



NEWS RELEASE

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County works with HUD to ensure housing opportunities

The County of San Bernardino and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, are working together to ensure the highest level of service to county families who utilize federally subsidized housing.

“The County has one of the best housing programs in the state, so we are pleased to be able to work with HUD on making our program even more responsive to the needs of our residents,” said County Community Development and Housing Director Dena Fuentes.

Housing is a key element of the Countywide Vision, www.sbcountry.gov/vision, which recognizes that the availability of housing and a broad range of housing choices are essential to achieving the county community’s educational, wellness, economic, employment, and public safety goals. The Vision has been embraced by the Board of Supervisors, the county’s cities, towns, and school districts, and other community stakeholders.

The County and HUD on Tuesday (March 31) entered into an agreement that will ensure housing and County office facilities are friendly to persons with disabilities, ensure employment and contracting opportunities for low-income residents, and ensure housing opportunities for all residents in need.

The County will:

- Conduct an assessment to ensure all housing units directly funded by the County with HOME or Community Development Block Grant funds meet federal requirements for the hearing-, visually-, and mobility-impaired populations.
- Create a strategy to ensure programs meet federal guidelines for providing ample opportunities for the needy throughout the construction process.
- Develop a survey method to compile and maintain records on the disability status of applicants and tenants.
- Analyze the race, ethnicity, and disability status of the applicants, beneficiaries, and participants in County-direct funded housing, and amend marketing plans to target any under-represented populations.

“Housing is a key element of our Countywide Vision (www.sbcountry.gov/vision), and our work with HUD demonstrates our dedication to making sure everyone in the county has access to a



diverse array of housing choices to meet the needs of their families," Fuentes said.

The agreement stems from a 2013 review by HUD received by the County in August 2014 that concluded the 120-unit Loma Linda Commons development did not have the required 2.4 sensory-accessible units and the required six mobility accessible units. The report also concluded the development's laundry room should have had at least one front-loading washing machine, and that a courtyard exterior door push/pull force exceeded the federal guidelines of 8.5 pound-force.

The report also found two County office counters that were slightly higher than allowed by federal regulations, and an unwrapped sink pipe in an employee break room. HUD was also not completely satisfied with the County's record-keeping. However, the agency did not report any instances in which an individual had been unable to use any of the facilities in question or in which anyone had experienced discrimination.

"The review revealed only minor issues, but it created an opportunity for the County to work with HUD to sharpen our program and make it an even more vital element in our county's effort to create housing choices for our population," Fuentes said. "That, in turn, will attract employers to our region, strengthen our schools, and lead to safer and healthier neighborhoods. That is the essence of the Countywide Vision."

The County's Department of Community Development and Housing seeks to better the quality of life for the residents of San Bernardino County by providing community and housing development resources for low- and moderate-income families, individuals and communities.

The department invests several HUD grants to undertake needed infrastructure projects and services for targeted communities. Housing grant funds are leveraged to develop vision-based affordable housing communities.