

# VOUCHER ADVANTAGE

Fall 2008

News for Owners and Managers in the Rental Assistance Program

## Voucher Pointers

Tips and resources for helping you get the most out of the Rental Assistance Program

**Tenant Selection.** Having responsible tenants who pay the rent on time and take good care of the rental property is always a landlord's dream. Here are some tips to help you find such tenants:



Megan, Heidi and Mike (left to right) have been model tenants.

- Check the applicants' credit histories. Websites such as **Tenantverification.com** offer credit reports that can tell you a lot about prospective tenants.
- Run background checks if necessary
- Make sure rental applications are fully completed (with references, emergency contact information, rental history, etc.)
- Collect appropriate deposits

**Owner Responsibilities.** Please keep in mind that the Rental Assistance Program only assists tenants in paying a portion of their rent. It is the owner's responsibility to maintain the unit and collect the tenant's rent. Also, always treat voucher tenants the same as non-assisted tenants.

**Rent Increase Requests.** To avoid delays, remember to notify both your voucher tenant and the San Diego Housing Commission at least 60 days prior to implementing approved rent increases.

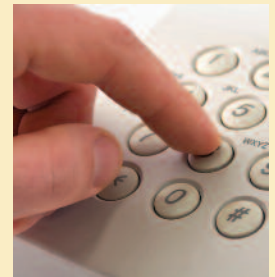
**Apartment Association Resources.** The San Diego County Apartment Association (SDCAA) offers a number of rental industry resources. These include updates about issues and legislation affecting landlords – such as the City of San Diego's recent declaration of a water conservation emergency and corresponding rules for reducing usage.

The SDCAA also has several seminars coming up, including: **Go Green! Recycling, Universal Waste Disposal & Holiday Décor** (Nov. 11, 9-11 a.m.), **Ethics & Property Management** (Nov. 12, 9 a.m.-noon), **Fair Housing: The Fundamentals of Handling Disabilities** (Nov. 19, 9 a.m.-noon), and **How to Become a Better Manager** (Dec. 10, 9-11 a.m.).

For more information, go to [sdcaa.com](http://sdcaa.com) or call 858.278.8070.

## Contacting Your Tenant's Housing Assistant

To more effectively route calls, the San Diego Housing Commission implemented a new system using tenant



account numbers. To contact staff for tenant matters, call 619.578.7777 and follow the prompts, then enter your tenant's nine-digit identification number. You will be directly connected to the staff member currently assigned to your tenant's file. Your tenant's nine-digit identification number can be found on your yearly Rent Portion letter and on other Housing Commission correspondence. (All tenants were issued identification cards with their identification numbers.)

## Wanted: Story Ideas

*Voucher Advantage* is designed to help rental owners and property managers get the most out of the Rental Assistance Program. Your feedback is key to helping us achieve that goal. Please send your ideas for articles to [ownerinfo@sdhc.org](mailto:ownerinfo@sdhc.org).

 San Diego  
HOUSING COMMISSION

## New Leaders Take Helm

Following nationwide, competitive searches, the San Diego Housing Commission has hired Richard Gentry as the agency's President & CEO and Jeff Davis as Director of the Rental Assistance Program.



### Richard Gentry – President & CEO

Rick has 36 years of experience in affordable housing and community development, including executive leadership positions at three housing authorities. Most recently, he served as Senior Vice President of Asset Management for the National Equity Fund in Chicago. He has also worked for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation in Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban

Development (HUD). Gentry is a member of the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), where he served as President from 1995 to 1997; the Public Housing Authorities Directors' Association; the National Housing Conference; and the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities. Rick replaces Elizabeth C. Morris, who retired in January 2008.



### Jeff Davis – Director, Rental Assistance Department

Jeff Davis has been named Director of the Rental Assistance Program, responsible for an annual operating budget of \$157 million and providing rental assistance to 13,780 low-income households. Most recently, Jeff was Housing Supervisor for the department's Leasing and Eligibility Unit. He joined the San Diego Housing Commission in 1996. Jeff currently serves

as a board member of the NAHRO Pacific Southwest Regional Council. He holds a bachelor's degree from Portland State University.



## Introducing the Quality Assurance Team

The Rental Assistance Department recently created a Quality Assurance Team – a new work unit that will oversee program integrity (detecting and preventing program abuse and fraud), staff training, HUD reporting, as well as program and personnel performance audits. These functions, which were previously handled separately, have been consolidated to more effectively monitor and enhance program quality and effectiveness.

The team leaders are (*pictured sitting, left to right*): Quality Control, Training & Management Reports Tracking Specialist Anita Solis; Rental Assistance Program Assistant Director Kathee Farrington; and Program Integrity Coordinator Cyndi Lofftus. The other members of the Quality Assurance Team (*back row, left to right*) are: Jessica Adamo, Maria Callow, Debbie Dorsey, Lorraine Gonzalez, Violet Nila, and Katrina Thompson.

*The San Diego Housing Commission is a public agency working to expand affordable housing opportunities in the City of San Diego. Each year, the agency helps more than 80,000 low-income individuals with affordable housing through award-winning programs that benefit the city's economy and revitalize neighborhoods.*



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## "Financial Fitness" Resources for Tenants

In addition to assisting with housing needs, the San Diego Housing Commission helps Rental Assistance tenants "get ahead" financially. Such is the case with Angela. With support from the agency's Family Self-Sufficiency and Aspire (financial education) programs, Angela worked her way up to become a supervisor at a youth residential care facility – and is learning about savings, credit and budgeting.



For more information about economic independence resources for tenants, go to [sdhc.org](http://sdhc.org).