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Item: Saint Paul Public Housing Agency Wins HUD’s “High Performer” Ratings – Again; Also Recognized for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

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Information about the PHA is also posted at: www.stpha.org

High Performer Ratings:

The Saint Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) again earned HUD’s top performance ratings for administering the Public Housing program and the Housing Choice Voucher program for its last fiscal year, ending March 31, 2010. This marks the PHA’s 20th consecutive year of “High Performer” recognition for public housing and its 9th year for housing vouchers.

Under the federally-funded public housing program, the PHA owns and manages over 4200 rental homes and apartments for low income families and individuals, about 10,000 residents total. In the Housing Choice Voucher program, also called “Section 8”, the PHA pays federal rent subsidies to private property owners who rent to qualified low income families and individuals. The PHA administers the voucher subsidies for about 4300 homes and apartments, providing affordable housing to another 10,000 individuals. In both programs the tenants pay about 30% of their household income for rent and utilities, and the federal subsidies make up the difference. Taken together, the public housing and voucher programs will return over \$57 million in federal tax dollars to Saint Paul this year.

The PHA’s programs are evaluated annually on a rigorous set of performance standards. On HUD’s 100-point scale, the PHA scored a 96 for its public housing program and a 97 for its Housing Choice Voucher program. An agency which scores 90 or higher is designated a “High Performer”.

Financial Reporting:

The Saint Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) also has been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA), honoring the PHA’s “Comprehensive Annual Financial Report” (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by the management and staff of a governmental unit or agency.

QUOTES:

PHA Board Chair Andy Boss: “The ‘High Performer’ rating demonstrates the ongoing excellence the PHA staff’s work. Running large public housing and voucher programs requires constant attention to both the details and the ‘big picture’, and it’s remarkable how well the PHA staff does it.”

PHA Executive Director Jon Gutzmann: “We have effective business systems and a lean organizational structure that help us meet the housing needs of our clients. But most importantly, we ‘get the job done’ year after year because of the hard work, caring and competency of our dedicated employees.”

Minnesota HUD Office Director Dexter Sidney: “The Saint Paul Public Housing Agency is consistently recognized as one of the top-performing large housing agencies in the country. They stay on top of every aspect of running these complex programs, delivering high-quality housing and services to thousands of eligible families and individuals.”

Examples of “high performance” at the Saint Paul PHA:

- The PHA has maintained a 99% occupancy rate in its 4249 units of public housing for 15 consecutive years. (In the private rental market, a 5-6% vacancy rate is considered “full occupancy”.)
- The PHA’s public housing units are well maintained. Maintenance requests are completed quickly. Vacant units are prepared and re-rented in an average of 13 days. Emergencies repairs are done in less than 24 hours.
- Major renovation at each site (now near completion at McDonough Homes) makes the PHA’s housing attractive, desirable communities.
- PHA residents pay their rents, in full and on time. The PHA’s collection losses are less than one percent of all rents and charges billed.
- The PHA’s independent public auditors reported “zero findings” on their annual audits of the agency’s financial transactions, records and operating practices, for 12 years in a row.
- The PHA’s Housing Choice Vouchers (4300 subsidies used in privately-owned apartments) are all in use and administered according to federal regulations.

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