



Los Angeles PIH Newsletter

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Farewell from Los Angeles Public Housing Director

February 2, 2007 will be my last day in Los Angeles. As you may have heard, I accepted the position of Director of Lender Activities, Office of Single Family Housing, HUD Headquarters. Since I joined Public Housing (PIH) in 2003, I have been extremely fortunate to meet and work with a great group of people. I could not leave here, however, without telling you how much I valued my time in Public Housing and providing housing for thousands of families in California and Arizona. The work you do is important and I am proud of my affiliation with all of you. I wish you all happiness and continued success. I leave the office in good hands, with K.J. Brockington who will be Acting Director.

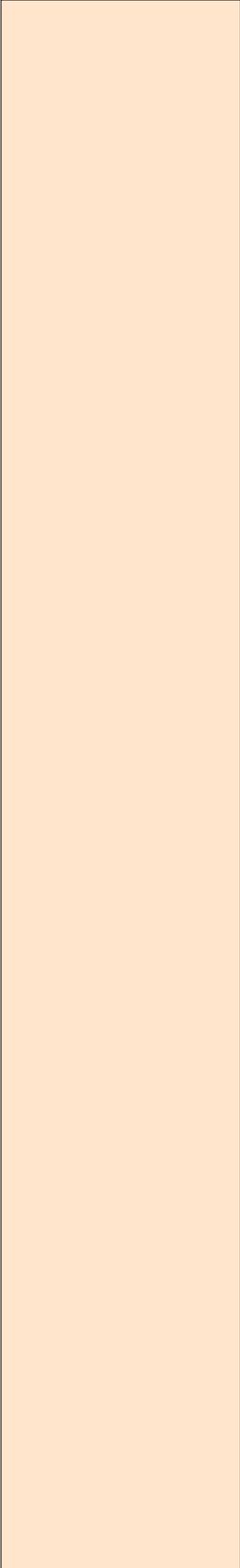
-Cecilia Ross, Director

PHA Spotlight

H.A.A.S.C. Inter-PHA Network Ready to Mobilize when Disaster & Incidents strike

Within days after the January 17, 1994 Northridge earthquake, the Housing Authorities Association of Southern California (HAASC), previously known as the Housing Authorities Executive Directors Association, quickly organized member PHAs to help fellow housing authorities impacted by the disaster. The PHAs deployed personnel and resources to assist with tasks such as dwelling inspections, working in disaster assistance centers and qualifying families displaced by the disaster for special Section 8 rental certificates.

Today, the network has grown to more than 30 participating Public Housing Authorities (PHA) in Southern California. The network is ready to respond with personnel, equipment, and resources to assist fellow PHA's affected by a disaster or incident, caused by humans or by nature, which requires response to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property.



Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath virtually destroyed public housing in New Orleans. The lessons of Katrina for a PHA emphasize preparedness and response to disaster and to have clear interdisciplinary roles and responsibilities that connect the local PHA to city, county, state and federal emergency responders and other PHAs as vital components. The HAASC network encourages local PHAs to perform self-assessment, training, evacuation drills, formal agency emergency plans and to exchange information between housing authorities and emergency responders regarding disaster and incident planning management.

In 2003, the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) recognized the HAASC Mutual Aid Network with an Award of Merit. No other region in the country to date had formed this example of inter-agency cooperation.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has developed the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to standardize response to incidents of significance and to avoid duplication between federal and local partner roles and responsibilities. PHA management can learn more about NIMS, through an online Independent Study (IS) course available at <http://www.training.fema.gov>

For further information about the HAASC Mutual Aid Network, please contact its officers, Linda Foster, president at lfoster@ci.santa-ana.ca.us or Don Swift, vice-president at dswift@uplandhousing.org

Subsidy Layering Reviews for Project-based Vouchers

If your agency is planning on project-basing vouchers, please be aware of the subsidy layering review requirements at 24 CFR 983.153 and 983.55 published in the Federal Register, October 13, 2005.

The rule requires that any project receiving government assistance from federal, state, local agencies, or tax credits, in addition to the project-based vouchers, must have a subsidy layering review conducted. The PHA may not enter into an Agreement or Housing Assistance Program (HAP) contract until HUD or a HUD-approved independent entity has conducted and approved the review. At this time, HUD has not identified or approved any independent entities; therefore, all requests for a subsidy layering review must be submitted to HUD. A checklist outlining required documentation is available from your local HUD field office. PHAs will put the review packet together once all government-funding sources have been identified and committed to the project. Your local field office will forward the package to HUD Headquarters to conduct the final review (an approximate 30-day turnaround).

