



Owner News

A newsletter for property owners & managers participating in the Chicago Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program

Q4 2020

Message from the Chief Officer



First and foremost, I want to thank you for your continued support during this challenging year.

The difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have been ever-changing and we appreciate your patience as we work through how to best support our partners, families and communities during this time. As we head into cold and flu season, I encourage everyone to continue following the guidelines set by the City of Chicago and take preventative measures to help limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

I also want to thank all of you who joined us for our 11th annual Owner Symposium, dubbed "Symposium Week '20." More than 1,000 property owners, managers, brokers, investors and other real estate professionals took part in a week of learning, networking and sharing best practices. We wish we could have seen you in person but are happy that technology allowed us the opportunity to offer a virtual alternative.

In this issue of *Owner News*, you will find HCV Program updates, guidelines on preparing for a virtual inspection, COVID-19 resources, highlights from Symposium Week '20, tips on preparing for winter 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 2021.

2020 has been a challenging year full of obstacles, but it has made us stronger. On behalf of all of us at CHA, I'd like to extend my best wishes for a safe holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year.

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Burns
Chief Housing Choice Voucher Officer

What's New

HCV South Office Move

The South Regional Office of the Housing Choice Voucher Program has relocated to:

3617 S. State St., Chicago, IL 60609

When CHA's Regional Offices re-open, voucher holders, participants and property owners who previously conducted HCV-related business at 10 W. 35th Street will now receive services at 3617 S. State Street.

New Payment Standards

The 2021 Payment Standards (and Utility Allowances) are now in use, effective Oct. 1, 2020. All HCV Program rent offers going forward will be calculated using these updated amounts.

HCV Operations and COVID-19

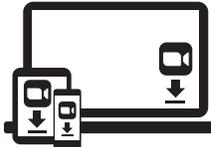
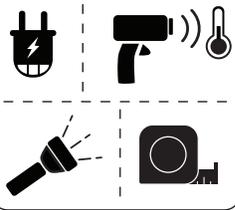
During this time, CHA is still working tirelessly to operate and provide essential services to CHA families, seniors and community partners.

We encourage all HCV partners to continue using CHA's online resources to conduct business as well as the "no contact" drop boxes at each CHA Regional Office.

For the most up-to-date information regarding HCV Program operations during COVID-19, visit the Owner Portal at chahcvportal.org or CHA's website at www.thecha.org.

How to Prepare for a Virtual Inspection

Did you know CHA has started conducting virtual inspections for units that meet specific criteria? Here is what you can do to prepare:

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Accept Calendar Invite 	Download Zoom zoom.us/download 	Check Internet Connection 
<p>When your virtual inspection is scheduled, CHA will email you a calendar invite with the Zoom link. Add it to your calendar!</p>	<p>Download the Zoom app on your phone, tablet or other portable device with a camera PRIOR to the inspection.</p>	<p>Verify that your device has a strong internet connection that supports audio and video in all the rooms and areas to be inspected.</p>
Complete Needed Repairs 	Secure Necessary Tools 	"Conduct" Inspection 
<p>You must have any needed repairs fully completed PRIOR to the virtual inspection. The Inspector will not wait for you to make repairs to identified failed items.</p>	<p>To verify compliance, you may be asked to use common home repair tools, such as a flashlight, outlet tester, measuring tape, level or laser temperature reader, as well as your fully charged device.</p>	<p>During the inspection, you will be expected to walk, reach and crouch to show specific items to the Inspector in the unit and on the property. Screenshots will be taken for documentation.</p>



Questions? Contact the Inspections Department
hcvinspections@thecha.org | 312-935-2600

2021 Administrative Plan

In January 2021, the following changes will be made to the CHA HCV Administrative Plan:

Accommodation for an Extra Bedroom

- Verification from a knowledgeable professional will be needed for a HCV participant to receive a Reasonable Accommodation for an extra bedroom.

Denied Reasonable Accommodation

- A HCV participant whose Reasonable Accommodation request is denied will have the ability to file a grievance with an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/504 Coordinator.

Applying Payment Standards

- Payment Standards will be updated if a HCV participant incurs a rent increase to ensure the subsidy keeps up with increasing housing costs.

COVID-19 Resources

If you are in need of help during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Chicago offers a variety of different resources. Learn more about Chicago's support services below:

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19, visit www.advocateaurorahealth.org/coronavirus-disease-2019 or call **866-443-2584**. If you believe you are experiencing an emergency, call 911 immediately.

Food Assistance: If your family is experiencing food insecurity, contact the Greater Chicago Food Depository by phone at **773-247-FOOD (3663)** or online at www.chicagosfoodbank.org.

Crisis Support: The following organizations offer free crisis counseling and mental health resources to all Chicago residents by phone and/or text:

City of Chicago Domestic Violence Helpline | **877-863-6338** or visit www.CHI.gov/dvhelp

Crisis Text Line | Text HELLO to **741741**

NAMI Chicago Mental Health Helpline | **833-626-4244**



Thank you to everyone who attended and made CHA's first-ever virtual Owner Symposium a great success! The week-long event kicked off with a video message from Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, welcoming attendees and thanking housing providers for the life-saving services they provide, and featured many engaging session topics, including digital business solutions, investment property strategies, lease building, income taxes and more.

If you missed any of the sessions or want to revisit your favorite topics, all recorded sessions from Symposium Week '20 are available online until the end of the year. Visit gotostage.com/channel/symposiumweek20 to watch!

Save the Date! The 2021 Owner Symposium is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 25, 2021 at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place. Stay tuned for details!

Preparing for Winter

Ensuring your unit is ready for winter not only helps prevent possible hardships, it can also keep your tenants safe and comfortable. Here are some tips:

Check the Heat — 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 September 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.

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.

Practice Space Heater Safety — Inspect your unit(s) to ensure tenants are practicing space heater safety and not overloading outlets. Space heaters are not to be used in damp or wet areas, and should be at least three feet away from household combustibles and have cords that are undamaged.

Watch for Frozen Pipes — The subzero temperatures of a Chicago winter increase the likelihood of frozen pipes. Protect the water heater and exposed pipes with a weather resistant, insulated material to prevent frozen pipes and improve energy inefficiency.

Check for Air Leaks — Examine interior walls for gaps and drafts. Seal air leaks with caulk or insulation. Air leaks can happen in unexpected places such as recessed lighting, electrical outlets or pipe-wall junction. Check weather stripping around doors and windows. Replace any material that looks worn out. Weather stripping plays a significant role in preventing cool air from entering your home.

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.



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.

Tuesday, March 16

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 14

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

Thursday, February 11

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

Thursday, March 11

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