

# ASSISTED HOUSING HAPPENINGS

*A Fort Worth Housing Authority publication for Landlords and Participants*

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## Customer Service Survey Results

Different responses from participants, landlords

Thank you to the clients and landlords who took the time to return the Customer Service Survey mailed out the end of May 2008 to randomly selected participants, applicants, and landlords. The survey is a valuable tool in gauging changes that need to be made, as well as providing feedback on what we do right.

While the return rate was low – just 25%, the overwhelming response from clients was satisfaction with, and appreciation of, HCV and Special Programs assistance.

- Just over 61% of respondents cited an overall excellent experience with FWHA, while about 37% said the overall experience is good and a little over 1% reported it is poor.
- Almost 63% who receive the Assisted Housing Happenings newsletter rated the information as excellent, and high marks were also

given in the categories of overall inspection and recertification experiences, as well as clear and concise answers to questions, and the courtesy and politeness of FWHA staff.

Only a little over 10% of landlords responded to the survey, and their experience was markedly different from that of clients.

- 12.5% reported an excellent overall experience, 62.5% said it is good, and 25% said their contact with FWHA is poor.
- The single biggest negative response was in regards to calls not being returned within 24 hours
- 100% reported a timely inspection appointment.

We will be working diligently to correct the deficiencies reported by landlords and clients, and appreciate the information you have given us. ♦

## FWHA Celebrates 70th Anniversary

Past, Present, and Future

FWHA will mark its 70th anniversary of providing safe, quality, affordable housing to Fort Worth's low income population with a celebration at the Administrative Office.

Celebration activities will take place this Fall. Please visit our website at

[www.ftwha.org](http://www.ftwha.org) for more information on the date of the event and scheduled family activities.

Join us as we look back on housing assistance of the past, discuss current trends, and prepare to step boldly and confidently into the future. •

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President and CEO: *Barbara Holston* Vice President of Assisted Housing: *Selarstean Mitchell* Editor: *Anna Gaines*

## FWHA To Host Landlord Workshop

Presentations by City, FWHA

FWHA would like to invite you to participate in the upcoming Landlord Workshop.

The workshop will provide valuable information regarding changes and additions to current FWHA programs as well as give insight into legal issues that could possibly affect you and/or your tenant.

The workshop will be held on Tuesday, September 23, 2008 at the Fort Worth Housing Authority Administrative Office at 1201 E. 13th Street in our auditorium from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Speakers from the City of Fort Worth and FWHA staff will speak on the following topics:

- FWHA Policy Changes including changes to Screening and Eviction for Drug Abuse and other Criminal Activity (SEDACA)
- Housing the Homeless
- Fair Housing
- Fraud
- Online Payment Information

If you would like to participate, please RSVP to Lori Riley at [lori@ftwha.org](mailto:lori@ftwha.org) or 817/333-3664 with the names of all representatives who will be in attendance.

Due to the number of expected participants we will be unable confirm your RSVP. ●

Visit us online at  
[www.ftwha.org](http://www.ftwha.org)



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## Paying Rent - Making Ends Meet

*Tips for assistance, prioritizing expenditures*

In the last issue of the newsletter, we encouraged you to **pay rent and utilities first** and look for sources to provide food, clothing, transportation, and other tangible goods when your funds fall short of covering monthly expenses. Following are additional tips to consider that may help you manage your finances more efficiently.

**Car Trouble** - How much is your car costing you each month? How much is gas costing you each week? Do you have insurance? Do you have an extra \$300-\$500 saved for repairs? Are you giving rides to others without reimbursement, making multiple trips to the store, or paying bills in person rather than by mail? Consider riding the bus to save on monthly gas expenses or to save money for unexpected repairs.

**Telephone** - Eliminate any extra services on a land line such as call waiting, caller I.D., etc. Use a cellular phone without text messaging capabilities or consider using only a cellular phone and eliminating your land line or vice versa. A Lifeline Universal discount on phone service is available to low-income people who receive a housing subsidy. Contact your local carrier to request an application for the discount. ◆

## New Housing Model Begins

FWHA on the cutting edge again with Housing First

Special Programs, with funds provided from the Fannie Mae Foundation, has embarked on a trial Housing First Program that specifically targets the chronically homeless.

