



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Disadvantaged and elderly Katrina evacuees to lose housing unless they act

700 DHAP Katrina families need to respond to the Houston Housing Authority's outreach before it's too late **Deadline: February 28**

HOUSTON - The Houston Housing Authority is urgently trying to contact more than 700 needy Hurricane Katrina evacuees assigned to the agency who will lose their housing benefits at the end of this month unless they take action.

Since December 1, 2007, the Houston Housing Authority's DHAP Katrina program has provided rental assistance to about 1100 Hurricane Katrina evacuee families to help with housing costs. The DHAP Katrina program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, ends on February 28, 2009 and will **not be extended.**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has provided special funding to provide Housing Choice Vouchers to DHAP Katrina families with an elderly head-of-household, a disabled family member, or gross income of less than \$125 a month. The Houston Housing Authority has about 700 Katrina families who may qualify for this continued assistance.

After numerous attempts to contact the potentially eligible families, fewer than 325 families have responded. "With the clock ticking toward February 28," Houston Housing Authority President and CEO Ernie Etuk said, "we hope that these families will promptly respond to the Housing Authority's letters and calls before their DHAP assistance ends."

The 700 DHAP Katrina evacuee families who have received letters and phone calls from Houston Housing Authority should go to the agency's main office at 2640 Fountain View Drive, Suite 100, to inquire about their eligibility. In order to expedite the process the families must bring personal identification documents, such as social security cards and birth certificates and other documents that show their family income and assets. In addition to meeting income, age or disability requirements, these clients must also pass a criminal background check.

"We're worried that some of these families who most need that help will fall through the cracks and won't be able to pay their rent beginning in March. We urgently need the families to respond to our notices and phone calls," Etuk said.

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