

Landlord Link

Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara

Award Winning Affordable Housing

Last month, the Housing Authority's latest affordable housing development, Artisan Court, was honored with a Santa Barbara Beautiful Award. Santa Barbara Beautiful is a non-profit organization that has been honoring outstanding individuals in the community and celebrating excellence in design since 1965. Artisan Court was recognized in the category of Multi-family Residence. The Housing Authority was also presented in October with Solar Design Recognition Awards by the City Council for three of its developments. This Program was approved by the Council in 2006 to promote a reduction in fossil fuel consumption, efficient use of energy resources, and aesthetically integrated systems into the design of projects and buildings.



Fair Housing Testing

Fair Housing Testing is a way of measuring the quality, quantity, and content of information and customer service given to potential renters, home buyers, etc. by a housing provider based on a protected class under fair housing law. At the Department of Justice, the Housing and Civil Enforcement Section of the Civil Rights Division brings suit on behalf of the United States to enforce the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and familial status. The Act authorizes the Department to bring suits where investigations yield evidence of a pattern or practice of illegal housing discrimination. In 1991, the Civil Rights Division established a fair housing testing program within the Housing and Civil

Enforcement Section and commenced testing in 1992. In a rental test scenario, testers as similar as possible in all characteristics, except the protected class involved, visit the site of a housing provider (within an appointed time period) and inquire about the availability of housing. Afterwards, the testers objectively record in detail everything that happened during the test — what was said, what was offered, what price was quoted for an available apartment, etc. Later, the test coordinator compares the testers' objective reports to determine whether a difference in treatment based on the protected class occurred. In the past 16 years, 92 suits were filed, 88 of which were resolved with a recovery of more than \$12.5 million. For more information visit: www.justice.gov.

Energy Assistance Programs

If you want to green your home or rental property, but can't afford the upfront costs, the County of Santa Barbara has several programs that may be able to help. These programs empower residents to upgrade their property and homes through energy efficiency, water efficiency or renewable improvements. These improvements can save money, enhance your property, create local jobs and, of course, help the environment ... a win-win for you and our community.

EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

AIR SEALING & INSULATION



WATER CONSERVATION



UPGRADE HEATING SYSTEM



emPowerSBC

Launched on Earth Day 2010 by Santa Barbara County, emPowerSBC (Elective Municipal Programs to Optimize Water, Energy and Renewables) is designed to take advantage of strong local demand for home retrofits by addressing two main barriers for homeowners:

- 1) accessing upfront money, and
- 2) navigating a new energy efficiency market.

emPowerSBC provides affordable loans to finance eligible energy efficiency and water conservation improvements. To learn more visit: www.empowersbc.org.

Energy Upgrade California (EUCA)

is a statewide "one stop shop" to help homeowners find qualified contractors and rebates to drive down the costs of energy efficiency improvements. For more information visit: www.energyupgradeca.org

Energy Saving Assistance Program

You and/or your tenant may be eligible for free weatherization services and energy efficient appliances. The Energy Savings Assistance Program provides income-qualified households with free energy-efficient appliances and equipment, as well as energy education on how to conserve energy and reduce utility bills. Services provided may include attic insulation, energy efficient refrigerators, energy efficient furnaces, weather stripping, caulking,

low-flow showerheads, water heater blankets, and door and building envelope repairs, which reduce air infiltration, among other measures. The Energy Savings Assistance Program is free to eligible customers and is available to both homeowners and renters. For more information visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

Weatherization

The Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County (CAC) provides free weatherization services to low-income households in Santa Barbara County. This free service lowers utility bills by: installing weather stripping, water heater blankets, low-flow faucets, and other minor household repairs. Recipients can either be homeowners or renters with landlord approval.

Home Energy Assistance Program

CAC has a program that may assist households who have received a shut off notice from their utility company, or just need assistance paying utility bills.

