



## Message From the CEO



Dear HCV Property Owners,

It's getting cold outside, and it is therefore fitting to start the fourth quarter message on a warm note – as in Operation Warm.

The 7th annual coat distribution and resource fair was held Saturday, Nov. 1 at the UIC Forum, and it was again an outstanding success. The Chicago Housing Authority gave away pre-ordered new winter coats to 3,300 families living in Public Housing developments or those with a Housing Choice Voucher. From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., an array of volunteers helped pass out the plush, handsome coats to many smiling families, who also received a free bag of groceries from Lead Platinum Sponsor PepsiCo (3,000 bags, to be exact); financial literacy resources from Gold Sponsor Wells Fargo; on-site enrollment in the Internet Essentials program from Silver Sponsor Comcast; and free flu shots from Silver Sponsor Walgreens. I would like to thank all of our partners for their support as we work to help our CHA families along their road to self-sufficiency. And a special thank you to Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who helped pass out coats and provided words of inspiration. Remember: the website [www.chayouth.org](http://www.chayouth.org) always goes live the Tuesday after Labor Day, so be ready for the 2015 coat registration and the follow-up eighth annual Operation Warm event.

I am equally proud to encourage all low-income households to apply for the 2014 CHA Waitlist Lottery Registration, which is open until Nov. 24. This marks the first time that low-income families and individuals have the opportunity to apply online for all three housing waitlists on one form, including HCV, Family Public Housing, and Property Rental Assistance. As of the end of the second week, about 200,000 people registered for the waitlist. Please help us spread the word on this historic housing opportunity as I continue to encourage all qualified low-income households to participate in the waitlist opening registration. Log onto [www.thechawaitlist.org](http://www.thechawaitlist.org) or call (312) 971-7700 for more information.

Thank you, and have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Sincerely,  
Michael R. Merchant

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## SIGN UP FOR INSPECTION ALERTS!



### DONT MISS ANOTHER INSPECTION!

Now you can assign specific call-ahead phone numbers to your inspections appointments.

- Assign calls to your property manager
- Assign calls based on the unit
- Sign up for SMS Alerts and define the frequency



## Owner Excellence Program Networking Event

On Friday August 08, 2014 the Chicago Housing Authority's Owner Excellence Program (OEP) held its first ever event fully dedicated to its members at the Charles Hayes Family Investment Center (FIC) located at 4859 S Wabash. The "OEP Networking Event," was organized to recognize OEP members for their dedication and commitment to the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. This event also introduced OEP members to a variety of vendors that provide services and goods to businesses in multiple areas of property management.

The event was well-attended by property owners and managers from across the city. More than 200 OEP members gathered with their peers to discuss their experiences with the HCV Program and OEP. Additionally, OEP staff were excited to welcome the newest partner and primary sponsor U.S. Communities, who informed OEP members on how they could receive government discounts on



select goods to enhance their properties and improve their business. Additional vendor participation and sponsorship included HD.Supply, AmSan, Haworth, Cintas, Hertz, Garland, Empire, Graybar, Warehouse Direct, and Allstate insurance.

More than \$10,000 in gift certificates were provided by the sponsors and raffled at the event. Overall, OEP members expressed that they enjoyed the opportunity to network with each other and share information, experiences, and tips that help them stand out amongst thousands of HCV Owners.

## HCV News for Owners

### Uniform Housing Policy

Many HCV Property Owners may know that CHA administers two primary housing subsidy programs – Public Housing governed by the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP), and the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) governed by the HCV Administrative Plan.

CHA's new strategic plan, [Plan Forward: Communities that Work](#), proposed to develop a Uniform Housing Policy (UHP) that not only makes the ACOP and HCV Administrative Plan more consistent, but also clarifies and streamlines policies to make CHA more efficient.

Listed below are the UHP updates that may affect Property Owners and Managers in the HCV Program beginning January 1, 2015:

- **HCV Owners or their representatives will be required to attend all annual unit inspections.** Implementing this change will improve

communication with owners, encourage owners to make necessary repairs on their units, and places the responsibility for inspections on both owners and tenants. **There will not be a penalty for units that pass the annual inspection when the owner or his/her representative does not attend. However, if the owner does not comply with this policy and there is a pattern of failed annual inspections, a penalty may be imposed on the owner.**

- **Medical marijuana will not be allowed in CHA properties due to new HUD requirements.** These changes are required by law and HUD regulation. It is suggested that Property Owners and Managers develop a policy for marijuana for their tenants.
- **All CHA properties will have a weapons-free policy in light of Illinois' new concealed-carry law.** These changes are required by law and HUD regulation. It is suggested that Property Owners and Managers develop a policy for weapons-free units.