The Housing First concept centers on providing housing quickly, then working on changing behaviors that contribute to chronic homelessness. It also addresses failure to engage those who have been homeless for many years into mainstream social service programs. Because admission requirements for most housing programs seem insurmountable to the chronically homeless, the Housing First model drastically reduces those requirements and gently edges people into services AFTER they get housing.

Housing First began at FWHA in May 2008, and housed its first client in July. A total of 10 slots will be available the first year of the program.

Potential clients will be outreached by a Case Manager, Nastassja McCullough-Travis, who will assist with obtaining necessary documents and will intensively monitor clients' progress after they sign a behavioral contract and enter into housing.

Special Programs is seeking landlords who are interested in this groundbreaking housing model and serving the hard-to-house homeless population. For more information please contact Susan Cockrell at 817/333-3551, [susanc@ftwha.org](mailto:susanc@ftwha.org); or Nastassja McCullough-Travis at 817/333-3556, [nastassja@ftwha.org](mailto:nastassja@ftwha.org). ■

## FWHA Conducting Criminal History Checks Annually

Violations of SEDACA will result in termination

Criminal History checks are now being conducted annually on all household members 16 years of age and older.

Findings of arrests or convictions for charges that violate FWHA's Screening and Eviction for Drug Abuse and Other Criminal Activity (SEDACA) policy will result in termination of HCV assistance.

If you have questions regarding annual criminal history checks, contact your Housing Counselor. ■



Left to right: Selarstean Mitchell, FWHA Vice President of Assisted Housing; Anna Gaines, FWHA Administrative Assistant; Donna Dunwoody, SW NAHRO President; Renee Rooker, National NAHRO President at SW NAHRO Awards in Lafayette, LA

## Monthly Statements Now Available Online for Landlords

**Housing Choice Voucher and Special Programs Landlords can now retrieve and print monthly statements with no wait.**

Statements are available on our website homepage at [www.ftwha.org](http://www.ftwha.org) under "Vendor Check Status" by entering your six digit FWHA vendor number and tax identification or Social Security number. Statements will be available the 2<sup>nd</sup> of each month.

Please contact Lori Riley at 817/333-3664 or [lori@ftwha.org](mailto:lori@ftwha.org) with any problems or questions about accessing your information. ◆

## FWHA WINS SEVEN AWARDS FROM NATIONAL HOUSING ORGANIZATION

*Assisted Housing Newsletter, FWHA employee receive awards from regional chapter*

FWHA has received seven Awards of Merit from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), a leading organization in the assisted housing and housing development arena. Three of the seven are in the Assisted Housing Division of FWHA, one of which was also nominated for an Award of Excellence.

The broad spectrum of the categories illustrates an agency-wide commitment to continue to provide innovative services in both Public and Assisted Housing. The FWHA Assisted Housing Division awards are:

- ◆ Gifts in Kind – Awarded to the HCV Homeownership Program for partnership with select local retailers who donate household goods to first-time homebuyers. Also nominated for an Award of Excellence.
- ◆ Employee Donations – Awarded to FWHA staff for providing care packages to attendees of an area homeless service provider fair and Day Resource Center for the Homeless.
- ◆ Christmas for the Homeless – Awarded for a staff member's volunteer efforts in providing Christmas gift bags to the homeless.

Other National NAHRO Awards of Merit were for excellence in project design for modernization of Hunter Plaza (Public Housing), providing comprehensive case management with the Resident Social Worker program (Public Housing), innovation in providing property management companies training in procurement by government entities (Administrative Services), and innovation in providing affordable housing at Cambridge Court Apartments (Development and Asset Management).

