



## **HCHA Record of Accomplishments:**

The Harris County Housing Authority is recognized as HUD's highest-performing housing authority in the region and one of America's 10 best public housing authorities. Over the past eight years, HCHA has grown from a troubled agency to reach extraordinary heights by —

- housing the homeless,
- creating homeowners,
- developing more than 1,000 new affordable-housing units,
- responding to natural disasters,
- building the first Platinum LEED senior community in the nation,
- producing the first veteran-themed, tax-credit community in the nation, and
- designing a master-planned community specifically designed to honor our nation's brave veterans.

The accomplishments below reflect the fruition of staff-board alignment and our commitment to improve the lives of the citizens of Harris County. HCHA is a government agency that serves more than 2 million people in a service area of approximately 1,100 square miles. HCHA has garnered a reputation for excellence through accomplished change and innovation.

HCHA programs include our Senior Housing Development Program, Assisted Housing Program, Single Room Occupancy Program, and the Independence Homeownership Program. HCHA is considered the best affordable-housing leader in America in terms of managing a housing authority. From 2005-2010, HCHA has developed more than 1,000 new affordable-housing units (worth over \$100 million) for the citizens of Harris County and has created or provided more than 3,000 jobs. HCHA has also employed as many as 1,000 contract workers through its wide-reaching disaster housing qualifications. This strong performance has not gone unnoticed. It has earned the HCHA national recognition:

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded HCHA its highest ranking for eight consecutive years, rating the agency as one of the highest-performing housing authorities in America.

- The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials honored HCHA Board Chairman Casey Wallace in 2011 with the national Elizabeth B. Wells Award as best commissioner of the year.

HCHA is known nationally and internationally. Following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, HCHA led the effort that housed more than 25,000 people in 18 days through the Houston Astrodome. To that end, HCHA designed and developed America's first long-term disaster assistance program, which ultimately served more than 36,000 families in the Houston area. For its exemplary approach and effective response, HCHA was appointed by HUD to manage the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) in Houston, New Orleans, and hundreds of other cities across 41 states.

Recently, HCHA developed the first veteran-themed housing development and also the first Platinum LEED–certified senior multifamily affordable-housing development in America. The following list details the HCHA's extensive track record of continual growth, demonstrated success, and accomplishments.

## **2004**

- HCHA held its first board meeting and retreat to develop its vision and mission statements.
- HCHA successfully managed the Housing Choice Voucher Program, thus transforming the agency from a troubled public housing authority to a high-performing one.
- HCHA developed a standard operating procedures work flow for all its programs.
- HCHA designed and developed its financial and accounting operations, which formerly had been performed by another government entity.
- HCHA extended the Moderate Rehab Program, securing another 20-year contract.

## **2005**

- After Hurricane Katrina struck, HCHA responded by creating the nation's first Disaster Housing Voucher Program in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

- HCHA created the Independence Homeownership Program.
- HCHA developed public-private partnerships to build quality senior housing developments in Harris County.
- HCHA successfully managed the Housing Choice Voucher Program, responding to the needs of Harris County's most vulnerable citizens.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ranked HCHA as one of the highest-performing housing authorities in the country for the second year in a row.
- HCHA opened Cornerstone Village, 156 units of affordable housing created through unique public-private development partnerships.

## **2006**

- HCHA created the nation's first housing choice voucher to house people during a natural disaster. More than 36,000 families were assisted through the Houston joint hurricane task force and more than 70,000 families through HCHA's vision and efforts.
- HCHA became one of the first housing authorities in the United States to change all of its inspection vehicles to hybrid vehicles.
- HCHA partnered with Habitat for Humanity to build a home for a senior couple. HCHA acted as the sponsor, and the staff and board of commissioners assisted in building the home.
- HCHA assisted more than 1,000 families from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita through the Disaster Housing Voucher Program.
- HCHA continued to create new homeowners through its Independent Homeowners Program designed to help Housing Choice Voucher Section 8 families purchase a home.
- HCHA opened two senior housing developments in 2007: Primrose at Heritage Park, with 210 units, and Baybrook in Webster, with 100 units.

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ranked HCHA as one of the highest-performing housing authorities in the country for the third consecutive year.

