



50th
ANNIVERSARY

AGENCY REPORT | 2019-2020

50 YEARS OF CHANGING LIVES THROUGH HOUSING

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In July of 1969, just one year after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the establishment of the Fair Housing Act, the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz was established. Initially, the Housing Authority assisted families whose annual income was below \$3,600 with an average monthly rent of \$41! At that time, Santa Cruz County was very different. We had less than half of our current County's population, neighboring "Silicon Valley" didn't even yet exist, and UC Santa Cruz had only 4,000 students.

Over the ensuing decades, the Housing Authority would grow to become the largest provider of affordable housing in Santa Cruz County. Since 1969, our Agency has built, owned and managed 428 rental units for low-income families, developed and sold 117 single family homes, administered \$30 million in disaster recovery funds after the Loma Prieta earthquake, and currently assists over 5,000 low-income families with rental assistance through a variety of federal, state, and local programs. These fifty years of housing success would not have been possible without the dedication of generations of employees, board members, landlords and community supporters. We continue to build on the momentum of our past. In the last year

alone, we have successfully appealed and replaced HUD's Fair Market Rents (FMRs) to more accurately reflect the rising rent prices in Santa Cruz County. This has allowed us to increase the amount of assistance we provide to the thousands of families in our programs and has resulted in funding increases, helping us add over 200 families to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. We've supported the development of new affordable housing at Pippen Apartments in Watsonville, and we've also improved community access to our Agency and our programs by moving our office to a mid-county location and re-opening our Section 8 waiting list for the first time in 7 years.

As we look ahead toward the next fifty years, we recommit to our mission of providing and promoting quality affordable housing to the low-income individuals and families that help keep our community vibrant and viable.