## Participant Responsibilities

### What CHA Requires of Voucher Holders

All HCV Participants and household members must follow obligations listed on the Voucher in order to continue participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Failure to do so could result in termination of the Voucher.

While these “Family Obligations” are shared with all HCV Participants, it is important for HCV Owners to be aware of what CHA communicates to them. Examples of these rules are listed below:

#### Do’s

- **Pay Utilities:** Voucher holders are required to pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease.
- **Promptly notify CHA IN WRITING:** Voucher holders are required to notify the CHA of the following - when the family is away from the unit for an extended period of time in accordance with CHA policies (typically 30 days or longer); of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child; and if any family no longer lives in the unit.
- **Follow CHA Guest Policy:** Voucher holders may visit a family in an assisted unit for a total of 14 calendar days in a calendar year; however, each visit cannot exceed seven consecutive calendar days and no more than 30 days in a calendar year.

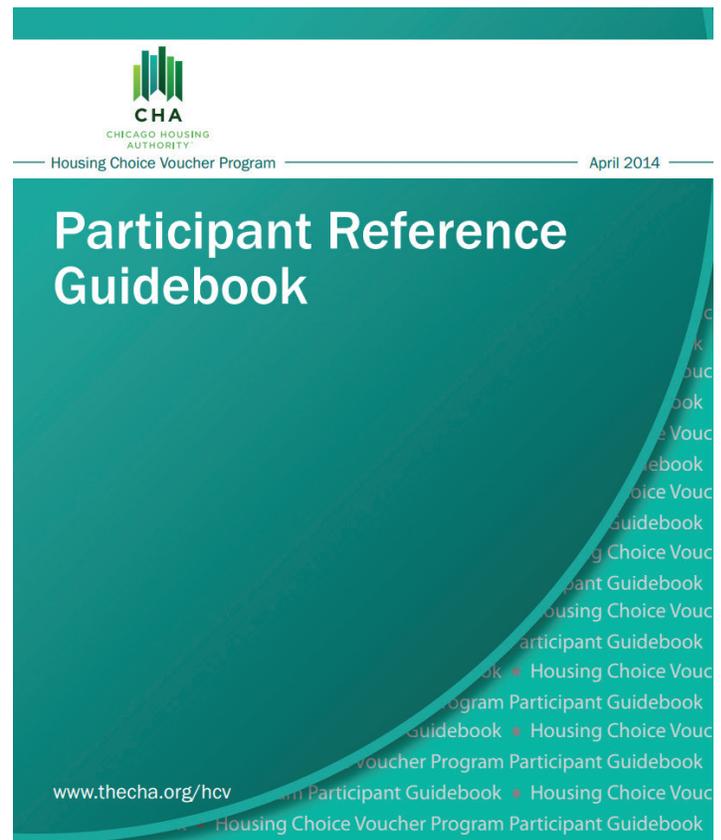
#### Don’ts

- **Cause Damage:** Voucher holders must not damage the unit or premises (other than damage from ordinary wear and tear) or permit any guest to damage the unit or premises.
- **Engage in or allow guests to engage in illegal or prohibited activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises:** Voucher holders must not commit

fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the HCV Program; engage in or allow guests to engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity; abuse of alcohol; abusive or violent behavior toward CHA personnel or its representatives; possess or use a firearm or aggravated assault weapon in violation of federal, state, or local criminal or civil laws.

- **Engage in criminal or drug related activity:** Voucher holders must not be a registered sex offender in any state or territory of the United States, or be convicted of a drug-related crime for the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

*For a more comprehensive list of the CHA Family Obligations, HCV Owners can consult the [Participant Reference Guide](#), which can be found on the CHA website under “Housing Choice Voucher Program” > “Resource Centers.”*



## 2014 Owner Workshop Recap

The CHA HCV Program began hosting a series of educational workshops for program Participants in 2013. By teaming up with industry experts, the workshops focused on promoting understanding between Participants and Property Owners regarding their rights and responsibilities with housing-related issues.

During the second and third quarters of 2014, industry experts presented on Bed Bugs and Evictions.

### Bed Bugs

In response to the recent return of bed bugs in the U.S. and especially Chicago, the city passed the Bed Bug Ordinance which went into effect January 1st, 2014. In order to help alleviate the problem of bed bugs, which are appearing in apartments across Chicago, the HCV Program collaborated with Allied Cleaning Services, Inc. to provide educational workshops for HCV Owners.