## 2007

- HCHA's "Housing First" model continued to thrive, serving as an SRO to remove 72 homeless adults from the streets and place them in quality housing.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ranked HCHA as one of the highest-performing housing authorities in the country for a fourth consecutive year.
- In 2007, HCHA opened Waterside Court, consisting of 118 single-family residences located in Northwest Houston. It was constructed in response to Harris County's growing demand for larger rental units. Waterside Court is specifically tailored for larger families with children, providing single-family rental homes for people who need affordable housing.
- HCHA continued to successfully manage the Moderate Rehab Program.
- HCHA served more than 2,000 families every month with a 99% lease-up rate.
- HCHA's expertise in assisting clients to cross the bridge into self-sufficiency created several new homeowners through the Independence Homeownership Program.
- HCHA partnered with Fannie Mae to provide housing to Hurricane Katrina and Rita survivors, creating eight new homeowners.
- HCHA received the 2007 Homeless Collaborative of the Year Award for Outstanding Service to the Community.
- HCHA continued to successfully assist over 1,000 families from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita through the Disaster Housing Voucher Program.
- HCHA initiates the preliminary plan for the first veteran-themed, master-planned, mixed-use community in the United States.

## 2008

- After Hurricane Ike struck, HCHA led a countywide effort to provide residents with critical information on accessing relief. HCHA created an educational video to explain the application process to the storm's victims in an understandable way. Over 2,000 copies of the DVD were distributed as a tool to assist residents, community leaders, the United Way agencies, elected officials, and community leaders in understanding their eligibility for financial aid, as well as the application process for assistance from FEMA and SBA following a hurricane. The video aired on various cable TV shows, reaching hundreds of thousands of people throughout the region.
- HCHA successfully responded to the needs of citizens following Hurricane Ike in partnership with the following social services providers: Focus Care, Houston Area Urban League, Neighborhood Centers Inc., Harris County Community Development, and the City of Houston (HHS). The resulting partnership rendered case management services to tens of thousands of families on a monthly basis.
- HCHA developed a national disaster recovery model that can be implemented within 72 hours of a disaster. The model details how to construct a DHAP facility, incorporate software management, and mobilize human capital immediately following a disaster. This model is now part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's response to disasters.
- HCHA assisted in the development of a points-of-distribution (POD) management system that led to stabilization of more than 400,000 people throughout the region.
- HCHA furnished 10 apartments and offered temporary housing assistance at Magnolia Estates for elderly persons who lost everything in Hurricane Ike and who lived in temporary shelters in Seabrook, Bolivar, Galveston, Pasadena, and Houston.
- HCHA coordinated with the City of Houston, Harris County, United Way agencies, and the faith-based community to help the most vulnerable citizens during Hurricanes Ike and Gustav.

- HCHA continued to transition Hurricane Katrina survivors in Harris County and 41 states to receive permanent housing assistance.
- HCHA was recognized by the U.S. Senate in a letter to former Harris County Judge Robert Eckels as one of the best housing authorities in America.
- HCHA established advanced technology standards. After Hurricane Ike, HCHA developed the first-of-its-kind three-dimensional National Geographic Information Systems Damage Assessment Model and Methodology. In the future, HCHA will partner with local, state, and national leaders to provide guidance on how to help communities recover after a major disaster, while saving precious resources and helping communities recover quickly. The model was developed with Rice University and other research entities to more accurately reflect damage during natural disasters.
- HCHA received the National Association of Housing Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) Award of Merit for the HCHA Independence Homeownership Program.
- HCHA received the NAHRO Award of Merit for Innovative Single-Family Rental Housing for Waterside Court.
- HCHA developed a renewable energy plan to incorporate into HCHA's future affordable-housing building principles to reduce the impact on natural resources. HCHA first tested its solar panels at Magnolia Estates and will use them in future housing developments.
- Throughout 2008, HCHA continued to address homelessness head-on by locating homeless individuals and assisting them with placement into Jackson Hinds Gardens, a single-room occupancy (SRO) apartment community.
- HCHA was invited to participate in working with the Texas Governor's Commission on Disaster Recovery and Renewal.
- HCHA expanded the Damage Assessment Model to include pre-disaster grid mapping of coastal counties and coordinated with various regional councils of government.
- HCHA initiated meetings with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development to discuss options for the master-planned veterans community.

