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HUD and GreatSchools Team up to Help Assisted Households Make Informed School Choices



In a statement on December 6, 2011, HUD Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing Sandra B. Henriquez announced that HUD is joining forces with GreatSchools, a

national non-profit educational resource for parents. The goal of this new partnership is to give parents living in Public Housing or who receive HUD Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance better access to local school information that will help them make more informed decisions about where to send their children to school.

GreatSchools offers a free web-based tool, to parents and guardians. It is available at <http://www.GreatSchools.org>. This website offers information on more than 200,000 PreK-12 public, charter, magnet, and private schools across the U.S., and includes information on how parents can choose the best school for their children.

To find a school, users simply type in a city, address, or zip code and their child's grade level. From there a listing of local schools will appear with a GreatSchools rating, including schools' performance information, comments from other parents, and school contact information.

The website also features about 2,000 articles and videos that on how parents can help their children be successful in school with free materials such as parent-teacher conference information, homework help tips, and college preparation support.

"Choosing schools is one of the most important decisions parents make," said Bill Jackson, CEO and founder of GreatSchools. "We are thrilled to partner with HUD to provide millions of American families with access to easy-to-understand information about schools in their communities. Together, HUD and GreatSchools can help many families discover and attend schools of their choice, which can make a real difference for their children's futures."

Henriquez asked the nation's 3,200 Public Housing agencies (PHAs) to support the partnership. In a letter, Henriquez encouraged PHAs to provide easy access for HUD-assisted families to the GreatSchools website and materials. Providing these materials when families first enter the programs or during their annual recertification would give them timely access to information about schools, test scores, and extracurricular activities, and enable them to choose the best schools for their child.

For more information, please go to: <http://1.usa.gov/x4S8uD>.



PHA Job Training Program Makes Work Pay

Both New York City and San Antonio, two cities with unique geographic and cultural identities, are active in the employment training program Jobs-Plus. The Job-Plus program is a Public Housing-based program that focuses on increasing resident incomes and keeping residents employed.

Working with both unemployed and employed residents, the services offered through the Jobs-Plus program are tailored to the individual needs of residents, and use both on-site and referral services. The program also offers residents ways to "make work pay." Jobs-Plus cuts down the amount a family's rent would increase due to an increase in wages. The program strengthens ties with local community businesses and social services and increases support for work among residents.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) partnered with BronxWorks to launch a Jobs-Plus program in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx which will serve up to 600 Public Housing residents annually. Participating residents have access to employment placement, retention, and advancement plans in addition to training and education, which can include pre-GED, GED, and English as a second language classes. Financial counseling, focusing on such issues as debt, credit, savings, budgeting, and financial literacy are also a key component to the Job-Plus program.

"We are committed to providing residents access to the tools and resources needed for economic self-sufficiency and success," said John B. Rhea, Chairman NYCHA. "NYCHA looks forward to working with BronxWorks and others to support residents achieving their financial goals."

The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) also recently launched a Jobs-Plus program, which will be available to more than 1,000 Public Housing residents living at Alazan-Apache Courts and Mirasol Homes. The program is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Services' Social Innovation Fund and is working with local partners that include Catholic Charities, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the United Way of San Antonio.

San Antonio Mayor, Julián Castro, was pleased with the program launch, saying "The intersection of education and employment is critical to the future of our city and our economy. I commend SAHA for implementing the Jobs-Plus program which continues the agency's efforts to encourage adults to obtain an education and acquire needed skills for employment."

For more information on these programs go to:
http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/html/sif/jobs_plus.shtml.

TIPS

Section 3 offers Public Housing Residents a Job Hunting Advantage

HUD's Section 3 program encourages PHAs to promote resident jobs and community growth by allowing PHAs to give job hiring preferences to Public Housing residents. A part of the HUD Act of 1968, Section 3 requires that economic opportunities will be given to low-income residents and businesses in areas where HUD is funding housing or community development.

"HUD dollars should be invested in people as well as buildings," said John Trasviña, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. "Section 3 is the law. We will work with state and local governments, public housing authorities, labor organizations, businesses, and community leaders to create job opportunities and vigorously enforce the law."

Congress created Section 3 to make sure that the employment created by Federal housing and community development funds are directed toward low- and very-low income persons, particularly those who are recipients of government assistance for housing. 38,000 new jobs were created in 2010 through HUD investments and 47% of those jobs were filled through the Section 3 program.

Residents can find Section 3 employment opportunities in their area through a database that HUD has created. The Section 3 Business Registry will offer a searchable database where businesses register and list employment opportunities. Since this is a pilot program, the registry will initially be available only in Washington, DC; New Orleans, LA; Detroit, MI; Los Angeles, CA; and Miami, FL. The Section 3 Business Registry can be viewed [here](#).

"HUD is investing in these communities and we want to verify that low-income people and residents of low-income housing can also benefit from the jobs that will be created with that money," said Trasviña.

More information on the Section 3 program can be found at: <http://1.usa.gov/ijQekl>.

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Resume Tips

When applying for a new job it is important to put your best foot forward. The best way to do that is an updated and accurate resume. Your resume is the first, and usually only, piece of information that employers base their hiring decisions on. Maintaining a current and job-focused resume is the best way to get an interview that can lead to your new job. There are many resources available online to write and refresh your resume. Many free resources can be found at <http://resume.monster.com>.