



# Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles

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## **HACLA Announces Election of New Board Chair and Vice-Chair to lead the Agency**

Los Angeles - Today, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles' (HACLA's) Board of Commissioners voted to elect a new Board Chair and Vice Chair. Effective immediately, Mitchell Kamin, will serve as Board Chair, and Margarita Garr, as the Vice Chair.

Chairperson Kamin is a Partner in the law firm of Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert, Nessim, Dooks & Lincenberg, where he represents clients in a wide range of complex commercial and white-collar criminal cases. Prior to joining Bird Marella in October of 2010, Chairperson Kamin served as President & CEO of Bet Tzedek Legal Services, one of the largest and most successful non-profit law firms in the United States. As President & CEO, he led a seventy person full-time staff and was responsible for major policy initiatives and overseeing significant litigation, in both trial and appellate courts. He also spearheaded the largest pro bono initiative in U.S. history, garnering multiple national awards, including the ABA Pro Bono Publico Award.

Vice Chairperson Margarita Garr was first appointed to serve as a Commissioner on HACLA's Board in May 2008. Vice Chairperson has excellent skills in financial planning and new business development. She has over 10 years of experience in the business of finance and has turned poor performing operations into profitable centers

"I'm extremely excited to assume this role at such an important time for HACLA and the thousands of families it serves," said Chairperson Kamin. "I look forward to working with my fellow commissioners, along with the talented staff, residents and other stakeholders, to make HACLA the best housing authority in the nation. Our unprecedented economic turmoil presents some major challenges, but also makes HACLA's mission of providing housing to low income Angelenos more important than ever. I believe HACLA can rise to these challenges, while continuing to innovate, improve our services and increase transparency," concluded Chairperson Kamin.

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HACLA continues to provide affordable housing to its residents, as well as supportive services. The redevelopment of Jordan Downs continues with the recently issued Request for Qualifications for a Master Developer, and a contract was recently approved that will provide individualized services for all resident families to promote self-sufficiency.

Both Section 8 and Public Housing are leasing at nearly full utilization or occupancy, to assure every opportunity for those in need of affordable housing. The Authority will soon be opening a 99 unit affordable senior site, as well as having recently broken ground on a housing site in West Los Angeles, the neediest area for affordable housing. The Authority is also a leader in providing housing for the homeless.

To date, the Agency has committed rental subsidy for 1,429 Project Based Vouchers (PBV) through the Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSHP). Just in the last several months, we broke ground on three new apartment complexes in Los Angeles, which will house disabled homeless seniors: Osborne Place, Menlo Apartments, and Willis Avenue Apartments, with 64, 30 and 42 PBV units respectively. HACLA has committed 25 vouchers to the Roadmap to Housing program, launched in partnership with the LA Homeless Services Authority to house homeless in Los Angeles.

Moreover, HACLA is awarded the largest number of HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program vouchers in Southern California. The largest grant of \$1,851,912 will further assist us in helping house men and women who served our country. To date, HACLA has provided permanent housing to more than 900 families through this program.

The Housing Authority has also expanded programs for its public housing sites, particularly aiding our young residents. This summer, four public housing communities participated in the Mayor's successful anti-gang program, Summer Night Lights, which is credited for reducing crime by as much as 40% in participating neighborhoods. Moreover, over 600 youth found summer jobs via Summer Youth Employment Program.

Our programs continue to receive industry recognition for our work. The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) awarded HACLA six Awards of Merit for the following programs: Jordan Downs Gets Connected with Free DSL Access, Partnership in the Ready to Lead Program, Domestic Violence Awareness Training, Preventing Scalding Injuries in Public Housing, Preparing Young Achievers for Lifetime Success, and Trees and Green Careers Take Root in South L.A.

The Housing Authority remains committed to providing safe and affordable housing and services to a very needy public under the worst of budget constraints. Both the Board of Commissioners and HACLA management are confident and committed that they will continue to move the agency to innovative and effective programs.

HACLA congratulates Commissioners Kamin and Garr on their newly elected position as Chair and Vice Chair, and looks forward to a successful partnership.

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