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NEWS RELEASE

Dubuque Receives Annual Section 8 Assessment Results

DUBUQUE, Iowa – Following the Section 8 Management Assessment Program process for fiscal year 2012 and site visit in June 2011, the Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Region VII Office in Kansas City assigned the City of Dubuque's program a score of 85 percent but indicated its overall performance rating is being withheld.

HUD recently notified the City of Dubuque of three concerns with the City's Section 8 Program. According to HUD, two aspects of Dubuque's preference point system and the reduction in the number of vouchers issued locally are not in compliance with program requirements.

In January 2007, Dubuque's voucher selection process was modified to give preference points to applicants who reside in the city of Dubuque, Dubuque County, or the state of Iowa. HUD reports the City must qualify applicants based on standard qualifying requirements, with no consideration of the applicant's current or previous address. Each locality is allowed to establish local preferences but consideration of where an applicant lives prior to admission is not in accordance with HUD rules and regulations.

According to HUD, "the cumulative residency preference point allotment, along with the elimination of the very-low income preference point allotment and the closure of the wait list to persons not qualifying for local preference points in 2009, as well as the attempted complete closure to all non-Dubuque residents in February 2010, were intended to and did operate as residency requirements, which are impermissible under the regulations."

Based on HUD's funding formula, Dubuque's program qualifies for a maximum of 1,063 Section 8 vouchers. Beginning in November 2009, Dubuque chose to gradually reduce its number of vouchers to 900, with 830 currently being utilized. This voluntary reduction was made in an effort to better serve voucher recipients and reduce the case load of the staff

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assigned to the recipients. The number of vouchers allocated to a locality is determined by HUD based on population, poverty rate, history, available federal funding and other demographics. According to HUD, the City is not in compliance with program requirements by failing to fully subscribe participants to the 1,063 voucher allocation.

The local preference points system was outlined in the City's five-year plan for the Section 8 Program which was submitted to HUD. In June 2010, HUD notified the City that the plan was approved; however, the notification stated, "approval of this plan does not constitute an endorsement of the strategies and policies outlined in the plan."

"It is the policy of the Department of Housing and Community Development to operate all HUD and/or federal programs according to guidelines, standards and procedures," said Housing and Community Development Director Alvin Nash. "These findings of noncompliance are the result of our local interpretation of the rules and regulations. The department has a solid history of compliance and we look forward to addressing these issues and continuing to serve the needs of our community."

While the City does not agree with HUD's interpretations, changes are being made to ensure compliance. In response to HUD's regulatory review, Nash will ask the Dubuque Housing Commission to approve at its Dec. 4 meeting a revised administrative plan for Section 8 in Dubuque as well as a corrective action plan to ensure compliance with program rules. The City will provide the corrective action plan to HUD no later than Dec. 10, 2012.

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