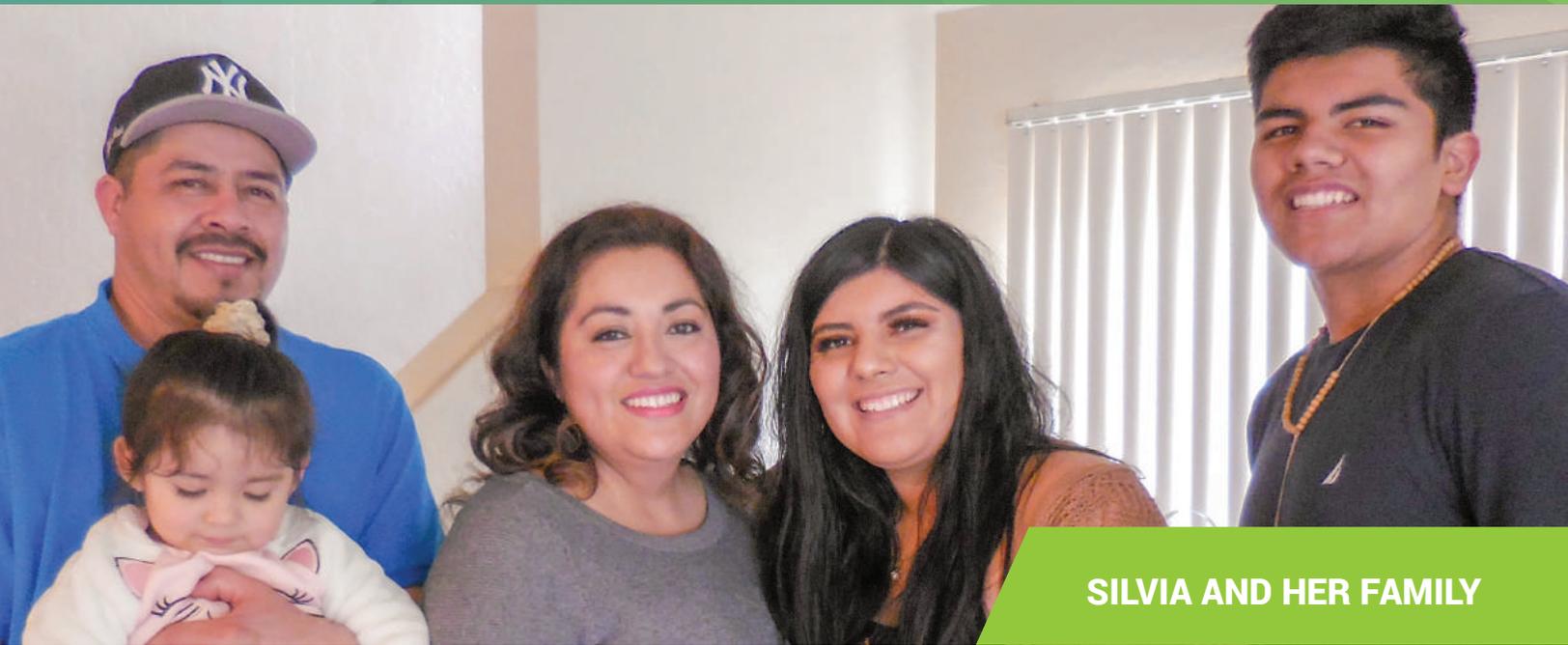


SONJA BRUNNER
BOARD CHAIR



JENNIFER PANETTA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

While we celebrate the positive and lasting impact our Agency and our programs have had in our community, we know that there has never been a greater need for our services, and our work must continue.



SILVIA AND HER FAMILY

HOUSING PLUS, A FAMILY SUCCESS STORY

When Silvia was laid off from her job she said, “Everything went down.” She was offered housing assistance through the Low Income Public Housing Program, and learned about the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program, or Housing Plus. “We’re going to make it,” she told her children. “I promise you guys!” In the Housing Plus Program, when a tenant’s income goes up, so does their portion of the rent. The Housing Authority, however, saves a portion of that increase in an account for the tenant. Silvia just had to set a personal goal and reach it to receive all the funds in her account—no strings attached. Silvia knew what she wanted: to earn a good income through a stable, full-time career. First she found work through a temp agency, and then a regular full-time position. “It took a while to learn, to get on track,” Silvia said. “Little by little, I got out of welfare.” Silvia also credits her success to frequent follow-up calls from her Housing Plus Specialist over the years. “That motivates you to become better,” she said. Silvia reached her goal and received all the funds in her account.

Housing Plus is open to anyone in Section 8 or Low-Income Public Housing. Contact Brenda Chavez 831.454.9455 for information on how to apply.

There are many other stories like Silvia’s. Currently, nearly 75 participants are in the Housing Plus Program working towards their own personal goals. 26% of the participants are working towards a degree (AA, BA, Masters), 20% for education for a specific career, 19% for employment, 19% for increased income, duration, or hours from employment, 14% to start their own business, and 2% to buy a mobile home.

“For 50 years, the Housing Authority has been a wonderful partner for Santa Cruz County to provide workforce housing in our community. As the need for affordable housing increases, I expect the partnership to grow to serve even more of our community.”

Ryan Coonerty, Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz

AGENCY AT A GLANCE

Number of Households Assisted by Program

Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)	4,544
Low Income Public Housing	234
USDA-Rural Development Farmworker Housing	70
Buena Vista Migrant Farm Labor Housing	103
Tax Credit Units	15
Shelter Plus Care Permanent Supportive Housing	48
Moderate Rehabilitation	51
Brommer Street Transition Housing	6
TOTAL	5,071

Financial Data

Contribution to local economy from Federal and State Sources.....	\$72,246,117
Amount paid in rent on behalf of low-income families	\$63,056,837
Amount paid to vendors.....	\$5,239,261
Amount paid for rehabilitation /construction	\$1,277,766

SECTION 8 VOUCHERS: A CLOSER LOOK

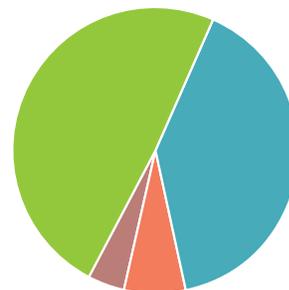
Overview of Assisted Households

Average household size.....	2.4
Average Household Income	\$22,946
Federal Poverty Level for family size of 3.....	\$20,780
Average monthly housing assistance paid to landlord	\$1,225
Average monthly household rent paid by assisted tenant.....	\$515

28% of Santa Cruz County population is eligible for federal rental assistance.



