

For Immediate Release

RIHA Housing Choice Voucher Program Earns HUD High-Performance Rating

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has given The Rock Island Housing Authority (RIHA) a section eight management assessment program (SEMAP) rating of High-Performer. RIHA provides homes for 1,047 families living within the City of Rock Island. Two-hundred-thirty of those families utilize a section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) to subsidize the payment for their homes.

The HCV program is the federal government's major program for assisting low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing within the community and are not required to live in public housing. HCV participants are free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

Each year, HUD, utilizes SEMAP to measure the performance of the public housing authorities (PHAs) administering the HCV program. SEMAP covers 14 key areas including:

- Proper selection of applicants from the housing choice voucher waiting list
- Sound determination of reasonable rent for each unit leased
- Establishment of payment standards within the required range of the HUD fair market rent
- Accurate verification of family income
- Timely annual reexaminations of family income
- Correct calculation of the tenant share of the rent and the housing assistance payment
- Maintenance of a current schedule of allowances for tenant utility costs
- Ensure units comply with the housing quality standards (HQS) before families enter into leases and PHAs enter into housing assistance contracts with landlords
- Timely annual housing quality inspections
- Performing of quality control inspections to ensure housing quality
- Ensure that landlords and tenants promptly correct housing quality deficiencies
- Ensure that all available housing choice vouchers are used
- Expand housing choice outside areas of poverty or minority concentration
- Enroll families in the family self-sufficiency (FSS) programs as required and help FSS families achieve increases in employment income.

RIHA receives funds from HUD to administer the HCV program. The number of vouchers available to RIHA for distribution to section 8 program participants is based on that funding.

Changes in the voucher funding and administrative fee formulas from 2004 – 2007 resulted in the loss of approximately 150,000 vouchers nationwide. In spite of these catastrophic program losses, RIHA has maintained all of its vouchers allowing them to continue to provide decent, safe, and sanitary private market housing to everyone on the program.

RIHA has 478 families including elderly and disabled individuals on their HCV waiting list indicating a significant need for additional affordable housing choices within the City of Rock Island.

RIHA is committed to pursuing new and creative ways to meet the changing housing needs of the diverse population of the City of Rock Island. We are dedicated to creating safe, viable and vibrant communities for a

broad-based market founded on transition and hope. As an organization and as a member of the Rock Island community, we strive to make Rock Island a better, healthier place for *all* people to live.