



For Immediate Release

Newly released federal rating verifies dramatic 60% improvement in physical condition of Newark's Public Housing

Newark NJ—May, 28, 2009— The quality and maintenance of Newark's public housing has dramatically improved over the past year.

That's the finding of inspections of Newark Housing Authority properties done by independent contractors for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

NHA saw its score soar for physical conditions under the federal Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) from a 15 out of a possible 30 last year to 24 out of 30 this year. That's an improvement of 63%.

Executive Director Keith Kinard said the boost in the housing authority's physical condition score "reflects our focus on improving the condition of the properties."

The overall PHAS score goes beyond physical conditions to also measure housing authorities' performance in three other key areas: financial condition, management operations and resident satisfaction and service.

When considering all four areas, NHA's score showed an 8 percent increase from last year, rising from 74 to 80 percent.

Not very long ago, these scores would have been unthinkable in Newark. In 2005, the agency's overall performance rating was an abysmal zero and the agency was labeled as "troubled" by HUD.

Since Kinard took the agency's helm three years ago, the housing authority PHAS scores have significantly and steadily increased.

"The rapid increase in our score is the result of putting strict and sensible standards into place coupled with the collective efforts of the various department heads to ensure these high standards are followed through," Kinard said.

NHA Board of Commissioners Chairman Modia Butler commended the housing authority's management team for showing steady improvement in its overall performance ratings. "When you have great leadership, this is what happens," Butler said. "This is all about serving our residents with a superior product."

“This new rating reflects our level of commitment to strong service delivery,” said Kinard. “However, the work here is not complete until we climb above the 90% rating and accomplish HUD’s ‘high performer’ status.”

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