Geographic Distribution



South County	49%
North County.....	40%
San Lorenzo Valley.....	7%
Hollister / San Juan Bautista	4%

Household (HH) Composition

 HH with minor children 2,119	 Disabled head of HH or spouse 2,023
 Total number of Seniors in HH 1,609	 Veteran HH 245



BRINGING MORE FEDERALLY FUNDED SECTION 8 VOUCHERS INTO OUR COMMUNITY

Thanks to more than a dozen partner agencies and HUD, the Housing Authority has been awarded 137 new federally funded Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers in the past year! Here's what this means for our community:

- 50 more Housing Choice Vouchers for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities (NED)
- 29 more Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers for veterans experiencing homelessness
- 58 more Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers for families that need housing to be reunited with their children or to avoid placement of their children in out-of-home care. It also includes vouchers for young adults, ages 18 – 24, who were in foster care and were either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

For more information about these and other special voucher programs, please visit our website at:

www.hacosantacruz.org/waiting-lists

LANDLORD PROFILE: FROM HOUSED TO HOUSING OTHERS THROUGH SECTION 8

The Housing Authority welcomes Carlos into the elite group of almost 2,000 landlords who rent to families with Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. "I know it's very difficult to find affordable rentals," Carlos said. "I've seen a lot of ads stating 'No Section 8.'" As tenants themselves through the Section 8 Program for six years, Carlos and his family know firsthand what a difference it can make. During that time, he and his wife raised their young children and earned college degrees to further their careers. Carlos is now a faculty member at a local community college and is able to give another family the same opportunity he had through Section 8. Welcome to being a Section 8 Landlord, Carlos!

"I am thrilled that at the eleventh hour a location was available. Never have I known or heard of a government agency so surely 'on the side of the Angels,' so wonderfully helpful and honest in assisting folks as the Housing Authority. Thank you."

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program participant

ADVOCATING FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO BUENA VISTA MIGRANT FARMWORKER HOUSING

For nearly 40 years, the Housing Authority has operated the 103-unit migrant farmworker housing development known as Buena Vista Migrant Center, just outside of Watsonville. Historically, the migrant farmworker housing program has provided seasonal housing to migrant farmworker families between May and November. Over the years, however, changes in climate and farming practices have led to a longer growing season and more families have come forward asking to remain year-round in the community to avoid disruptions in their children's education. In the past year, the Housing Authority has supported and

implemented new changes in state law, allowing us to house these families longer, from April through December. The Housing Authority Board of Commissioners also joined local government and community advocates to support changes to the "50-mile rule" which required that all migrant families move more than 50 miles away upon the Center's seasonal closure. Due to this advocacy, recent legislation now allows up to half of migrant families with school age children to stay together in the local community and keep their kids enrolled in school.



FAIR MARKET RENT (FMR) STUDY EXPANDS HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILIES

HUD sets the Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Unfortunately, in expensive rental markets like ours, the HUD-calculated FMRs don't keep pace with local rent increases. That's why we have commissioned our own FMR study for the past two years. With our locally calculated rates, we have successfully increased the 2019 FMRs for Santa Cruz County

by 24%! When FMRs go up, we can increase our Payment Standards, allowing us to pay more in rent for the families in our program. This, in turn, increases the "buying power" of a voucher, helping more families find units they can afford and encouraging landlords to accept vouchers. The study will also have an impact on our funding. The prior year's FMR study increased our federal funding by roughly \$1.25 million in the first year alone, and this year's study is expected to generate even more in additional federal funding, allowing us to add more new families to our program.



