



# Going Places Q4 2021

A newsletter for participants in the Chicago Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program

## Message from the Chief



It's been quite a year ... adjusting to new norms, managing uncertainties, all while providing support to our families. Thank you for your continued patience and partnership.

I would also like to thank everyone who participated in CHA's 2021 Operation Warm. This year, over 6,000 new winter coats were distributed to CHA families and attendees had the chance to visit with organizations in the resource fair — even get vaccinated against COVID-19 and the flu. It was truly an unforgettable event.

As we look to 2022, we are excited to once again kick off the new year with our Take Flight: Staying the Course event on January 5. This event will give CHA college students the chance to network and build connections with organizations across the City of Chicago as well as learn more about potential internship and employment opportunities. We can't wait to see all of our college students next month.

In this issue of *Going Places*, you will find information on CHA's Choose to Own (CTO) Homeownership Program, resources available for senior residents, details about the HomeMod Fund and tips on winter safety. Plus, make sure to check out the workshops for HCV participants starting in January 2022.

I'd like to extend my best wishes for a joyful holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year.

Regards,

Cheryl L. Burns  
Chief Housing Choice Voucher Officer

## What's New

### GoSection8.com is now AffordableHousing.com

On September 13, **GoSection8.com** changed its name to **AffordableHousing.com** and made several enhancements, including an improved user interface and the ability to list accessible features for the physically and vision/hearing-impaired. If you had an account previously 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**.

For the most up-to-date information regarding HCV Program operations, including any updates as to when the offices will reopen to the public, visit the CHA's website at **www.thecha.org** or the Participant Portal at **cha.participantportal.org**.

### 2Gen Coaching Program

Children's Home & Aid's 2Gen Program gives HCV families the chance to work directly with a dedicated coach who will help them achieve goals in education, financial security, employment, health and safety. To be eligible for the 2Gen Program, families must have at least one child under the age of 18.

For information about how your family can receive one-on-one support through the 2Gen Program, contact Children's Home & Aid at **773-918-8643** or **zgeninfo@childrenshomeandaid.org**.

## Choose to Own Homeownership Program

Are you ready to buy a home? It can become a reality through the Choose to Own (CTO) Homeownership Program. The CTO Homeownership Program allows CHA families to use their housing subsidy to buy a home within the City of Chicago and pay a portion of their mortgage payment. The CTO Homeownership Program also provides referrals to pre-and post-purchase homebuyer education, credit counseling, real estate industry professionals, and other services to help families navigate the home-buying process. To qualify for the CTO Homeownership Program, you must meet the following criteria:

- **Income:** Household must meet income and employment requirements (Head of Households who are senior or disabled have an income exception), meeting or exceeding HUD's very low income limit of 50% of area median income (AMI).
- **Credit:** Be credit worthy with a 640 minimum credit score and good credit history.
- **Savings/Down Payment:** Have at least \$3,000 in savings (\$2,000 for HOH senior and disabled families) and capable of continuing to save.
- **Maintenance Reserve:** Have \$1,000 in personal savings prior to closing that will serve as a financial safety net for unexpected home repairs.
- **Lease Compliance:** Be lease compliant and in good standing with the CHA or HCV Program property owner and/or manager.

If you are interested in learning more about the CTO Homeownership Program or want to see if you qualify, please contact [CTOprogram@thecha.org](mailto:CTOprogram@thecha.org).

## Resources for CHA Senior Residents

Senior residents are an integral part of the HCV Program as well as valued members of each of the 77 communities across the City of Chicago. Their unique perspectives and experiences are important to our history and society at large. To assist our older population, CHA's Resident Services team offers a variety of programs and services for those living in senior-designated housing as well as seniors in mixed income and scattered site developments. Available services include:

- Assessment and referral services
- Benefit application assistance
- Health, wellness and educational activities

For more information, senior residents can contact CHA's Senior Hotline at [312-913-7164](tel:312-913-7164).

