



Orange County Housing Authority receives \$884,560 to assist homeless Veterans through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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(Santa Ana, CA) – The Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA) has been awarded \$884,560 to further expand its ongoing Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (VASH). This funding is a portion of \$75 million appropriated to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for 2012 in a coordinated effort involving HUD, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and local housing authorities to provide permanent housing for homeless veterans in conjunction with supportive services.

OCHA has been designated as one of 28 housing authorities in California to receive VASH funding this year. The funds will provide OCHA with an additional 75 Housing Choice Vouchers that are reserved for homeless single veterans or veterans with families. Under the VASH Program, the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Long Beach provides supportive services and case management to eligible homeless veterans and then refers the veterans to OCHA for rental assistance.

Qualified veterans receive a Housing Choice Voucher and are able to rent apartments, condominiums or homes from property owners who are willing to participate in the program. In addition, veterans will pay approximately 30% of their income for their portion of monthly rent and OCHA will pay the balance directly to property owners.

OCHA previously received annual funding for VASH Vouchers in 2009, 2010, and 2011. This new award of 75 VASH Vouchers is expected to be funded in April 2012 and will expand the number of homeless veterans to be assisted by OCHA to 370.

OCHA was invited by HUD to apply for the new VASH Vouchers and applications were due on March 8. This notification on March 27 represents the most expedited application for HUD funds experienced by the agency. Through close collaboration with the Long Beach VA Medical Center, OCHA will begin assisting additional veterans in April or May 2012.

In addition to a strong partnership with the VA Medical Center in Long Beach, OCHA also works closely with the Orange County Veterans Service Office Vet Connect Program which is a partnership between the County's Health Care Agency and other partner organizations to assist veterans and their families. These additional VASH Vouchers also support goals and strategies in Orange County's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.

OCHA currently assists over 25,000 people with monthly housing assistance payments to more than 4,000 property owners.

COUNTY AWARDED ADDITIONAL VASH HOUSING VOUCHERS

March 29, 2012

Page 2 of 2

Veterans who are interested in the VASH Program should call the HUD-VASH Interest Line: (562) 826-8000, extension 2336.

Property owners who would like to rent to VASH veterans or other low-income households, should contact the Orange County Housing Authority Owner Hotline: (714) 480-2866.

For more information about the County's efforts to end homelessness, please contact Karen Roper at (714) 480-2805.

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