



# Jesup Housing Authority

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Mark A. Watson, Executive Director

Commissioners:  
Leslie C. Cogdell, Chair  
Clifford Davis  
Fred Donica  
Evelyn Jackson

## ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

JUNE 21, 2005

### **The Jesup Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners and Executive Director are proud to make the following announcement:**

“On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the ***Voluntary Graduation Bonus Program*** to recognize public housing authorities that experience high rates of families that transition out of the public housing program and all other forms of federal housing assistance. This is the first initiative in over twenty years to affirm that public housing's primary mission is to help low-income families gain access to housing for a temporary period while on the road to economic freedom. HUD has stressed that public housing should not be managed as a permanent housing solution for the poor. HUD has also allocated over fifteen million dollars in incentive bonuses to those public housing authorities that exceed a baseline transition rate. On the same date, HUD released the state and national rankings for ***End of Participation*** rates and average length of residency for public housing authority tenants. These two performance measurements establish the baseline threshold for the allocation of incentive bonuses. The Jesup Housing Authority ranked first in the state of Georgia and fourth in the United States with an EOP rate of 47.2% for calendar year 2004. Simply stated, this means that 47.2% of the residents receiving federal assistance through residency in a Jesup Housing Authority neighborhood transitioned out of public housing and all other forms of federal housing assistance. The JHA also ranked first in the state of Georgia and eleventh nationally with the average length of stay for its residents at 2.51 years. With over 3200 public housing authorities nationally and 189 located in the state of Georgia, this is a tremendous accomplishment for a public housing authority that was listed as a troubled agency only two years ago. Executive Director Mark Watson had these comments regarding the national recognition:

“This award took a total team effort, from the work of the JHA Board of Commissioners, the effort put forth by the JHA Staff, and the initiative of the current and former residents of the JHA in establishing their economic independence from this federal funding. The effort can be summarized by the mission statement of the Jesup Housing Authority: ‘The

Jesup Housing Authority and its Board of Commissioners are committed to creating a positive living environment for residents where people can live, learn, and grow to be productive and responsible citizens.’ The Board and Staff’s primary focus is on the residents and improving their individual situations through training and other programs that the JHA provides. It is truly exciting to be a part of the tremendous team at the Jesup Housing Authority. For over two years now we have focused on the importance of our mission statement, and it is rewarding to see the fruits of the hard work of the Board and Staff by making a positive difference in so many lives in our community. It is a tremendous accomplishment to be recognized as first out of 189 PHA’s in Georgia and fourth out of over 3200 PHA’s across our country at what HUD considers to be the most important objective for all housing authorities.”



*Taking part in the award ceremony for the high national rankings of performance at the Jesup Housing Authority are, from left to right, seated: RAB Member Grady Foster, RAB Chairman Leroy Daniels, Chairman Leslie C. Cogdell, Jr., Vice-Chairman Fred Donica, Legal Counsel Glenn Thomas, Jr. Standing, from left to right: Commissioner Clifford Davis, Jr., Maintenance Mechanic Clifford Bryant, Groundskeeper Ellie Futch, Director of Maintenance Roger Oglesby, RAB Member Melinda Johnson, Maintenance Administrator Chandra Cox, RAB Secretary Charlotte Beason, Asst. Maintenance Supervisor Ted Thornton, Commissioner Evelyn Jackson, Maintenance Mechanic Brian Wilbur, Receptionist Madeline Bennett, Director of Resident and Employee Services Vic Drawdy, Director of Housing Christine Morrison, and Executive Director Mark Watson. Not pictured are CBE Student Celesta Robinson and RAB Vice-Chair Tessie Gafford.*