



# Jesup Housing Authority

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## PRESS RELEASE

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*A view of a newly remodeled apartment building at the Jesup Housing Authority.*

The Georgia Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities (GAHRA), in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Atlanta office, have designated September 19 – 25 as Public Housing Awareness Week. Many state and local officials will join with Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing Orlando Cabrera and HUD Regional Administrator Bob Young to begin the week's events on Tues., Sept. 19 with a press conference and proclamation honoring the work of public housing authorities in the state at the Georgia State Capitol Building at 10 a.m.

The week's activities include the news conference at the Capitol in Atlanta on Sept. 19 when housing authorities will join with Governor Sonny Perdue for the proclamation. In addition, during the week, different aspects of housing authorities' work will be featured around the state. The schedule for those activities includes:

- Mon., Sept 18 – Modernization Plan Day**
- Tues., Sept 19 – State Legislature Recognition Day**
- Wed., Sept. 20 - Resident Involvement Day – Youth, Family, and, Seniors**
- Thurs., Sept. 21 – Homeownership and Development Day**
- Fri., Sept. 22 – Community Partners**

Events will culminate on Mon., Sept. 25 at the GAHRA Annual Conference held in Savannah with recognition by the Georgia Congressional delegation.

There are 188 public housing authority GAHRA members that administer and manage low-income housing across the state. More than 50,000 Georgia families reside in public housing units and another 52,000 households utilize housing vouchers (Section 8 subsidized housing) to assist them in their ability to rent affordable housing. The majority of families living in public housing have incomes that are less than \$9,700 annually and are elderly or the working poor.

“Housing authorities are at the forefront of understanding and providing for the need of affordable housing in Georgia,” GAHRA president Mark Stalvey says. “Our work to provide affordable housing aids in the viability of Georgia communities. Housing authorities are multi-faceted organizations meeting the needs of many.”



*Mark Watson has served as Executive Director of the JHA since June 2003. Since that date, the JHA has undergone an intensive restructuring to improve it's perception in the community along with it's ability to serve low-income families in the area with affordable housing alternatives.*

The Executive Director of the Jesup Housing Authority is Mark Watson, who also serves on the Executive Board of GAHRA and as Chairman of the Legislative Committee. “Locally, we currently house over 400 residents in 200 apartments in our communities. The budget for the JHA for FY 06 is just over \$1.1 million dollars. With the cutbacks in federal funding that we have faced over the last several years, it's important to maximize every dollar of income to help create an affordable housing choice for low income families. We currently are receiving only 54% of the funding that HUD cites as necessary to operate a PHA in our area. There aren't many organizations that could survive a cut such as this, but through the hard work of the staff of the JHA, along with the guidance of our commissioners, we are making the impossible work until our funding improves on a federal level. Our in-house modernization program allows us to save 73% of the costs of modernization of apartments based on the Georgia PHA average, while still producing a marketable stock of apartments that are a viable option for low-income families,” Watson stated.

In addition to administering subsidized rental programs, many housing authorities across the state also have developed homeownership opportunities for families of moderate incomes. In many communities, housing authorities are relied on to assist with strategic planning for mixed-income development of both rental and owner-occupied homes. In addition, the State University System of Georgia has called on housing authorities in their communities to initiate housing revenue bonds so that residence life halls may be built on campuses.

As independent, not-for-profit organizations, housing authorities receive guidelines from the federal government through HUD. The operating budget for housing authorities is derived from tenant rents and a federal subsidy.