Los Angeles Field Office's Christmas Holiday Party



The Los Angeles Field Office's Christmas party involved preparing care packs to mail to troops stationed in Iraq, and donating to Toys for Tots. Two marines came to show gratitude for over 100 packages assembled for the troops. Pictured with the marines are, back row, left to right: Letitia Henderson, Sara Kurzenhauser, Percy Taylor as Santa, Martha Murillo, Ted Skonos, middle: May Miso, kneeling: Alejandra Sigala, Cecilia Ross and Gregory Nunn.

LIVE-IN AIDES

There have been some inquiries regarding what information is needed in the participant file regarding live-in aides (LIA.) A family consisting of one or more elderly, near-elderly or disabled person may request the PHA to approve a live-in aide to reside in the unit and provide necessary supportive services for a family member, who has a person with disabilities. The live-in aide would be approved if needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family member with the disability. A statement from a qualified medical professional may be needed to document the need or necessity for a live-in aide.

The need for a live-aide does not mean that the PHA is obligated to approve any specific person. The PHA may refuse to approve or withdraw approval if:

- the person commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program

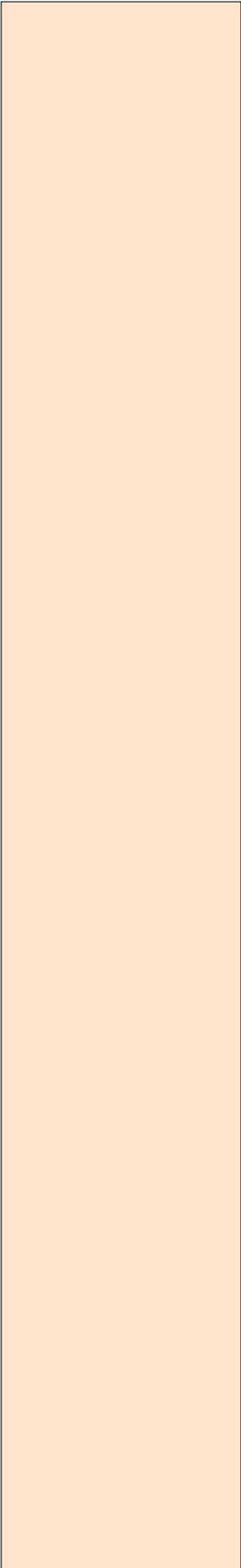
- the person commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or the person currently owes rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance
- Accordingly, with the above, the PHA will need to request and document sufficient information about the proposed LIA to make a determination about the person's eligibility to reside in the unit. Specifically, the PHA may require documentation of the person's Social Security Number and the date of birth. Documentation may include the SS Card, birth certificate, driver's license, or other state/federal issued ID.
- Income of LIAs are not included as part of the household's annual income. PHAs are not required to request or to verify a LIA's income.

VERIFICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME BENEFITS

Notice PIH 2006-41 (HA) was issued on December 19, 2006. This notice renews and revises Notice PIH 2004-18 and explains the required procedures PHAs are to use for verifying social security benefits.

As you know, third party verification of income for voucher families is required (unless 3rd party cannot be obtained and the reasons why are documented in the files). For most families 3rd party verification of SS/SSI benefits may be obtain through the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system. The exceptions are:

- New admission, information not available in EIV
- New tenant, information not available in EIV
- Current tenant, information not available in EIV due to identity validation error
- Current tenant, information not available in EIV, reason unknown
- The notice provides guidance on correcting errors caused by identity verification.



The Social Security Administration (SSA) reports that PHAs are still submitting income verification requests to the local SSA offices. The SSA will begin to charge PHAs a fee, based on the jurisdiction, for PHA requests for verification letters. To avoid incurring costs, PHAs should request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter for **each** household member that receives social security benefits (remembering that any member may receive benefits). The family member may obtain the requested documents by calling the SSA at (800) 772-1213 or via the SSA Internet Website at www.ssa.gov. Once the correct family member is in PIC, EIV should be able to provide verification at the next annual reexamination. You may wish to inform the family that EIV will eventually be providing a benefits history of several years. This may help the family's ability to recall all benefits. Also, the benefits history may help families track down benefits intended for a household member but sent to a person who does not reside in the household.

VMS REPORTING

The Voucher Management System (VMS) reporting window for the quarter ended December 31, 2006 will be open from January 15-31, 2007. Please submit within this window.

DISASTER INFORMATION SYSTEM (DIS)

The Disaster Information System (DIS), also known as KDHAP/DVP, (Katrina Disaster Housing Assistance Program/Disaster Voucher Program) has been moved from the PICTest system to the PIC (Public and Indian Housing Information Center) production. Many users were automatically transferred to PIC production. If you have not been moved and need to have access to DIS, please submit a request through PICHelp.

New Phone Number for Seeking PIC Help

The PIC Help desk is no longer active. PIC and PIH/PHA EIV Users - If you need assistance with PIC or EIV, contact PIH-REAC's Technical Assistance Center (TAC) at (888) 245-4860 or via email at REAC_TAC@hud.gov.