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OAKLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY RECEIVES 93,000 PRE-APPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING WAIT LIST

Innovative Partnership with City Libraries

(Oakland, CA) – Oakland Housing Authority, dedicated to providing quality housing for low-income persons, recently opened its wait list inviting pre-applications for twelve different public housing and project-based Section 8 properties it operates in Oakland.

During a five-day period, a total of 93,654 pre-applications were submitted. Through an automated lottery system, 10,000 households will be chosen. Once the qualifications of those 10,000 pre-applications are verified, and ranked according to preference for location, the wait list each of OHA twelve wait lists will be finalized. These twelve sites include three senior developments and nine family developments.

The last time the OHA wait lists were opened in 2006, OHA received over 9,057 pre applications. “The rise in the number of pre-applications received by the OHA was a result of several factors not just the current state of the economy and housing crisis,” stated Jon Gresley Executive Director of the Oakland Housing Authority. “OHA’s campaign included very effective outreach, improved access through our innovative partnership with the Oakland Public Libraries and other non profit service providers. Another major factor was that we opened up site-based waits lists for the first time. Site-based wait lists allow families to choose any of the twelve site lists they would like to apply to be on, and apply for as many lists as they are eligible for. Consequently the numbers of applications has risen as households apply for homes in a variety of developments.”

The average household income of those applying for the public housing wait list was \$20,272. The overwhelming majority, 83% of applicants, are living at or below 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) which is \$26,800 for a family of four for the San Francisco Bay Area.

Service and innovation were the hallmarks of the wait list outreach campaign. This was the first time OHA used a fully Web-based application which focused on improving access to the process and included outreach to the diverse neighborhoods and communities OHA serves. To ensure access to all interested families, OHA established computer kiosks at its East and West District Offices. In addition, in a creative partnership with the Oakland Public Library, sixteen libraries throughout the City were staffed with members of OHA, who had been specially trained and available during all branch business hours, to assist potential tenants through the streamlined pre-application process. It is estimated that over 1,500 wait list lottery applicants used Oakland Public Library computers to submit their online applications. This partnership brought new and familiar families and seniors into their neighborhood libraries, and demonstrates what an important resource the library system plays in our community.

Marketing of the wait list opening included outreach to over 200 East Bay community based organizations, government agencies, and faith based organizations. Flyers and advertisements were available in five languages (English, Spanish, Mandarin, Khmer and Vietnamese), and placed in six print publications and three news websites.

The process for selecting applicants includes initial screening to determine those who are ineligible due to income requirements, or those families who may have inadvertently applied for senior sites. The actual lottery is done automatically by machine. Each application is sorted and assigned a lottery number and rank. Each number is then placed on a waiting list and is ranked by preference. OHA sets numeric scores for preferences, which include applicants who are a veteran, or meet self-sufficiency criteria (for example, college or technical training school attendance, part time employment, disability, or a combination of these factors) or who live and work in Oakland.

Notifications of lottery results will be sent to all applicants 120 days from the close of the wait list (July 31, 2009) with ineligible applications notified slightly earlier. The ability to move into a development is dependant upon vacancies at each property, or group of scattered site properties, with waits from six months to three years projected for those selected.

Wait lists are being created for three senior sites, Adele Court, Harrison Street Tower, and Palo Vista and three large family sites, Campbell Village and Peralta Villa in West Oakland and Lockwood Gardens in East Oakland, and six geographic groupings of scattered sites.

Oakland Housing Authority recently celebrated its 70th Anniversary of providing quality, affordable housing to Oakland's residents. It has revitalized neighborhoods, offered life enrichment services to its residents and has contributed to the local economy. Presently, OHA provides housing for approximately 10 percent of Oakland's families, with 3,221 public housing

units in its stock. 11,142 of Oakland families, elderly and disabled rent with Section 8 vouchers, which is a public/private partnership allowing clients choice in the private rental market. The average income of OHA families is about \$15,000.

For more information on the Oakland Housing Authority call 510-874-1512 or visit www.oakha.org

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