Mike Brown, Pest Division Manager, delivered the



presentation, which featured valuable information regarding bed bugs, including the history of bed bugs, biology, facts, lifecycle, signs of infestation, and treatment. Mr. Brown also distributed brochures for Owners to use for future reference and consultation.

### Evictions

In order to help educate owners on their rights and responsibilities regarding the evictions process, the HCV Program collaborated with Attorney Lewis Powell from the John Marshall Law School to provide educational workshops for HCV Owners.

Mr. Powell delivered the presentation, which featured valuable information regarding the evictions process, including procedures, and notices of termination and examples. Attendees received handouts to use for future reference.



## Attention HCV Owners

Do you have vacant units that need to be occupied immediately?

Are you interested in taking advantage of HCV Program benefits with more units?

**Invest more units with the HCV Program!**

Thousands of HCV applicants and their families are waiting for Property Owners like you to provide more housing opportunities in Chicago.

Visit the CHA HCV website to get started today!  
[www.thecha.org/hcv](http://www.thecha.org/hcv)



## Inspections Corner

### Combination Inspections

In the near future, CHA will conduct QC Combination Inspections, where a Quality Control Inspection may be conducted during the same time as an Annual Re-Inspection. In the event that a Combination Inspection is conducted, the re-inspection scheduling notice will inform the owner.

### Complaint Inspections Process

Effective immediately, in compliance with a requirement from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), CHA will implement a revised process for submitting Complaint Inspection requests.

When a request for a Complaint Inspection is received, CHA staff will determine if the nature of the request is an emergency or non-emergency complaint. CHA will no longer contact the owner when a complain inspection is requested.

- If anyone reports a condition that is an **emergency HQS Violation**, CHA will inspect the housing unit within 24 hours from the time that the notification was received.
- If anyone reports a condition that is a **non-emergency HQS Violation**, CHA will inspect the housing unit within 15 days from the time that the notification was received.

As per the CHA Administrative Plan, the following are considered emergency HQS fail items because of life-threatening conditions.

1. **Any property determined uninhabitable** by a city agency, including uninhabitable units due to fire, flood, or other natural disasters.
2. **Any condition that jeopardizes the security** of the unit (e.g. missing or broken locks on exterior doors).
3. **Major plumbing leaks, waterlogged ceiling, or floor in imminent danger of falling.**
4. **Natural or LP gas leaks or fuel oil leaks.**

5. **Any electrical problem or condition** that could result in shock or fire.

6. **Absence of a heating system** capable of maintaining a minimum of 55 degrees Fahrenheit between September 15th and June 1st .

7. **Utilities** (i.e. gas, electric, or water) **not in service.**

8. **Conditions that present the imminent likelihood of injury.**

9. **Unmovable obstacles** that prevent safe entrance or exit from the unit.

10. **Absence of a functioning toilet in the unit.**

11. **Backed up sewer system in the unit.**

12. **Lack of at least one working smoke detector** on each level of the unit.

13. **Lack of a working carbon monoxide detector** in an area with fossil fuel burning system and on each level used for sleeping.



*For more details on HQS fail items, please refer to the [HQS Inspection Guidebook](#).*

### New “Call-Ahead” Tool on the Owner Portal

From now on, HCV Owners can choose which number(s) the Inspection Services system will contact when making reminder calls for inspection appointments. Instead of having the system automatically use the number currently on file with CHA, Owners can now designate the specific number for each call made: two business days in advance, same-day reminder, and inspector call-ahead. HCV Owners can now also choose to receive a phone call, text message, or both.

HCV Owners can update their preferences by using the Owner Portal in one of two ways - by appointment, or by Vendor ID. See next page for details.



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## Inspections Corner cont.

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### New “Call-Ahead” Tool cont.

#### Option #1 - By Appointment

1. Select “**View My Inspection Appointments**” on the “Quick Links” menu on the left side of the screen OR scroll over the “Inspections” tab on the home page and select the “**Inspection Appointments**” option on the drop-down menu.
2. Click on the “**Review**” link in the “Call-Ahead Numbers” column.
3. A pop-up window will appear that allows the Owner to choose each alert option and type/preference for that specific appointment.

#### Option #2 - By Vendor ID

1. Select “**Account Settings**” on the upper-right corner of the home page OR scroll over the “**My Account**” tab on the home page.
2. Click on the “**Notification Preferences**” link.
3. The section labeled “**Phone Alert Options**” allows the Owner to choose the alert option and type/preference, then the specific Vendor ID he or she wishes to apply those settings.

*\*Note: Any changes made may not apply to inspection appointments scheduled to take place within the next three business days from when the preferences were changed on the Owner Portal\**