



For Immediate Release

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Recognizes the Orange Housing Authority for Exceptional Management

Housing Authority Deemed a “High Performer”

ORANGE – December 10, 2014 – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has given the Orange Housing Authority (OHA) its highest marks in recent memory for strong performance.

OHA scored in the 90th percentile of housing authority’s nationally for its complete management performance under the federal “Public Housing Assessment Score,” which evaluates the agency’s performance in such categories as physical, financial, capital and overall management.

The assessment evaluates the status of each property supported by HUD. This measurement is used to underline good practices by each housing authority and draw attention to inefficiencies.

Since 1998, all public housing authorities across the nation are required to participate in HUD’s annual assessment.

In 2005, OHA scored as low as 49 for its overall management operations, putting the agency in jeopardy of losing federal and state resources. In the latest assessment, OHA scored an impressive 92, higher than most other housing authorities in the state and nation. This is the second year in a row the Housing Authority has been ranked as a “High Performer.”

Under Dr. Walter McNeil’s leadership, as executive director, OHA has been able to responsibly develop safe and decent affordable housing for its residents, while assuring the responsible use of its resources.

“OHA has proven over time to be a trusting steward of state and federal money for the community,” McNeil said. “We are extremely proud of our progress, to date. Our most recent federal score underlines the quality work we are doing here.”

OHA and the Orange Housing Development Corporation have worked collaboratively to revive the East Ward’s community, a neighborhood once ridden by crime and violence. Their success is evident throughout Oakwood Avenue, Parrow Street and North Parrow.

One prime example is the redevelopment of the Dr. Walter G. Alexander Court Public Housing Development. In 2010, the OHA was awarded tax credits and financing from the New Jersey Housing Mortgage and Finance Agency (NJHMFA) with a total value of \$23.3 million to revitalize the buildings.

The redevelopment resulted in a \$32 million total investment for the first two phases of the project, comprising 114 residential units, 48 affordable housing units for seniors and 66 affordable housing family units.

In 2013, the NJHMFA awarded OHA another \$7.4 million in tax credits to complete the redevelopment with an additional 42 units and a 4,500-square-foot community room.

“Because of the hard work of many, hundreds of families now have a safer and more nurturing place to raise their children in Orange,” said Coram Rimes, Jr., chairman of the OHA Board of Commissioners. “We are certainly pleased with our latest HUD score, but not satisfied. More work is needed as we march toward becoming the top housing authority in the nation.”

OHA offers 250 residences, 642 “Section 8” vouchers, 114 tax credit units and is constructing 42 more. The public agency is committed to improving the community by buying properties, improving their worth and stabilizing streets and neighborhoods.

Learn more at www.haconj.org

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