



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

**News Release**

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**SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION  
MARKS 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, RECOGNIZING  
CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY SPEAKER TONI ATKINS FOR  
HER LEADERSHIP IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
AND ENDING HOMELESSNESS**

*SDHC celebrates history of public service during October Housing America Month*

**SAN DIEGO, CA**—In marking its 35 years of public service to residents of the City of San Diego (City), the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) on Thursday presented Speaker of the California State Assembly Toni Atkins with its first-ever Champion Award.

San Diego City Council President Todd Gloria presented the award in a reception at the new Central Library in Downtown San Diego, citing Atkins' leadership in advocating for affordable housing and programs to address homelessness.

“Speaker Atkins embodies the spirit of the San Diego Housing Commission’s role in our community,” said SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry. “Her vision of serving low-income families and homeless San Diegans has literally changed lives.”

As a member of the San Diego City Council, Atkins led the effort on August 6, 2002 to declare the nation’s first Housing State of Emergency in the City. The City Council also approved the creation of the Inclusionary Housing ordinance, administered by SDHC, requiring residential developers in the City to set aside 10 percent of units for low- and moderate-income households or pay a fee to support affordable housing.

Since that time, the fund has generated \$64.7 million. Some 1,696 housing units have been built, and 305 more are on the way.

As a State Assemblymember, Atkins authored a bill, signed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2012, which shifted \$30 million from unused funds to the Multifamily Housing Program (MHP) to build and rehabilitate rental housing. The bill, AB 1951, allows many affordable housing projects to compete for funds and provide homes for low-income Californians.

These funds were put to use in San Diego in 2014 when the MHP committed \$3,140,339 toward the \$13.5 million development of Independence Point, a 32-unit development in San Diego’s Lincoln Park community for low- and very low-income families, with 25 units specifically for families with a member who has a developmental disability.

During October Housing America Month, SDHC is commemorating its history of providing rental assistance, addressing homelessness and creating and preserving affordable housing.

More than 100 community partners attended the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reception, including: California State Senator Ben Hueso; San Diego City Councilmember Myrtle Cole; former San Diego City Councilmember Leon Williams, who served on the City Council when SDHC was established; SDHC Chairman of the Board Gary Gramling; Vice Chair Roberta Spoon; and Commissioners Ben Moraga; Kellee Hubbard; and Dorothy Surdi. With the support of Commissioner Frank Urtasun, SDG&E's Regional Vice President-External Relations, SDG&E underwrote a portion of this event.

**Among the milestones of SDHC's 35-year history:**

July 1, 1979 – SDHC begins operations with 56 employees and \$15.3 million budget.

Summer 1986 – Low-income households receiving U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 rental assistance through SDHC reaches 5,500, up from 2,100 in 1979.

March 1990 – SDHC establishes a nonprofit affiliate, Housing Development Partners, to acquire and develop affordable housing for low-income families, seniors and persons with disabilities.

August 6, 2002 – Led by then-Councilmember Toni Atkins, the San Diego City Council declares the nation's first "Housing State of Emergency." The City Council also approves, in concept, an inclusionary housing policy, to be administered by SDHC.

May 20, 2003 – San Diego City Council enacts the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, requiring 10 percent of new residential developments be affordable housing units or developer pays a fee to support affordable housing.

September 10, 2007 – The largest public housing conversion ever done at the time: HUD approves an SDHC agreement to transfer ownership and operating authority over 1,366 public housing units to SDHC.

January 14, 2009 – SDHC designated a "Moving to Work" (MTW) agency by HUD, one of only 39 public housing authorities nationwide, out of 3,400: Empowers SDHC to design innovative, cost-effective ways of providing housing assistance to low-income families.

April 3, 2009 – SDHC and Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC), directed by San Diego City Council to seek proposals for a permanent homeless services facility. Nine-member volunteer citizens committee organized to reviews proposals and make recommendation.

September 11, 2009 – SDHC Board of Commissioners approves a Finance Plan to leverage equity from its former public housing real estate portfolio: \$95 million is raised to purchase, rehabilitate or construct new affordable housing.

April 9, 2010 – SDHC lays the foundation for the implementation of the "Housing First" model in the City of San Diego, which is to provide housing for homeless individuals as quickly as possible with supportive services as needed. Permission from HUD granted to use federal Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers to provide long-term housing for chronically homeless individuals.

July 1, 2010 – SDHC is one of the first housing agencies in the nation to receive HUD approval to use federal Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers to address homelessness. SDHC awards these housing vouchers to nonprofit partners to provide long-term housing for chronically homeless individuals.

September, 2010 – SDHC awards federal Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers to the Downtown San Diego Partnership’s Campaign to End Homelessness in Downtown San Diego (Campaign). The goal was to identify the most vulnerable individuals, then provide them with housing, medical care and social services. SDHC has awarded a total of 125 Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers to the Campaign.

October 4, 2010 – SDHC Achievement Academy, an MTW innovative program opens: State-of-the-art learning center with computer lab provides career planning, job skills training and personal financial education—at no cost to Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) participants and public housing residents.

January 12, 2011 – The United Way of San Diego County launches Project 25, a three-year program using federal Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers awarded by SDHC to provide long-term housing, linked with supportive services, for 25 chronically homeless individuals who represent some of the costliest drains on public resources.

March 11, 2013 – Grand opening of Connections Housing Downtown, a one-stop homeless housing and service center. SDHC supports this year-round City-sponsored public-private collaboration with federal Project-Based Housing Vouchers.

Today, SDHC serves more than 14,000 families with federal Housing Choice Vouchers, its largest program. Since 1981, SDHC has contributed more than \$1 billion in loans and bond financing to projects that have produced 14,782 affordable rental units.

SDHC programs impact the lives of more than 125,000 individuals in the City of San Diego annually.

For more information about SDHC programs, visit [www.sdhc.org](http://www.sdhc.org)