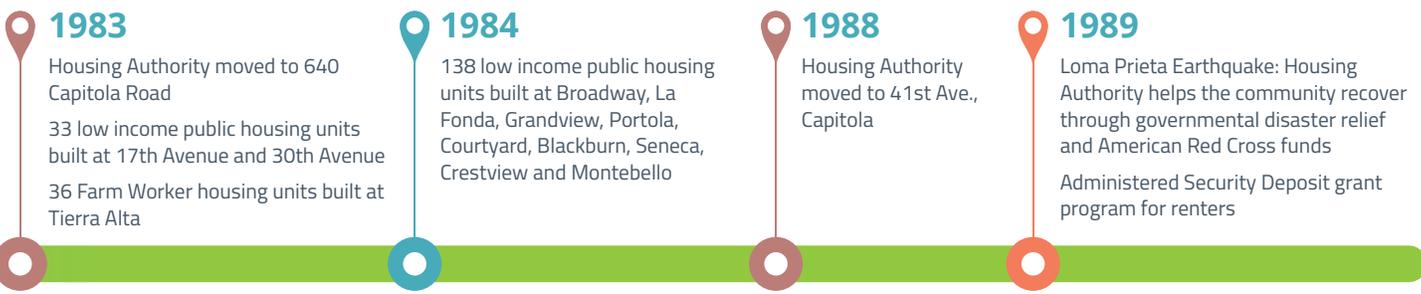


EXTENDED MIGRANT CENTER HOUSING BRINGS HOPE TO THE ROCHAS

Mr. and Mrs. Rocha have lived at the Buena Vista Migrant Center with their two children, Alex and Evelyn, on a seasonal basis for the past 8 years. At the end of each season, they would move at least 50 miles away to comply with the state requirement to be eligible to return to Buena Vista as ‘migrant’ laborers. Alex and Evelyn would stay at their aunt and uncle’s house to finish out the academic year without switching schools. Not only was the separation difficult for the entire family, it impacted the teen’s performance at school. Sometimes, Alex and Evelyn would rejoin their parents part way through the winter, only to fall behind on school assignments. Now the family can stay together. Mr. and Mrs. Rocha look forward to being available to support their children academically and Evelyn looks forward to keeping her A grades; her friends are delighted too! Even if there isn’t the same amount of work, the family is hopeful and grateful that they can stay in the community year-round, and remain eligible for seasonal housing at Buena Vista.

“For the last 50 years, the Housing Authority’s programs and services have provided critical lifelines to those in our community lacking safe, affordable, and dignified housing. One of these lifelines has been the Buena Vista Migrant Center, where the agricultural workers who plant, pick, and process the fruits and vegetables so vital to our economy have a place for themselves and their families to live and belong. The Housing Authority’s recent advocacy helped to result in extending the housing program for a longer duration each year, as well as allowing exemptions to the 50-mile rule so that school age children can finish their school year without interruption.”

Mark Stone, State Assembly member





I KNEW I WANTED TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION BY NOE ROCHA

"I was born in the Buena Vista Migrant Camp and lived there until I was 8 years old. In fact my mother grew up there too! That kind of housing assistance allowed us to save our hard-earned money, move out, and buy our own home. If it wasn't for my experience at the Migrant Camp, I don't think I'd be the person I am.

My decision to become a policeman is from my upbringing. There wasn't any crime in the Migrant Camp, but there was a lot in Watsonville. By my junior year of high school I knew I wanted to be part of the solution. I went to college, I earned my BA in criminal justice, at age 21 I became a probation officer in Merced. Then I started missing Watsonville. I came back at age 24 and joined the police force.

It all starts from way back in the day ... the experience of growing up in the Migrant Camp was the best! The bonds of friendship I formed ... I still keep in touch with the friends I made there as a child.

I encourage other youth to be part of the solution too!"

"Affordable housing is a critical need on the Central Coast. We're fortunate to have the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz leading the effort to provide housing and rental assistance to our low-income residents. As proposed budget cuts threaten affordable housing programs, I will advocate to fund these programs in Congress."

Congressman Jimmy Panetta, representing the 20th District of California

1991

6 transitional housing units acquired at Brommer Street

1993

16 low income public housing units built at Clifford Avenue

1994

Family Self Sufficiency Program established
115 single family homes built in Arroyo Verde and Arista Place

1995

15 tax credit units built at Merrill Road



PIPPIN ORCHARD APARTMENTS OPENS IN SOUTH COUNTY

MidPen Housing, with funding from both the City of Watsonville and Santa Cruz County, proudly opened Pippin Orchard Apartments in November of 2018. This is a new, 46-unit affordable housing development in Watsonville with one, two, and three bedroom apartments. Thirty-one of the units receive rental assistance through the Project Based Voucher program (PBV) of the Housing Authority; six are designated for persons with disabilities, and two are designated for young adults with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness. We applaud MidPen along with the City of Watsonville and Santa Cruz County for their partnership and their achievement, and we're proud that the commitment of project based vouchers helped to support the development of more affordable housing in South County!

We are actively looking for additional opportunities in both Santa Cruz and San Benito County to provide more affordable housing through the Project Based Voucher Program. If you are an owner or developer interested in pursuing Project Based Vouchers, please call 831-454-9455 Ext. 223.

