

# Community Highlights



Transforming Lives & Communities

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Have Questions?

Customer Service Hotline  
713.260.0377

We value your feedback. Comments and article ideas are welcomed for the Community Highlights newsletter. Please include your name and phone number with your submission. Email submissions to [njones@housingforhouston.com](mailto:njones@housingforhouston.com)

The mission of the Houston Housing Authority is to improve lives by providing quality, affordable housing options and promoting education and economic self-sufficiency.



Houston Housing Authority

2640 Fountain View Dr.  
Suite 400  
Houston, Texas 77057  
Phone: 713.260.0500  
713.260.0547 TTY  
[www.housingforhouston.com](http://www.housingforhouston.com)

## HHA responds to displaced victims of Hurricane Harvey: Your initial steps towards recovery

In the weeks following Hurricane Harvey and its catastrophic affects across Houston and the surrounding area, the Houston Housing Authority moved swiftly to provide aid to its clients who have been impacted. Our hearts go out to all those who have suffered inconveniences and loss of property. We ask for your patience as the assessment process continues.



“Our immediate priority is the locating of our families and preparing to move those who need to be relocated due to damage from the storm,” says HHA President and CEO Tory Gunsolley. “We urge all individuals and families currently being served by the HHA to inform us of their status. This is critical for ensuring that we are able to collect the necessary data and make a final determination of assistance needed.”

Go online to HHA’s [Hurricane Harvey Status portal](#) and answer the questions provided. No information on income is required to complete the checklist. If you have any questions, you can call the agency’s Call Center at (713) 260-0600.

If you are a Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) participant and your unit has been damaged, we recommend these steps:

1. Register online with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or call (800) 621-FEMA (3362). Once registered, you will be given a FEMA registration number. Write down your number and save it. You will need the number whenever you contact FEMA.
2. Begin your search for a new unit search at [www.housingandcommunityresources.net](http://www.housingandcommunityresources.net) or at [www.socialserve.com](http://www.socialserve.com) (and click ‘Texas’ under the ‘For Rent’ tab.) We urge you to be patient but persistent with these services, as many were affected by the storm, including landlords.
3. If you need additional help with your unit search, call (877) 428-8844.
4. Consider units at your current property, if they are available.

HHA urges you to begin this process as soon as possible, as we anticipate that it will become more difficult to find available units as time progresses.

Since September 5<sup>th</sup>, HHA has been conducting unit inspections to determine their usability after the storm. If you request an inspection and it is confirmed that your unit is uninhabitable, you will then be eligible to attend a move briefing. We encourage you to consider units at your current property, if available.

“It is important that you take quick action to get into a unit,” says HHA Vice President of HCVP Mark Thiele. “Do NOT delay – start your search for a unit today.”

# MyGoals Update...

HHA's **MyGoals for Employment Success** continues to make strides in the lives of individuals in the agency's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Enrollment in the program has now reached over 340 participants and hosting weekly orientation sessions at the HHA central office. Designed to combine **"executive skills"**-informed workforce development coaching strategies with **financial incentives**, and **motivational interviewing** techniques on **employment outcomes** for recipients of HUD Section 8 rent assistance.

Along with direct coaching support, participants also have the opportunity to qualify for reward payments (up to **\$5,000.00**) for staying engaged with their coach and for finding and keeping a fulltime or part-time job. To date, **MyGoals** has aided over 25 participants find jobs and issued over \$20,000 to enrollees who have maintained employment and program participation.

Eligible candidates for **MyGoals** must meet these criteria at enrollment:

- Between the age of 18-56;
- Unemployed and able to legally work in the U.S.;
- Member of a HHA Housing Choice Voucher Program Household;
- Not a current HHA Family Self-Sufficiency Program participant.  
(limit one **MyGoals** participant per household)

One of the program's notable successes is Houstonian Angela Moreno, who was introduced to the program by **MyGoals** Career Coach LaTonya Rogers. A self-proclaimed "glass half-full" type when she began in the program, Angela desired to make significant changes – personally and professionally – so she might be more accomplished.

