



County agency shines

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SAN BERNARDINO - The San Bernardino County Housing Authority received what may well be the highest marks in the state this week by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Housing Authority provides homes for 32,000 people countywide.

HUD, which oversees funding for public housing, conducts the review to help measure how well they are run.

Local authorities provide shelter to low-income residents through the Section 8 and Public Housing programs.

The report grades housing authorities nationwide that receive funding from the Section 8 Management Assessment Program and Public Housing Assessment System.

The HUD report evaluates how well the local housing agencies do in several categories, including crime reduction, fiscal management, tenant satisfaction, site inspections and overall management.

"They look at how fast we turn around vacant units, how fast we respond to maintenance requests, tracking crime and related issues," said Daniel Nackerman, executive director of the county housing agency.

Federal officials also study the programs local agencies use to help residents gain economic self-sufficiency such as job training and after-school programs.

The report includes a review of all Section 8 landlords that partner with the local housing authority and uses a set of 15 indicators including how the waiting lists are managed and whether every Section 8 unit is inspected annually.

The review also grades how the county agency enforces its standards with the landlords to make sure the units are safe and sanitary.

The San Bernardino County Housing Authority scored 92 of 100 in its public housing review. For Section 8 it exceeded the highest possible score - 150 out of 145. Sal says they got extra credit JS

"We're very proud," Nackerman said. "We tried to find any other agency in California that had such high marks and we couldn't find any others. So we think we might be the highest in the state."

Nackerman credited his staff for the high marks, which he said had "really raised the bar this year."

The scores given the county authority demonstrate its success, said HUD spokesman Larry Bush.

"This score indicates that the San Bernardino (County) Housing Authority is serving tenants and the community, and being responsible with tax dollars," Bush said. The Housing Authority has also been working with Operation Phoenix, San Bernardino Mayor Pat Morris' anti-crime and anti-blight program launched a year ago in a 20-block area northeast of downtown.

Nackerman said the Housing Authority has been working with the roughly 60 Section 8 landlords in that neighborhood to raise the standard of living for tenants.

"So far, we've had trouble with two of them and they were terminated, and we've also terminated some families from Section 8 housing," he said.

Tenants can lose their Section 8 funding if they are involved in a crime or if they violate their lease.

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