- HCHA began administering the DHAP Ike program for Harris County families displaced by Hurricane Ike. More than 2,500 families have been assisted through DHAP Ike from November 2008 to December 2011.
- In addition to Harris County families, the HCHA has assisted over 400 families under the DHAP Ike-Texas/USA program for families throughout Texas displaced by Hurricane Ike from November 2008 to December 2011.
- HCHA developed a comprehensive study of housing laws, actions, and programs in hurricane-prone states for the governor of Texas. HCHA has analyzed the best practices for the development and protection of housing developments throughout the Gulf Coast. The governor and the Texas Legislature will take up this report at the next session, improving the lives of all Harris County citizens through building practices, codes, and smart coastal design.
- HCHA managed the DHAP Greater New Orleans operations, which consisted of managing six housing authority disaster programs in the greater New Orleans area. This effort fulfilled a request by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to help New Orleans.

## **2009**

- HCHA purchased 91 acres of land for a veteran-themed, master-planned community.
- HCHA submitted TDHCA Tax Credit Applications for Sierra Meadows and Cypresswood Estates.
- HCHA published the Residential Damage Assessment Report for Harris County, by which more than \$8 billion of property damage was identified.
- HCHA began the initial intake of over 4,000 DHAP Katrina/Rita families for eligibility into the HCV program.

- In partnership with the Brookings Institute, HCHA developed a white paper regarding disaster preparedness in housing. HCHA is recognized as a national leader in emergency housing.
- HCHA designed America's first one-of-a-kind master-planned waterfront community designed for and dedicated to veterans. The current design includes beautiful and spacious home sites, condominiums, multifamily residential units, retail, offices, and medical facilities, as well as 44 memorial monuments, ceremonial parks, and other amenities located on 91 acres of impeccable grounds with scenic water views.
- HCHA submitted an application for a Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grant and a Community Development Block Grant to build 88 units of senior housing on a foreclosed property to stabilize a neighborhood and provide affordable housing for seniors.
- HCHA developed and presented a DHAP operational plan to the Secretary of HUD. The plan outlines the disaster and recovery recommendations to designate HUD as the lead federal agency for the provision of temporary housing following a disaster, in connection with Katrina lessons learned.
- HCHA moved the entire operations of the housing choice voucher program to 8933 Interchange to accommodate and manage the transition of up to 2,000 new families that HUD awarded to Harris County. The previous housing choice voucher program consisted of 1,840 families. It was estimated at the time that 2,000 additional families would be added to the program permanently, resulting in an additional \$15 million per year of housing assistance payments in the community.
- HCHA created Housing Americas, a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing affordable housing throughout the States and assisting other public housing authorities on an as-needed basis. The foundation of the other 4,100 public housing authorities throughout the country is to help low- and moderate-income people, and HCHA has developed a tool that can help those other organizations.
- HCHA assisted in the effort to pass legislation creating H.B. 3558, allowing housing authorities to develop veteran housing communities without regard to jurisdictional boundaries.

- HCHA developed a comparative study of housing legislation and recommendations for the Texas Governor's Disaster Recovery and Renewal Commission.
- HCHA submitted Final TDHCA Application for Sierra Meadows.
- HCHA submitted HOME application for Sierra Meadows.
- Independent financial audits performed for the past 7 years exhibit zero findings and sound financial policy.
- Magnolia Estates became 100% leased and stabilized in March 2009.
- The HCHA housing choice voucher program doubled in size by the conversion of DHAP Katrina/Rita families and DHAP-USA. These are permanent housing choice vouchers for Harris County obtained by the conversion process.
- HCHA hosted a workshop with 25 other housing authorities to conduct REO training for public housing authorities to assist in structuring their programs.
- HCHA was awarded approximately \$12.5 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program/Community Development Block Grant funds for Cypresswood Estates.
- HCHA finalized preliminary design for a senior veteran development and held a board retreat to discuss the various design, engineering, and partnership aspects for this master-planned community.
- HCHA invited to be a presenter at a NAHRO conference as an expert on providing affordable housing solutions.
- HCHA purchased 9.9 acres for Cypresswood Estates.
- HCHA commenced predevelopment and design plans for Cypresswood Estates.
- HCHA developed and launched a veteran-themed white paper on why we should house veterans, resulting in HCHA Board of Commissioners requesting HCHA staff to build veteran housing.