"From the first consultation, I realized that I was working with a woman who meant business! 'Excuses are not an option' was our motto," says Moreno. "Ms. Rogers explained that the goals I wanted to achieve would be set by me, and I would need to follow the plan I created for myself."

"When I first enrolled in MyGoals and had a job paying \$7.25 an hour, Ms. Rogers asked me 'If you truly believe you deserve more, what what steps are you going to take to get a better job?'" shares Angela. "This was the moment which inspired me to be more honest with myself."

It was at this point that Angela worked to create an Action Plan with her Career Coach, and progress began to take shape. Through weekly coaching sessions and consistent motivations from LaTonya, Angela began to gain increased confidence, identify strengths, and address those areas of her life that needed improvement.

"Because of MyGoals and conversations with my coach, I am now in a new position paying six dollars more than my previous job and in a doctor's office," shares Angela. "I am now learning skills to further my education, and doing something I enjoy. I am so fortunate to be a part of the MyGoals program and feel lucky to serve as a prime example that it works."

Orientation sessions are held every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 10:00 a.m. at the HHA Central Office. Walk-ins are welcome anytime and individual sessions can be arranged. For more details, call (713) 260-0590 or email [MyGoals@housingforhouston.com](mailto:MyGoals@housingforhouston.com).

## socialserve.com®

Searching for a Housing Choice Voucher property has never been easier. The Houston Housing Authority has partnered with [Socialserve.com](http://socialserve.com) an online housing locator, which provides a free search engine to find rental properties. Listings are available to potential Housing Choice Voucher participants seeking apartment units, duplexes, single-family homes or townhomes throughout the greater Houston area.

Socialserve.com provides a fully-staffed, toll-free bilingual call center that helps participants search for properties while monitoring the availability and accuracy of listings. The toll-free number is 1-877-428-8844. Participants can also find available units by visiting [MyApartmentMap](http://MyApartmentMap) or [Harris County Housing Resource Center](http://Harris County Housing Resource Center).

## Reading Matters!

Studies show that students with reading ability by the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade increases their proficiency potential in later grades. To help children achieve success, HHA's 2017 Summer Reading Program issued 3,460 books to Housing Choice Voucher participants. Also, our Opportunity Center offers free books daily to children who need them most. Start building your home library today by visiting the Opportunity Center, located at the HHA Central Office.



### Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program Recruitment Orientation

*"Think about where you want to be in 5 years..."*

Are you sick of living paycheck to paycheck?

Are you interested in buying a home?

Do you want to further your education?

If the HHA closed tomorrow, would paying bills force you to move from your home?

If you answered **YES** to any of these questions then the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is for you! Please join us as we discuss the benefits to the FSS

**Change your future by attending one of our Recruitment Orientations!**

*All orientations are held the 3rd Thursday of each month starting at 10 a.m.*

September 21<sup>st</sup>

October 19<sup>th</sup>

Where: Houston Housing Authority  
2640 Fountain View Dr., Ste. 330  
Houston, TX 77057

Space is limited. To RSVP, please email: [EWashington@housingforhouston.com](mailto:EWashington@housingforhouston.com)

#### IMPORTANT DATES:

##### SEPTEMBER

9/19 Board of Commissioners Meeting @ Oxford Place at 3 p.m.

##### OCTOBER

10/9 Columbus Day holiday – **HHA closed**

10/17 Board of Commissioners Meeting @ Lyerly at 3 p.m.

##### NOVEMBER

11/10 Veterans Day holiday – **HHA closed**

11/21 Board of Commissioners Meeting @ Clayton Homes at 3 p.m.

11/23 Thanksgiving Day holiday – **HHA closed**

11/24 Day After Thanksgiving Day holiday – **HHA closed**