

NOTICE TO RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF BLAKLEY HOUSING AUTHORITY

As a result of the settlement of two lawsuits against the City of Blakely Housing Authority (BHA) and its former executive director, a number of important changes have been made to the management and operation of the BHA:

- Dan Cooper will resign as executive director of the BHA and will never again work for or with the BHA.
- The BHA will hire a new executive director (or may choose instead to hire an independent management company) to manage its apartments.
- No BHA employee will carry out security or policing functions on BHA property, although the BHA may hire licensed security personnel to perform such functions.
- After appointment of a new executive director (or a management company), the BHA will hold an election among the BHA tenants for a non-voting member of the BHA's Board of Commissioners. New elections will be held annually.
- The BHA Board of Commissioners will meet with BHA tenants every 3 months to discuss any issues tenants may have regarding their housing.
- The BHA will forgive past due balances of many former BHA tenants who want to move back to the BHA. The BHA will also delete from the BHA files of such tenants, to the extent permitted by law, by HUD regulations, and by their individual circumstances, some past criminal, disciplinary, financial or other negative information that might otherwise prevent these former tenants from renting a BHA apartment. (There are certain crimes and offenses that are too serious to be deleted from tenant files.)
- The BHA will not charge tenants for any repairs that result from routine wear-and-tear or complex-wide improvements. The BHA may charge tenants a refundable deposit to rent its community room, but this deposit cannot be more than \$25.00. If there is damage to the community room in excess of \$25.00, the BHA has the right to recover the excess amount from the persons responsible for the damage -- for example, by suing them in court.
- If tenants have past-due balances, the BHA may charge a late fee of 10% of the unpaid balance, but in no case will any initial late fee be less than \$10 or more than \$25. Subsequent fees for bills that remain unpaid for longer periods cannot exceed 10% percent of the unpaid balance. For example, a tenant who has a rent of \$50 a month and is late paying that rent will be charged an additional \$10 for the first month and \$5 for any subsequent months that that particular month's rent remains unpaid. Under no circumstances will these late fees be cumulative.
- The BHA will conduct three seminars (at dates and times to be announced) for tenants, explaining their rights and responsibilities.
- Each member of the BHA Board of Commissioners, and certain other BHA employees, will take a fair housing class approved by the U.S. Department of Justice.
- The BHA will not discriminate against any person in any way because of that person's race or color.
- The BHA will keep certain documents and information on file and regularly provide them to the U.S. Department of Justice.

These changes were required by a 2004 settlement that ended two lawsuits against the BHA. The lawsuits claimed that the BHA discriminated against its African-American tenants and applicants in a number of ways. In addition to these changes, the BHA paid \$240,000 and Dan Cooper paid \$12,500 to settle these suits.