



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — July 1, 2016

CONTACT: Beth Phillips, bethp@hacanet.org

(512) 767-7725

**U.S. Congressman Lloyd Doggett Joins HACA in Kickoff of Program
to Expand Job Opportunities for Public Housing Residents**
Grant is largest ever received by HACA for Resident Programs

U.S. Congressman Lloyd Doggett (D) today (July 1) helped the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) kick off the Jobs Plus Pilot Initiative, a new employment initiative funded by a \$2.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program will also leverage \$4.5 million from HACA and its partners, including in-kind contributions.

“HACA is to be commended for its leadership on an innovative program that will help more of our neighbors obtain long-term, livable-wage jobs to help work their way into the middle class,” said U.S. Congressman Lloyd Doggett.

Jobs Plus will assist east Austin public housing residents at HACA’s Booker T. Washington Terraces and Chalmers Courts by providing community and peer supports for work, employment-related services, and financial incentives, also known as Jobs Plus Earned Income Disregard.

“Jobs Plus is about opportunity for public housing residents,” said HACA President and CEO Michael Gerber. “This program is about bringing community organizations together to break down barriers to employment and help families who are struggling to make ends meet.”

Community supports for work efforts will include direct outreach to every work-able resident living at Booker T. Washington Terraces and Chalmers Courts . HACA will hire residents to serve as community liaisons. These residents will engage their peers and motivate others to succeed by sharing experiences and the benefits of work. HACA career coaches will conduct focused case management and service coordination to help participants choose the best pathways and services to achieve their goals, and Jobs Plus program partners will provide direct workforce development and training services.

Bringing the community together for recognition and celebration of residents who are working or engaging in skills training is also part of the Jobs Plus initiative. Jobs Plus will provide employment-related services including classes, workshops, training, entrepreneurial and post-secondary educational support, mentoring, and supportive services for teens and adults living at Booker T. Washington and Chalmers Courts who are interested in gaining employment or advancing in their chosen careers.

Expected outcomes of these three program pillars, and the Jobs Plus program, include:

- Job placement, retention, and ongoing supportive services for work, including upward mobility in the workforce and increasing the number of residents who are earning a “living wage”
- Creating and sustaining a culture of work amongst residents of both participating communities
- Financial incentives, in this case stabilized rent, to encourage resident savings, asset-building and the pursuit of additional economic opportunities

Primary partners on this initiative include Workforce Solutions Capital Area, the African American Youth Harvest Foundation, Austin Area Urban League, Austin Community College, BiG Austin, Capital IDEA, Economic Growth Business Incubator, Goodwill of Central Texas, Literacy Coalition, and Skillpoint Alliance.

About HACA: The Housing Authority of the City of Austin is a public agency whose mission is to cultivate sustainable affordable housing communities and partnerships that inspire self reliance, growth and optimism. For more information, visit www.hacanet.org, or find us on Twitter [@hacanet](https://twitter.com/hacanet).

#####