Additionally, there are many resources and support services available citywide, including Senior Flu Shot Clinics, Home Delivered Meals and Senior Centers. Many retailers even offer senior shopping hours dedicated for seniors to purchase groceries without crowds:

- Whole Foods: One hour before stores open every day
- Target: First hour of every Wednesday
- Jewel-Osco: 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Mariano's: 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. every day
- Walmart: One hour before stores open on Tuesdays
- Tony's Fresh Market: 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays

To view a full list of Senior Services offered through the City of Chicago, visit [www.chicago.gov/seniors](http://www.chicago.gov/seniors).

## Winter Safety

As colder weather approaches, it's important to take the necessary precautions to protect yourself and your home. Here are a few tips to help you be safe:

**Keep up on unit maintenance.** Make sure to check your roof, ceiling and gutters for any damage. These items are essential for proper air flow in your unit. If any repairs are needed, make sure to notify your property owner or manager right away.

**Practice fire and heater safety.** Space heaters are a common cause of fires. When in use, make sure to keep space heaters at least three (3) feet away from furniture, curtains or bedding. If possible, use an electric space heater with an automatic shutoff. If you're using a fireplace, make sure the surrounding area is clutter-free and there is proper ventilation to the outside.

**Be prepared for a winter storm.** Chicago winters can be dangerous. Make sure you are prepared in case of a weather-related emergency. Keep non-perishable foods, drinking water, spare batteries and a first aid kit on hand. Make sure to double-check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, flashlights and any other battery-powered devices in your home.

**Check the heat in your unit.** 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. *Reminder:* 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.

## Neighborhood Spotlight: Wicker Park

Wicker Park is bound by Bloomingdale to the North, Ashland to the East, Division to the South and Western to the West.

Wicker Park was named after city alderman and state legislator Charles Gustavus Wicker. One of the most popular attractions in Wicker Park is the 606 trail. The 606 is a 2.7 mile long elevated park and trail that runs across Wicker Park, Bucktown, Logan Square and Humboldt Park.



We can help make your home  
**ACCESSIBLE**

HCV participants with a verifiable disability are eligible to apply for the HomeMod Fund to pay for accessible unit modifications.

Contact the HCV Fair Housing Department  
312-913-7062 | [fairhousing@thecha.org](mailto:fairhousing@thecha.org)

### Neighborhood Resources & Community Organizations

#### 2nd Ward, Alderman Brian Hopkins

1400 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60622

312-643-2299

[ward02@cityofchicago.org](mailto:ward02@cityofchicago.org)

#### 14th Police District, Commander Elizabeth Collazo

2150 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60647

312-744-8290

[caps.014district@chicagopolice.org](mailto:caps.014district@chicagopolice.org)

#### Wicker Park Chamber of Commerce

1414 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60622

773-384-2672

[www.wickerparkbucktown.com](http://www.wickerparkbucktown.com)

#### Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago

1279 N. Milwaukee Ave., 4th Fl., Chicago, IL 60622

773-329-4111

[www.nhschicago.org](http://www.nhschicago.org)



CHICAGO HOUSING  
AUTHORITY™

Housing Choice Voucher Program  
60 E. Van Buren  
Chicago, IL 60605  
[www.thecha.org/residents](http://www.thecha.org/residents)



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## Upcoming HCV Participant Workshops

### **Passing HQS Inspections the First Time, Every Time**

Learn from HQS inspectors what CHA considers as health and safety hazards, and the consequences for both you and the property owner when inspections fail.

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 | 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Online Webinar

Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

### **RENTCafé 101**

Learn how HCV participant families can use RENTCafé to complete their Re-Examinations and Interim Re-Examinations online, including making changes to household composition, uploading verification documents, and more!

Tuesday, January 25, 2022 | 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Online Webinar

Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

To see the full schedule of HCV participant workshops and to register for these or any other upcoming sessions, visit [CHA-HCVevents.eventbrite.com](https://www.thecha.org/HCVevents.eventbrite.com). Online registration is required.

**Disclaimer:** All HCV participant workshops are free and open to all Program participants and property owners, as well as family, friends, neighbors, etc. However, material covered in these workshops is intended specifically for HCV Program participants and may not apply to all audiences. For more information, please contact [hcvmarketing@thecha.org](mailto:hcvmarketing@thecha.org).