Message from the Chief Officer

I hope that you are staying safe and following the City of Chicago’s guidelines as we continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since mid-March, when CHA’s offices closed to the public, HCV staff has worked diligently to continue providing services to our families and partners. In addition to email, phone and the U.S. Mail as ways to remotely conduct business, we have also expanded resources and communications through the CHA website and HCV Portals, added video conferencing for inspections and other appointments, and placed “no contact” drop boxes at the South and West offices.

Over the last couple months, and in preparation for the future, CHA has assembled a group of internal staff that is strategically planning a return to the workplace — taking expert guidance and industry best practices into consideration at every turn. Until a return is possible, we will continue to offer and expand our virtual options, while making sure the proper protocols are in place to create an office environment that is as safe as possible for everyone.

In this issue of Owner News, you will find HCV program updates, guidance on the new Fair Notice Ordinance, tips on marketing your property, information on Exception Payment Standards for accessible units and a reminder of the September 15th start date for the Chicago Heat Ordinance.

Thank you for your understanding and support during these challenging times. Please stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Burns
Chief Housing Choice Voucher Officer

What’s New

Virtual Inspections
CHA is now conducting virtual inspections via video conference for Re-Inspections and Complaint Inspections that meet specific criteria.

To be eligible for a virtual Re-Inspection, the unit must have 10 or fewer non-life threatening hazards. Some hazards that cannot be inspected virtually include, but are not limited to, fail items related to:

• Excessive Paint
• Mold or Air Quality
• Infestation
• Flooding or Sewage

New HUD Waivers
On July 2nd, HUD granted additional waivers, issued amendments and extended the period of availability for many previously issued waivers. Below is a newly adopted waiver that may impact HCV property owners:

• CHA is conducting Initial and Regular in-person inspections on a case-by-case basis and will delay the inspection if it is determined that it is unsafe for anyone in attendance. In the case where an inspection is not able to be completed, CHA may temporarily allow the property owner to self-certify that no life-threatening hazards exist in the unit.
Fair Notice Ordinance

On July 22nd, Chicago City Council passed the Fair Notice Ordinance, an addendum to the Chicago Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (RLTO). Effective July 28th, the Fair Notice Ordinance makes three important changes.

First, the ordinance amends the advance notice period for non-renewal or termination of a lease. Second, the ordinance adds a notice period for increasing the monthly rent. These new notice requirements apply for all property owners and tenants who are subject to the RLTO, whether they have a written, fixed term lease or a month-to-month lease, and are based on the length of time the tenant has lived in the property:

• 30 days of notice for a tenancy under six months.
• 60 days of notice for a tenancy over six months but under three years.
• 120 days of notice for a tenancy over three years.

Note: This change shall not apply to any existing rental agreement that expires less than 90 days after the effective date of the ordinance.

In compliance with the new notice periods, CHA has revised its rent increase policy regarding the effective date to either 60 or 120 days after submission, based on length of tenancy.

Third, the ordinance adds a new one-time right to cure for tenants who are issued an eviction notice for non-payment of rent. Up until an order of possession has been issued, tenants can now end their eviction case by paying the unpaid rent in full, as well as any filing fees and costs incurred by the property owner for service (does not include attorney's fees).

Property owners with concerns as to how this update impacts their properties should seek legal counsel. For more information regarding the Chicago RLTO and to download the updated RLTO Summary, please visit www.chicago.gov/housing.

How to Market Your Property

Marketing is an important step in finding a tenant and can even make your unit stand out from the rest. It’s also a great way to build excitement in any potential tenants. Here are some tips on marketing your property and showing off everything your unit or house has to offer:

List Your Property Online — Make sure to add as many photos as possible, including the interior and exterior of the property. Details are also key. Be sure to mention the total number of rooms, bathrooms and amenities such as heating/air conditioning, on-site laundry or parking. It’s also helpful to include information about the neighborhood on the listing.

What are some well-known local businesses? Schools? Is public transportation near the property? These important details will help generate more interest in your unit.

Make Signs — Posting “for rent” signs outside of your property can catch the eye of anyone passing by and is a proactive way to reach a broad audience.

Create Flyers — Similar to the online listing, make sure you include photos and as many details as possible. Your contact information should be easy to find, so any potential tenants will immediately be able to get a hold of you! Flyers can be posted on community bulletin boards, utility poles and/or other public property.
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.

To have an Exception Payment Standard applied to the rent calculations, the HCV participant must first identify either: a unit with the necessary accessibility features or a unit where accessible modifications will be made.

In addition, HCV participants may be eligible to receive help with the cost of home modifications through the Home Modification Fund, a program offered through a partnership with the Chicago Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD).

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

Reminder: Chicago Heat Ordinance Effective September 15th

The Department of Buildings enforces the Chicago Building Code. This includes the Chicago Heat Ordinance, which 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. 15th – June 1st 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.
- A property owner/manager can face fines up to $500 per day, per violation for each day they do not supply adequate heat. The reason for the lack of heat does not matter. Property owners/managers must follow the law and residences must be heated regardless.
As part of our mission to make valuable resources as accessible as possible to our partners and families, CHA has officially launched HCV webinars! Now you can view workshop material and stay updated on important HCV topics from the comfort of your own home or even on-the-go using a computer, tablet or smartphone.

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.

**Suspended property owners are required to attend this workshop to regain good standing with the HCV Program. To receive credit, you must register with your vendor # and attend the full duration of the session.**

**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.

**Tuesday, October 8**  
1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

**Tuesday, November 12**  
1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

**Tuesday, December 10**  
1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

**Tuesday, October 13**  
1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

**Tuesday, November 17**  
1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

**Tuesday, December 15**  
1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer