



Going Places Q4 2020

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

Message from the Chief



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 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 would also like to thank the families who participated in CHA's 2020 Operation Warm event. This year may have looked different due to COVID-19, but we were nevertheless able to distribute 7,500 new winter coats to CHA families throughout the city.

In this issue of *Going Places*, you will find information on CHA's new RENTCafé® platform, tips on winter safety, COVID-19 resources and guidelines on preparing for a virtual inspection. Plus, make sure to check out the workshops for HCV participants 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.

Regards,

Cheryl L. Burns
Chief Housing Choice Voucher Officer

What's New

CHA's HCV South Regional Office Has Moved!

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

3617 S. State Street, Chicago, IL 60609

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

2021 Administrative Plan

In January 2021, the following HCV Administrative Plan changes will be presented to the CHA Board of Commissioners for approval:

Reasonable 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.

RENTCafé 101

CHA has officially launched RENTCafé®, a new online tool that currently allows HCV participants to complete upcoming Re-Examinations and submit Interim Re-Examination requests electronically (no need to come into one of the HCV Regional Offices).

To get started, all HCV participants must first register for a RENTCafé account. If you haven't done so already, here's how:

1. Visit res-par.thecha.org and click "Resident Login" in the upper right corner of the page.
2. Select 'Click here to register.'
3. Enter the registration code exactly as it is written on your RENTCafé registration email or letter (include caps and hyphens). Then click "GO".
4. Carefully fill out the required fields in the additional boxes that will appear and make sure the information is correct!

Once registered and logged in, you will have access to complete your Re-Examination online by clicking on the "Re-Examinations" tile on your RENTCafé dashboard and following the on-screen instructions. For a walkthrough of how to complete each step of this process, please visit www.thecha.org/RENTCafe.

In addition, you can even report household changes, such as a loss of income, addition or removal of a household member, or change in expenses through RENTCafé. To do so, click on the "Interim Request" tile on your RENTCafé dashboard, then click the "Interim Re-Examination Request" button. Follow the steps, fill in the fields and upload documents as needed.

If you have questions or need assistance, click on the "HCV Resources" tile on your RENTCafé dashboard, or contact the CHA Customer Call Center at hcv@thecha.org or **312-935-2600**.

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

Winter Safety

The inclement weather in Chicago can make winters tough. However, it's important to make sure safety comes first. Here are some tips for being safe this winter:

Be aware of fire hazards — Closely monitor burning candles that are lit for an extended amount of time. Also be sure to watch out for space heaters as these are one of the most common causes of fires. Do not use the space heater in a damp or wet area and make sure to inspect the cord periodically to look for frayed wire or damaged insulation.

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.

From September 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.

Keep an emergency kit on hand — Be prepared and keep an emergency kit in your home that is packed and easily assessable. Some helpful items to include in your kit include, but are not limited to, a flashlight, medical supplies, water and food. These items can come in handy in the event of an emergency.

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 and click the link for the COVID-19 Resource Center 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

HCV participants can contact CHA FamilyWorks providers for a variety of support services. Please visit www.thecha.org/familyworks, call **312-935-2625** or email familyworks@thecha.org to find out more.

For COVID-19 updates and additional resources available to residents, visit www.chicago.gov/covid.

Neighborhood Spotlight: Little Village

Little Village is a neighborhood on the Southwest Side of Chicago. It is bound by Ogden Avenue to the North, Cicero to the West, the BNSF train line to the South and Western Avenue to the East.

Little Village is home to over 1,000 businesses and is one of the busiest shopping districts in the City of Chicago. Little Village is known for its global grocery stores, bakeries, art and Mexican culture.



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:

1	2	3
<p>Accept Calendar Invite</p> <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 Zoom zoom.us/download</p> <p>Download the Zoom app on your phone, tablet or other portable device with a camera PRIOR to the inspection.</p>	<p>Check Internet Connection</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>
<p>Complete Needed Repairs</p> <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>Secure Necessary Tools</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>"Conduct" Inspection</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
hcvp inspections@thecha.org | 312-935-2600

Neighborhood Resources & Community Organizations

22nd Ward, Alderman Michael D. Rodriguez
2500 S. St. Louis St., Chicago, IL 60623
773-762-1771
ward22@cityofchicago.org

10th Police District, Commander Gilberto Calderon
3315 W. Ogden Ave., Chicago, IL 60623
312-747-7511
CAPSo10District@chicagopolice.org

Erie Neighborhood House
1701 W. Superior St., Chicago, IL 60622
312-563-5800
www.eriehouse.org

Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
2445 S. Spaulding Ave., Chicago, IL 60623
312-762-6991
www.lvejo.org



CHICAGO HOUSING
AUTHORITY™

Housing Choice Voucher Program
60 E. Van Buren
Chicago, IL 60605
www.thecha.org/residents



Going Places

Q4 2020

Upcoming HCV Participant Workshops

How CHA Determines Rent for Voucher Holders

How does CHA determine Contract Rent offers? Learn from CHA staff about how utilities, unit size, property location, market comparisons and tenant affordability impact the calculations.

Tuesday, January 12, 2021 | 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Online Webinar
Your Phone, Tablet or Computer

HQS Inspections 101

Do you want to learn more about HQS inspections? Learn from HQS inspectors what CHA considers as health and safety hazards. This session will also cover CHA's new virtual inspection process.

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 | 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.