



NEWS

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THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COOK COUNTY RELEASES 2015 YEAR END ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Agency Committed to Housing Most Vulnerable & Improving Quality of Life for Families

(Cook County) – The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) today announced its 2015 accomplishments, and remains committed to its mission of providing affordable housing and improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable.

In 2015, the HACC met all Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulatory compliance standards. The HACC continued to make smart investments by leveraging more than \$54 million from non-public housing resources to rehabilitate its housing portfolio. This included the rehabilitation of four buildings with over 450 units of affordable housing for very low income seniors and disabled residents. The HACC used approximately \$3 million in HOME Partnership funds - one of the most utilized grants for filling these financing gaps. The HACC rehabilitated more than 200 units, including units within its south suburban sites, and plans are currently underway to rehabilitate 200 more units throughout Cook County.

In addition to investing in infrastructure, the HACC continued to make human capital investments for its most vulnerable residents a priority. Through its partnership with the Hines VA and the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program, more than 400 homeless veterans and their families have been housed and more housing opportunities are available for homeless veterans at the new Hines VA Freedom's Path Apartment Complex that opened spring of 2015.

The Agency also partnered with the Boys & Girls Club of America and south suburban colleges to advocate on behalf of its young residents for more extracurricular activities and higher education opportunities.

The Housing Authority of Cook County also marked another milestone by becoming the first public housing agency (PHA) in the state and beyond to consider applicants with a criminal past through its re-entry program.

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Add One/
HACC 2015 Year End

The HACC housed its first homeless resident with a criminal past. Caseworkers screen applicants to ensure applicants are working closely with social service agencies to reform their lives. The HACC also considers the type of conviction on a case-by-case basis. This program was recognized and honored by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. HUD also uses the HACC's program as a premier model for other PHA's.

The HACC partnered with Catholic Charities of the Archdioceses of Chicago and launched its first affordable fresh market grocery store pilot program within a PHA family site.

The HACC continued to realize energy savings. As a result of improvements to HVAC, improvements and other energy efficient practices.

Under the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV), an additional 400 families were issued vouchers and were able to secure safe, affordable housing with the rental assistance provided by the voucher. Despite Federal funding cuts, the HACC was able to assist these additional families and achieve maximum utilization within its HCV Program.

Building upon the human services initiatives, the HACC facilitated opportunity housing in diverse mixed income communities, with the goal of building healthy self-sufficient families through homeownership, education, workforce participation, wealth building and personal responsibility.

In 2015, 295 households received services under the Housing Choice Voucher Family Self Sufficiency Program. Fourteen households successfully completed their five year contract of participation; 105 households increased their earned income by an average of over \$15,000.00; 11 households experienced a reduction in, or stopped receiving cash welfare assistance; two families moved to unsubsidized housing no longer needing rental assistance; and two families purchased a home.

The HACC also increased its MBE/WBE participation goals by 11 percent and is committed to making minority hiring and minority business opportunities one of its top administrative priorities. HACC sponsored several housing, job and career fairs for residents, and dozens of HACC residents were eligible for employment opportunities under the Section 3 Work Force program.

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Add Two/
HACC 2015 year End

On December 1, 2015, the HACC became the largest public housing authority in Illinois to announce a Smoke Free policy, going beyond HUD's proposed rule to institute a smoke free housing policy. The HACC is also the largest housing authority in Illinois to transition **all** of its properties to smoke free buildings before the HUD deadline later this year.

The Smoke Free policy applies to over 1,800 HACC public housing units and 200 HACC multifamily units. This life saving achievement is the result of a year-long collaboration between HACC and Cook County Department of Public Health, and a shared dedication to improving the health and wellbeing of HACC residents.

The Housing Authority of Cook County is the second largest public housing agency in Illinois and owns and operates 23 housing properties.

For more information about the Housing Authority of Cook County, please visit us at www.thehacc.org; www.facebook.com/theHACC or www.twitter.com/theHACctweets.

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