- HCHA received the IABC Bronze Quill Award of Merit for the creation of the Hurricane Ike “Need Ike Relief” video.
- HCHA completed the HUD Consolidated On-Site Review. This procedure occurs every 10 years to review and audit all housing authority policies, procedures, and operations. The review resulted in the following, as reported by HUD:
  - No findings or negative observations.
  - “HCHA practices are some of the best throughout our region.”
  - Exemplary recognition for the HCHA HCV Briefing Packets, HCHA Intake System, and Lobby.
  - The HCHA File Room control has been set as the example for HUD Region VI.
  - Noted as the best practice quality control protocol.
  - Exemplary continuous training program for staff.
- HCHA was awarded \$2 million in HOME funds for Sierra Meadows.
- HCHA was awarded \$1.18 million in tax credits for Sierra Meadows.
- HCHA completed its permanent loan conversion from construction financing for Magnolia Estates.
- HCHA was granted approval from the City of Houston for final plan approval for master-planned housing developments.
- HCHA converted to permanent loan on Primrose at Heritage Park.
- HCHA finalized design and financing for the first Platinum LEED development in Harris County. HCHA leads the way in terms of new energy resources in Houston.
- HCHA negotiated and executed MUD Developer Fee-Sharing Agreement for new developments.
- Three homeownership workshops were provided to a total 160 Housing Choice Voucher Program participant families earning more than \$20,000 per year.

- The HCHA closed its 2009 fiscal year as a SEMAP High Performer, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's highest rating.
- All six of HCHA's affordable-housing developments maintained compliance requirements with HOME and tax credit programs.
- HCHA created seven new homeowners through its Independence Homeownership Program in 2009.
- In 2009, the HCHA acquired an additional 1,200 vouchers for the citizens of Harris County.

## 2010

- The HCHA closed its 2010 fiscal year as a SEMAP High Performer, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's highest rating. This is the eighth year in a row the HCHA has been awarded this honor. In addition, national housing experts have recently stated that the HCHA is one of the best housing authorities in America.
- HCHA created more than 300 jobs through the construction industry by building two new affordable-housing developments in 2010: Cypresswood Estates and Sierra Meadows.
- All six of HCHA's affordable-housing developments maintained compliance requirements with HOME and Tax Credit programs and are 100% leased.
- In 2010, the HCHA Housing Choice Voucher Program acquired an average of \$350 million in rental assistance payments for the citizens of Harris County.
- Five families successfully participated in the HCHA Independence Homeownership Program in 2010. This program continues to assist and advocate low-income working families to achieve goals of the American dream of homeownership, thus carrying on the HCHA mission of assisting clients to cross the bridge into self-sufficiency.
- HCHA received the NAHRO Award of Excellence for the HCHA HUD-VASH Voucher Program. HCHA continues to be the regional leader in developing housing solutions for veterans.

- HCHA received its eighth independent financial audit, which demonstrated sound financial policy and zero findings for 2010.

## 2011

- HCHA was a finalist for the National Association of Home Builders award for Best Example of Green Building Concepts. Using the newest designs in green building, HCHA's award-winning Cypresswood Estates is Houston's premier affordable active-adult green community, using the highest possible LEED green building standards (Platinum LEED certification).
- The Thomas Apartments complex, an HCHA MOD-Rehab, remains 100% leased.
- HCHA closed the fiscal year with a 99% lease-up rate for the Housing Choice Voucher Program in March 2010.
- HCHA assisted more than 2,000 DHAP clients in 2010.
- HCHA Chairman Casey Wallace won three NAHRO awards: he is named Chairman of the Year for Texas, for the region (Southwestern United States), and for the nation.
- U.S. Green Building Council awards HCHA with certified LEED Platinum Award of Excellence for Cypresswood Estates.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in association with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs awarded HCHA 125 additional family vouchers to assist veterans in securing housing options in the Houston region.