Thank you for your patience and partnership as we continue to adjust to new norms and manage uncertainties. Your support throughout the year has been essential in helping meet the needs of CHA families.

I would also like to thank everyone who made Symposium Week ’21 a great success. We’re beyond thrilled that so many property owners, managers, investors, brokers, realtors and real estate professionals were able to participate in this year’s event.

As a reminder, Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) are still available to help families who continue to be deeply impacted by the pandemic, specifically those facing homelessness and survivors of domestic violence seeking shelter. If you have rent-ready units, please make sure they are listed on AffordableHousing.com (formerly GoSection8.com) so that voucher holders can find suitable housing as soon as possible. For more information about EHV, visit thecha.org/ehv.

In this issue of Owner News, you will find information on pest control, tips to help prepare for winter, a recap of Symposium Week ’21 and save the date for 2022, and a message from the Office of Inspector General. Plus, make sure to check out the webinars we have planned for HCV property owners starting in January 2022.

With the new year upon us, it’s important to take a moment to reflect on everything that was accomplished in 2021 and set goals for what looks to be a very promising 2022.

I wish you all a safe holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year.

Regards,

Cheryl L. Burns
Chief Housing Choice Voucher Officer

GoSection8.com Changed Name to AffordableHousing.com
On Sept. 13, GoSection8.com changed its name to AffordableHousing.com and made several enhancements, including an improved user interface and ability to list accessible features for the physically and vision/hearing-impaired. If you previously had an account on GoSection8.com, all data was automatically transferred and you will log in to AffordableHousing.com using the same credentials.

HCV Program Operations
HCV Program offices continue to be open by appointment only. Masks are required and visitors must undergo temperature and symptom screening before being admitted to their appointment. If you need to schedule an appointment, please contact the CHA Customer Call Center at 312-935-2600. Please continue to utilize the online resources available to you as well as the “no contact” drop boxes located at each of the HCV Regional Offices.

For the most up-to-date information regarding HCV Program operations, including any updates as to when each of the Regional Offices will reopen to the public, visit the CHA’s website at www.thecha.org or the Owner Portal at chahcvportal.org.
Exception Payment Standards for Accessible Units

Did you know that accessible units are in high demand, and when rented to a HCV participant with a verifiable disability, may qualify for additional subsidy?

In an effort to expand housing opportunities for HCV participants with disabilities, CHA has implemented an Exception Payment Standard policy for accessible units. An Exception Payment Standard is an increased amount of subsidy (up to 250%), which offers HCV participants who meet specific criteria, the opportunity to rent units previously outside of their affordability range. To qualify, a member of the HCV participant household must have a verifiable disability, and the unit’s accessibility features (i.e. ramps, widened doorways, grab bars or rails) must assist them in managing their disability.

For more information, please contact CHA’s HCV Fair Housing Department at fairhousing@thecha.org.

Preparation for Winter

Proper preventative maintenance ensures that your tenants are safe and comfortable, as well as protects you from costly utility bills or emergency repairs. Here are some tips to help you stay stress free this winter.

1. Check interior walls for gaps and drafts, and seal air leaks with caulk or insulation. Air leaks can happen in unexpected places such as recessed lighting, electrical outlets and pipe-wall junctions.

2. Check weather stripping around doors and windows and replace worn out material. Weather stripping plays a very important role in reducing the amount of cold air that enters your home, especially during the winter months.

The Chicago Heat Ordinance mandates that during cold weather months property owners/managers must supply heat to rental units or to any unit where property owners do not have individual control of heat.

From Sept. 15 – June 1, the temperature inside a rental residence is required to be at least 68 degrees from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. and at least 66 degrees from 10:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m.

3. Protect the water heater and exposed pipes with a weather resistant, insulated material to prevent frozen pipes and improve energy efficiency.

4. Check the building exterior for any cracks in the masonry, roof leaks, broken joint seals and blistering paint. Timely repairs can prevent structural damage from ice, snow and nesting pests.

5. Install outdoor lighting. This can help prevent falls on icy paths and make your tenants feel safer overall.

6. Be prepared for snow removal. Stock up on ice melt and other snow removal tools, and store them in a secure, but easily accessible location.

7. Check for overhanging trees and branches as they have potential to fall with high winds or heavy snowfall. This can help prevent damage to the roof.
Thank you to everyone who participated in Symposium Week ‘21. The week-long virtual event kicked off with a look-back video featuring CHA’s Chief Executive Officer Tracey Scott, who reflected on the history of the Owner Symposium, which was first held in 2008.

Throughout the week, subject matter experts spoke on 12 unique topics including property insurance, credit score building, energy efficiency and housing laws. Dozens gathered in our video networking rooms and built connections between sessions.

**Save the Date!**
Symposium Week ‘22 is scheduled for **Sept. 19-23, 2022.** More details will be posted once available at [www.chaownersymposium.org](http://www.chaownersymposium.org) ... so check back often!

**Pest Control**
Dealing with invasive pests can be difficult, but it’s important to take proactive approaches and explore all available options when it comes to managing them. Here are some tips to help get pests under control.

**Take preventative measures** — Caulk cracks and crevices in the unit where pests can enter and hide. Talk to your tenant about proper food storage and reducing clutter in the unit as it can make a difference in preventing pests.

**Know your responsibilities** — As a property owner, you are responsible for exterminating and eliminating pests. If your tenant brings any pest-related issues to your attention, make sure you do your part and help remove them from the unit.

**Identify the pests** — Common pests include cockroaches, rats, ants, wasps and termites. Each may require different treatment options.

**Safety first** — When pesticides are being applied, make sure the area is cleared of children and pets. Read and follow pesticide label instructions very carefully.

**Hire a pest control service** — Professional pest management companies often have access to more effective pesticides and management tools. Make sure to do proper research and screening before hiring a company. Ask your neighbors, friends or family members if they have any recommendations.

**A Message from the Office of Inspector General (OIG)**
The OIG ensures that violations, as they relate to CHA residents, employees, contractors, subcontractors or any entity receiving funds from CHA, are investigated and prosecuted. As a property owner, if you have any information regarding fraud in your dealings with tenants, CHA employees or CHA contractors, you are encouraged to report this information to the OIG. Immediate reporting, while facts are still fresh in your mind, is helpful. Complaints can be kept confidential. If you have any information relating to fraud or unethical activity within or affecting the Chicago Housing Authority, contact the OIG by calling our Hotline at **800-544-7139** or send us an email at fraud@thecha.org.
HCV Webinars can be viewed from the comfort of your own home or even on-the-go using a computer, tablet or smartphone. Join us to stay up to date on important HCV topics and learn about best practices for being a property owner in the City of Chicago.

For the full schedule or to register for any upcoming HCV sessions, visit CHA-HCVevents.eventbrite.com.

**Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections Workshop**

How do the CHA inspectors review a unit for the HCV Program? They follow the HUD inspection form! Join the inspections team as they methodically walk through a typical HQS inspection, highlight common fail items, and discuss the HUD regulations that dictate inspection criteria.

**Tuesday, March 15**

1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

**Property Owner Briefing: Get Started with the HCV Program**

New to the HCV Program? Want to hear the latest updates? Have colleagues who own rental property in Chicago and would be interested in taking advantage of the many benefits offered to HCV property owners? Make the most of your partnership with the Chicago Housing Authority and learn how CHA can work with you to provide safe, decent and affordable housing to Chicago’s families.

To find out more about what’s covered or to register, visit www.thecha.org/hcvownerbriefing.

**Thursday, January 13**

4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

**Thursday, February 10**

1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

**Thursday, March 10**

4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer