

# News Release



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*Leading Tennessee Home*

## THDA Providing Easy Access Site **Finding Rental Property with a Click!**

**NASHVILLE, February 7, 2008** – Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) has signed a contract with Socialserve.com to make it easy to search for rental housing across Tennessee without getting in a car.

The new housing listing and locator service will allow those seeking rental housing to search on-line for vacant units. THDA expects to open the site to renters in early May.

The new website's address is [www.tnhousingsearch.org](http://www.tnhousingsearch.org). When it is operative, prospective renters can select communities, rents, amenities and other features and get an up-to-date list of any vacant rental properties that meet their search criteria. Interested persons who do not have access to the Internet will be able to call toll-free 1-877-428-8844 and receive the same information, in both English and Spanish, by phone, fax or mail. The number is answered from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central, Monday through Friday.

"This is a great step forward for families searching for housing," said THDA's Executive Director, Ted R. Fellman. "We put this concept in our strategic plan and were quite pleased to see the Chattanooga Housing Authority had already established a search capability for its jurisdiction. We are working together. Having the Chattanooga area properties already available gives us a major kick-start. We are contacting property managers and owners all over Tennessee to make this as effective a site as we can. Everyone will benefit. It's free to list a property and it's free to look for properties."

Properties listed on the website will include housing offered by private landlords and public entities. THDA's focus is housing that meets "affordable" criteria, but all rental housing is eligible to be listed. Landlords, property owners and property managers are invited to call 1-877-428-8844 to learn about the site and begin listing properties.

"This is an effective way to connect property managers with actively seeking renters," said Fellman. "We know we have households that are doubled up. We know we have households paying too much for rent, and we know we have households with Section 8 vouchers who have not been able to find suitable housing. A free listing of available properties with all the questions answered will help immensely."

Additionally, this site will help disaster responders find housing for displaced persons. The lack of an active, up-to-date housing database was a large barrier when Hurricane Katrina and Rita victims arrived in Tennessee seeking shelter.

THDA's Statewide Rental Housing Study concludes that the capacity of all publicly subsidized rental units to serve the very low-income renter population (272,000 households) in Tennessee stands at 34%, ranging from a low of 5% to a high of 72% among counties. The new search site will facilitate full usage of the units available.

Listings on [www.tnhousingsearch.org](http://www.tnhousingsearch.org) display property features such as number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms, utility information, address, monthly rent, deposit requirements, availability for rental assistance, accessibility and other details. Pictures can be added, and there are links to school districts, maps and other community information such as public transportation. Contact information and directions will be included.

Through the partnership with Socialserve.com, property vacancy data is updated frequently. This service is available to anyone seeking an affordable apartment including social service professionals assisting clients with special needs.

Established in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1999, Socialserve.com, the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national leader in housing locator services, has been recognized by the US Conference of Mayors and the National Housing Institute. To date, 23 other states and numerous housing authorities have partnered with Socialserve.com to create useful technology applications.

THDA is a political subdivision of the State of Tennessee. THDA is the state's housing finance agency, responsible for selling tax exempt mortgage revenue bonds to offer affordable mortgage funds to homebuyers of low and moderate incomes through local lenders, and to administer various housing programs targeted to very low-, low- and moderate-income households.

THDA was established in 1973, making its first mortgage in 1974. It has provided affordable fixed rate mortgages to over 96,000 households without using state tax dollars. THDA issues between \$250 and \$300 million in mortgage revenue bonds annually for its first-time homebuyer program.

In the year 2007, THDA created the Tennessee Housing Trust Fund using state, THDA and locally-generated match to support programs for the very-low income, elderly and special needs populations.

More information about THDA is available on-line at [www.thda.org](http://www.thda.org).