



Harris County Housing Authority  
8410 Lantern Point  
Houston, TX 77054  
Phone: 713-578-2100  
www.hchatexas.org

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact:  
Sarah Miller  
Pierpont Communications  
Phone: 713-627-2223 ext. 1155  
smiller@piercom.com

## **HUD SELECTS HARRIS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR EXPANDED ROLE IN NATIONAL DISASTER-HOUSING PROGRAM**

*--One of Nation's Highest-Ranking Housing Authorities to  
Provide Assistance Across the U.S. and in New Orleans--*

**February 7, 2008 (HOUSTON)** – The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) has selected the Harris County Housing Authority to administer a national disaster-housing program for the remaining families who were displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita — a move that will help families in 37 states, including hard-hit areas of Louisiana such as New Orleans and St. Bernard Parish.

The new assignments are part of HUD's Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP), which is helping more than 30,000 U.S. families left homeless by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to achieve self-sufficiency. HUD introduced the DHAP program last September as part of an interagency agreement with FEMA. The new program replaces FEMA's older rental-assistance program by adding a social-services component along with other changes designed to help families end their reliance on rental subsidies by March 2009.

HUD currently administers the DHAP program by partnering with local public-housing authorities from coast to coast. In the Houston area, for example, the Harris County Housing Authority already administers HUD's DHAP program for more than 6,000 families – the largest single Katrina and Rita population receiving HUD assistance outside of the New Orleans area.

In its new role, the Harris County Housing Authority will expand its current DHAP activities by taking on administration of the program for almost 250 public-housing authorities located in 37 states where only a handful of DHAP-eligible families are currently living. Displaced families are not expected to experience any transition problems.

Harris County will administer DHAP on behalf of the public housing authorities listed on the following site: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/publications/phanodhap.xls>.

“We will use the repeatable processes and procedures we've pioneered in the Houston area, to effectively enroll and assist any family residing in a district where the local public-housing authority has other priorities,” said Guy Rankin, executive director and CEO of the Harris County Housing Authority, who has spearheaded and change-managed the authority since 2004.

### **HCHA to Help in New Orleans Area**

In addition to its role administering DHAP for public-housing agencies that cannot do so themselves, the Harris County Housing Authority will also build and operate a new 33,000 square foot DHAP Center in New Orleans, where it will assist approximately 4,000 DHAP-eligible families residing in that city as well as neighboring St. Bernard Parish.

“We will build a state-of-the-art facility on par with our DHAP Center in Harris County,” said Rankin. “Our hope is that by implementing a program like the one we’ve been running in Houston, these families can finally find the stability they need to put Katrina and Rita behind them.”

HUD cites the Harris County Housing Authority’s previous DHAP successes as the reason it tapped the agency for an expanded role. “The Harris County Housing Authority has been there from the start to support families displaced by the hurricanes; it has done a remarkable job running the DHAP program in the Houston area,” said Milan Ozdinec, deputy assistant secretary for Public Housing and Voucher Programs, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. “That’s why we’ve selected the agency for an expanded national role.”

In fact, HUD has ranked the Harris County Housing Authority among the highest-performing housing agencies in the country for five consecutive years. Moreover, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, or NAHRO, recognized the Harris County Housing Authority with a 2007 Award of Merit for its post-Hurricane Katrina and Rita response program, which created the nation’s first-ever Housing Choice Centers. These centers helped locate housing solutions for tens of thousands of families residing in Houston’s makeshift shelters, including the Astrodome.

The Harris County Housing Authority took on its new DHAP assignments at the urging of its board chairman, Casey Wallace, who has called the DHAP program ‘The Road to Self-Sufficiency’ – a moniker that refers to helping all participants achieve independence through smart government assistance. “We are proud to assist HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson with this national program,” said Wallace. “It’s a shining example of how government is helping people in need to help themselves.”

Families living in New Orleans who believe they may be eligible for the DHAP program should go to [www.DHAPNewOrleans.org](http://www.DHAPNewOrleans.org) or call 866-497-6036. Families living in a city where the public-housing authority is not administering the program should visit [www.DHAPUSA.org](http://www.DHAPUSA.org) or call 866-544-7908.

### **About the Harris County Housing Authority**

The Harris County Housing Authority operates housing-voucher programs for more than 2,500 families in Harris County. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has given the Authority its highest performance rating for five years in a row. For more information, please visit [www.hchatexas.org](http://www.hchatexas.org).

###