On June 24, 2008, the Assisted Housing Happenings newsletter and Anna Gaines received Southwest Regional NAHRO Awards for Best Agency Newsletter – Large Agency and Continuous Meritorious Accomplishment by an Employee at a conference in Lafayette, Louisiana. The newsletter was chosen from over 100 entries in a 7-state region. Ms. Gaines was recognized for her continuing volunteer work to distribute gift bags to the homeless over the last eight years. ●

## Getting to Know You . . . Homeownership / Family Self Sufficiency



*Left: Deana Broussard, Homeownership Coordinator; Right: Letetia Holt, Family Self Sufficiency Specialist*

### *Working Together to Make Dreams Come True*

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Homeownership and Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) programs are in partnership to assist clients in reaching the goals of economic independence and owning a home. Working together, both programs provide the support needed to become self-sufficient and a first-time home buyer.

When a participating FSS family establishes the objective of homeownership they begin working with the FSS Specialist, Letetia Holt. Letetia works with clients to overcome educational, career, child care, transportation, and/or life skills barriers by providing access to community services, guidance in setting realistic goals and how to meet them, and encouragement during the 5-year contract period. While increasing earned income and accruing escrow funds through the FSS program, clients may also participate in the HCV Homeownership program once the minimum income and par-

ticipation eligibility requirements have been met.

Deana Broussard, Homeownership Coordinator, works with the family on establishing credit, credit repair, referrals to homeownership counseling, finding a real estate agent, connecting with a mortgage lender and other activities of purchasing a home. FSS escrow funds may be used in the Homeownership Program to pay for costs associated with buying a home such as credit repair, closing costs, inspection, paying off old utility debts, as well as giving the client a substantial down payment for a new home. In addition, Deana and Letetia partner to provide inspiration and encouragement to keep clients focused on attaining the dream of homeownership.

For more information on FSS and/or Homeownership, contact Letetia at 817/336-2419 extension 2407, or [letetia@ftwha.org](mailto:letetia@ftwha.org); and Deana at 817/336-2419 extension 2406, or [deana@ftwha.org](mailto:deana@ftwha.org). ❖

## FWHA ASSISTED HOUSING STAFF DIRECTORY

### **ASSISTED HOUSING**

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Letetia Holt, FSS Specialist .....	817/336-2419 ext 2407
FAX .....	817/878-2476

### **ADMISSIONS**

Annie Nelson, Admissions Supervisor .....	817/333-3501
Aracelli Carranza, Occupancy Interviewer .....	817/333-3507
Laura Hollie, Occupancy Interviewer .....	817/333-3506
Shannon Kimble, Occupancy Interviewer .....	817/333-3503
Cheryl Edwards, Clerical Receptionist .....	817/333-3510
Angelia Thompson, Clerical Receptionist .....	817/333-3511
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### **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (FORMERLY SECTION 8)**

Hyacinth Onyekanne, Assisted Housing Administrator .....	817/333-3604
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April Benson, Administrative Assistant .....	817/333-3660
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Kathy Brackett, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3609
Irene Carrizales, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3667
Jeanette Crocker, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3610
Astrya James, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3611
Tunya Jones, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3612
Annie Kernal, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3608
Nicole Lewis, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3668
Janis Shockley, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3613
Joyce Siler, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3617
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### **INSPECTIONS**

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Theresa Miskin, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3616
Gerald Carr, Field Inspector .....	817/333-3659
Chris Gilbert, Field Inspector .....	817/333-3655
Caleb Morin, Field Inspector .....	817/333-3661
Lana Nelson, Field Inspector .....	817/333-3658
Heath Power, Field Inspector .....	817/333-3656
Enrique Segura, Field Inspector .....	817/333-3657
Randy Taylor, Field Inspector .....	817/333-3662
June Hill, Administrative Assistant .....	817/333-3663
Yolanda Elems, Assisted Housing Clerk .....	817/333-3652
FAX .....	817/877-3576

### **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

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Terry Del Cid, Administrative Assistant .....	817/333-3552
Geraldine Godfrey, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3554
Shana Harris, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3557
Sheila Reese, Housing Counselor .....	817/333-3553
Nastassja McCullough-Travis, Social Worker .....	817/333-3556
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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