“I am so grateful to be in a home, to have raised my children in a home, thanks to you all - 2 kids had a higher quality upbringing and that’s thanks to this program and all of you that work hard to keep the wheels moving.”

- Nina, Section 8, Housing Choice Voucher Program participant

NEW INCENTIVES FOR LANDLORDS TO ACCEPT SECTION 8

With the new Landlord Incentive Program, landlords throughout Santa Cruz County, including unincorporated areas, can feel confident renting their units to families with Section 8 assistance. Landlords can make claims up to \$2,500 to cover unpaid rent, damages exceeding the security deposit, vacancy loss, or legal fees in the event of an eviction. See our website for more information: www.hacosantacruz.org/landlords

1996
47 low income public housing units built at Pennsylvania Avenue, Arista Court, and Arista Lane

1997
Housing Authority receives 50 vouchers for Family Unification Program

1998
The Housing Authority administered the American Red Cross Revolving Loan fund, which since the Loma Prieta earthquake helped create or rehabilitate 348 units of rental housing in 3 counties

ART CONTEST: WHAT HOME MEANS TO ME

“Hi, my name is Audelia Fernandez. I am 15 years old and I am currently in 10th grade. In my home on our refrigerator we have images of what we want to achieve in life. That is what inspired me in the design of my poster. I created images of what my home means to me.

Home to me means faith, love, opportunity, and unconditional support.

Since I was a little girl I had faith that one day I would have a stable house and thanks to God and the Housing Authority I do now. It brought me the opportunity to graduate someday from high school and eventually continue to college. Home is where I will always find the love and support I need to achieve anything I want to accomplish in life. Thank you.”

The Housing Authority invites all children and youth (grades K-12) who are residing in assisted housing to create a poster on what home means to them. We accept entries all year long.

For more information, call Kate at (831) 454-9455 ext. 210.



2000

Housing Authority website goes live
Section 8 Certificate Program and Section 8 Voucher Program were merged into Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher
Loma Vista Mobile Home Park converts to co-op ownership with HA support

2003

5 project-based units added at Jessie Street

2005

Housing Authority moves to Mission Street, Santa Cruz
57 project-based units added at El Centro Residential Apartments, Emerald Hill Apartments and San Andreas

2008

HUD-VASH combines HUD housing vouchers with VA supportive services to help veterans experiencing homelessness

“The Housing Authority has been an essential partner with the City of Santa Cruz for decades, helping create and protect affordable housing under extremely challenging conditions. Following the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, the agency administered emergency relief funds to help create nearly 300 new affordable units downtown. They continue to administer the City’s short-term rental assistance programs for low-income residents, and most recently have reached out to rental property owners to expand the availability of subsidized units. We rely on the Housing Authority to leverage our own efforts for maximum impact.”

Cynthia Mathews, Santa Cruz City Council

The Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

Back row:

Ligaya Eligio,

Carol Berg

Andy Schiffrin

Vice Chair person

Ron Pomerantz

Front row:

Richard Schmale

Sonja Brunner

Chairperson

Rebecca Garcia



2012
Housing Authority implements a limited waiting list preference for Disabled and Medically Vulnerable (DMV) homeless individuals

2015
52 project-based units added at Resetar Residential Hotel

2017
Housing Authority conducts its own FMR Study, replacing HUD Fair Market Rents
39 project-based units added at St. Stephens Senior Housing

2018
Residency preference for the Section 8/HCV waiting list for applicants who live or work in the jurisdiction
44 project-based units added at Sycamore Commons and La Playa Apartments, and Pippin Orchards Apartments
Housing Authority moved to 41st Avenue Capitola



NEW LOCATION

In July 2018, the Housing Authority moved our offices to 2160 41st Avenue, Capitola. For 15 years, we were located on the west side of Santa Cruz, but this location was challenging for many South County residents to reach. The move to Capitola

aligns with our mission by making our agency more accessible to the community we serve. At our new mid-county location, it's much easier for most of our families, landlords, community partners, and our staff, to get to our offices.

“The Santa Cruz County Housing Authority is always working to bring better services to our county’s residents. The move to mid-county has made access to these services more equitable for everyone in our community.”

Aurelio Gonzalez, Watsonville City Council member and former Housing Authority Board member

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WAITING LIST.....(831) 454-5950
ELIGIBILITY & OCCUPANCY (831) 454-5955
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT(831) 454-5977
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