Gas Appliance Safety Testing

Income-qualified applicants can receive FREE gas appliance safety testing. If your gas appliance is found unsafe CAC can repair or replace your old gas furnace or appliance. CAC you will also install a free carbon monoxide alarm. For more information on CAC programs: www.cacsb.com

Lease Termination for Tenants in the Military

Federal law allows military servicemembers to terminate their leases in limited situations. California expanded the federal law and provides military tenants special lease protections and several unique exceptions to the lease termination and notice laws. California law provides all military tenants with the the legal right to terminate their lease agreements with little notice if they are transferred or called to active duty. The transfer or deployment

order must be for at least 90 days to qualify as a permanent change justifying termination of the lease. They must provide their landlords with written notice and a copy of their orders. Termination becomes effective in 30 days after the next rent payment date. The landlord also must return any "lease amounts paid in advance" (such as the unused portion of the service member's security deposit).

Inspector's Corner

by Jerry Morales

Historically, the Housing Authority has scheduled its Section 8 inspections three months prior to the tenant's anniversary date. In an effort to increase efficiency, cut expenses and simplify the process for tenants and landlords, we are now moving to an inspection schedule based on census tracts. That is, inspections will be scheduled based on area/ vicinity instead of anniversary date.

Last month we began this process and inspected several apartment complexes on the same day. The process worked very well for all involved. At a couple of complexes, we had the participation of the resident manager who shadowed us as we inspected the units and made quick fixes for items such as a new battery in a smoke detector or replacing a broken switch plate.

This alone had many advantages – no need for failed inspection letters as most repairs were taken

care of the same day, the tenant was not inconvenienced with an additional repair appointment or inspection and the manager was able to use the opportunity to see the condition of the units.

With over 2000 inspections per year, it will likely take a year to complete the switch to the census-based scheduling. For apartment complexes with 20 or more Section 8 tenants, we will send the landlord or property manager the date and a list of the scheduled inspections. If you choose to have a manager present and/or a repairman on site, we will be happy to coordinate the inspections with them.

We hope that this change is as beneficial to you as for the Housing Authority. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 805- 897-1049.

New Tenant Screening Requirement

The federal Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 requires users of consumer reports, beginning on July 21, 2011, to also provide credit scores to applicants if the score was used in taking adverse action. Currently the Fair Credit Reporting Act requires that an adverse action notice only include notice of the applicant's right to receive a

free copy of his or her consumer report. The Dodd-Frank Act amended that to stipulate the credit score itself must be included. Adverse action notices are provided to rental applicants who, after the tenant screening process, are denied. You can find more information at the California Apartment Association website www.caanet.org.



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

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MISSION

The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara is a local public agency created under state law for the purpose of providing safe, decent, and quality affordable housing and supportive services to eligible person with limited incomes, through a variety of federal, state, local and private resources.

VISION

HACSB does more than handle the day-to-day demands of providing affordable housing solutions to lower income families, seniors and the disabled. We strive to craft solutions to our Community's affordable housing dilemma in a holistic manner, and turn them into reality.

News Flash!

FREE ADVERTISING for your vacancies!

The Housing Authority continues to maintain a **FREE** listing service for your vacancies. If you want to fill a vacancy quickly, add it to our list which is sent out to all Voucher holders currently looking for a unit. Please contact Jerry Morales at 897-1049 or go to our website at www.hacsb.org to list your vacancy.

Giving Notice to Tenants

When terminating a lease for cause the "cause" must be tenant related not landlord/owner related. If a landlord needs to terminate a lease for other than cause, a 90-day notice must be served. Please refer to legal counsel for more information.

Furniture Donations Needed!

Our intern-operated Furniture Closet program is in need of your furniture donations! Your gently used items become a "treasure" in the new home of a low-income senior, disabled person or family in our affordable housing programs. And your donation is tax deductible! Please call 897-1041 for free pick up!

Lease Reminder....

The lease must have the name of the head of household; the complete property address, including unit number; the start date of the lease must match the start date of the HAP contract; the lease must include the full initial lease term and must stipulate the contract amount approved by the Housing Authority.

Who to Call...

For HAP payment questions:
Alicia Esparza, 897-1095

For HAP contract/lease-up questions:
Andrea Fink, 897-1034

For inspection questions:
Jerry Morales, 897-1049
Ronnie Anderson, 897-1045

Director of Housing Management:
Veronica Loza, 897-1032

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Carbon Monoxide detectors are now required by State law in single-family homes (in structures with 1-4 units) whether owner or tenant occupied. All other dwelling units must have the detectors installed by January 1, 2013.