of these vouchers.

These reports followed the Los Angeles Times' publication of an article online in November and in print in December about the program.

SDHC's Emergency Housing Vouchers assist San Diegans experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, including those fleeing domestic violence or human trafficking.

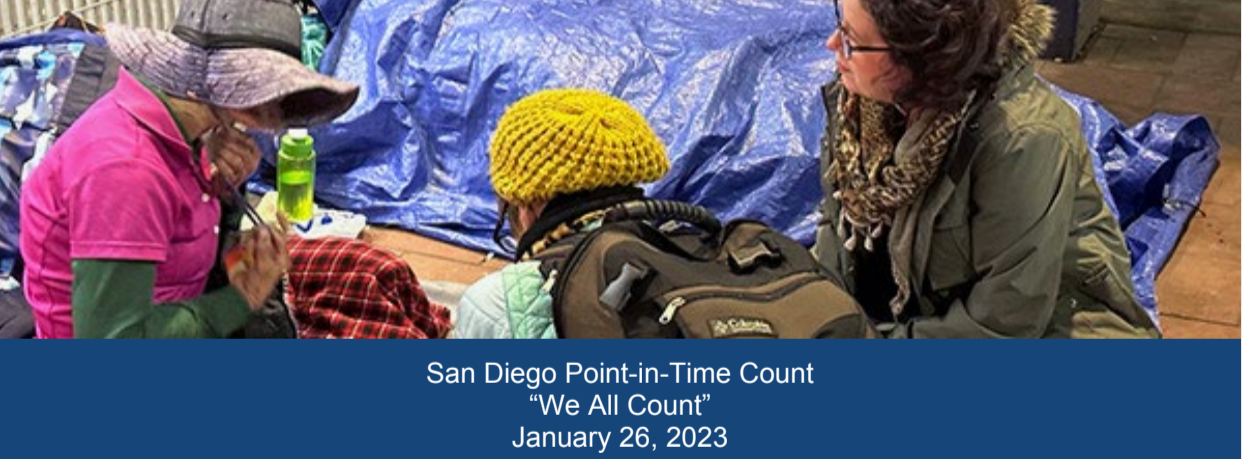
The news coverage about our program has highlighted the extensive housing navigation efforts from our staff and service providers to help connect these voucher households to housing units. In addition, the incentives and benefits available for landlords through our Landlord Engagement and Assistance Program, or LEAP, have been important to helping voucher households secure housing units. SDHC's payment standards through our Choice Communities Initiative also have been cited among the reasons for our success.

Our existing relationships with homelessness service providers throughout San Diego also facilitated our efforts. We contracted with 17 service providers to help identify households for these vouchers. These organizations also assisted households with paperwork, housing navigation, the leasing and moving process, and ongoing case management.

[Listen to the San Francisco Chronicle Podcast](#)

[Watch the NBC 7 San Diego Story](#)

[Read the Los Angeles Times article](#)



San Diego Point-in-Time Count
"We All Count"
January 26, 2023

SDHC Joins Hundreds of Volunteers for Annual Point-In-Time Count

SDHC Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives Lisa Jones and staff from SDHC's Homeless Housing Innovations Division were among hundreds of volunteers who canvassed the streets of the City of San Diego for the annual census of people experiencing homelessness, known in San Diego as "We All Count."

The San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) conducts the annual Point-in-Time Count. HUD requires the count, which is important for data and federal funding for homelessness programs in the San Diego region.

Thank you to RTFH and everyone who participated in this year's count.



COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program Report

With the conclusion of the COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program in 2022, SDHC produced a report that details the key components of the program from its launch through its conclusion and features stories of program participants.

Through this program, SDHC made payments totaling more than \$218.6 million to help pay rent and utilities for more than 18,300 households with low income that experienced financial hardship during or due to the pandemic.

[Read SDHC's Report](#)



State Assemblymember Visits SDHC Property

California State Assemblymember Chris Ward recently visited SDHC's Valley Vista apartments, which consist of 190 permanent affordable rental housing units with supportive services for people who experienced homelessness.

He met with residents and helped prepare for a weekly distribution of food for the property, organized by PATH, which contracts with SDHC to provide supportive services for residents.



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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 San Diegans with low income and/or experiencing homelessness.