



CHICAGO HOUSING  
AUTHORITY™

# Conducting Business with the HCV Program during COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions | Revised April 16, 2021

## PAYMENTS

***I am a property owner and should have received a Housing Assistance Payment on the first of the month. However, I don't see the payment in my account. When will I receive payment?***

COVID-19 has not impacted CHA's ability to issue Housing Assistance Payments. Unless the unit is in abatement or the HAP Contract has been terminated, HCV property owners should continue to receive Housing Assistance Payments on the 1st business day of the month.

- If a new HAP Contract has just been executed, the property owner may receive the first payment on the 15th (or subsequent business day) of the month.
- If the participant has recently completed an Interim Re-Examination, it may take multiple check-run cycles for the portion adjustment to reflect in the payments. Please refer to your Amendment to the HAP Contract letter for more information.

Property owners can see the status of their properties as well as HAP statements on the Owner Portal at [chahcvportal.org](http://chahcvportal.org) under the FINANCE menu.

If none of these situations apply and you believe that you should have received a Housing Assistance Payment, please contact the Owner Services Department by email at [ownerinfo@thecha.org](mailto:ownerinfo@thecha.org).

***I am a participant and should have received a Utility Reimbursement Payment on the 1st of the month. However, I don't see the payment in my account. When will I receive payment?***

COVID-19 has not impacted CHA's ability to issue Utility Reimbursement Payments. However, Utility Reimbursement Payments are not typically deposited in a participant's account until the afternoon of the 1st business day of the month.

- If you have recently moved, you may receive the first reimbursement payment on the 15th (or subsequent business day) of the month.
- If you have recently completed an Interim Re-Examination, it may take multiple check-run cycles for the new or adjusted reimbursement payment to appear in your account.

If none of these situations apply and you believe that you should have received a Utility Reimbursement Payment, please contact the CHA Customer Call Center via the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](http://cha.participantportal.org), by email at [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include "MISSING URP" and your voucher number in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

***As a HCV participant, am I still required to pay my rent portion during COVID-19?***

HCV participants should continue to pay their rent portion to the property owner.

If you cannot afford to pay your rent portion due to a decrease in your family's income, report the change to CHA immediately. Please see the **REPORTING & REQUESTING CHANGES** section of this

document for instructions on how to submit an Interim Re-Examination.

**Note:** It is imperative that participants submit an Interim Re-Examination request as soon as possible after experiencing a decrease in income in order to prevent an unnecessary financial burden. Participants who are not able to report a decrease in income in a timely manner due to extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Additionally, CHA recommends that participants notify the property owner when they have submitted an Interim Re-Examination request due to a decrease in income as part of a larger conversation to discuss options for payment of any outstanding rent.

### **What eviction protections are in place?**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago have enacted protections for renters facing eviction for non-payment of rent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, as a HCV participant, you should immediately contact CHA if you are unable to pay your rent portion, as your level of assistance is based on your reported income. Please see the **REPORTING & REQUESTING CHANGES** section of this document for instructions on how to submit an Interim Re-Examination.

If you have additional questions about how these eviction protections impact your specific circumstance, CHA recommends that you seek legal counsel.

## **REPORTING AND REQUESTING CHANGES**

### ***I received a stimulus payment from the IRS. Do I need to report that money as income?***

No, you do not need to report your stimulus payment from the IRS as income.

**Note:** Families without bank account information on file with the IRS may receive their stimulus payment on a pre-paid VISA debit card, issued by MetaBank, instead of a check. For more information, visit [www.eipcard.com](http://www.eipcard.com).

### ***I need to report a change in my income. How can I do that?***

To report a change in your income or family composition, you must submit an Interim Re-Examination request. For income changes, CHA prefers documentation such as check stubs, a letter from your employer or a benefit letter, but if needed, will accept written self-certification or oral third-party verification of the change. For convenience, CHA will accept scans or photos of these documents.

There are four (4) ways you can submit your Interim Re-Examination request:

1. Log in to RENTCafé®, CHA's new online account management tool for Re-Examinations and Interim Re-Examinations, at [res-par.thecha.org](http://res-par.thecha.org).

In order to request an Interim Re-Examination through RENTCafé, you must first set up an account using the personalized registration code included in a RENTCafé welcome letter.

If you have yet to receive or cannot find your welcome letter or registration code, please contact the CHA Customer Call Center by email at [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

2. Email the Interim Re-Examination request and supporting documents to [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) and include “INTERIM” and your voucher number in the subject line.
3. Drop off the Interim Re-Examination request and supporting documents at a “no contact” drop box, located at the HCV Central Office (60 E. Van Buren St.), HCV South Office (3617 S. State St.) and HCV West Office (1852 S. Albany Ave.).
4. Mail the Interim Re-Examination request and supporting documents to any of our HCV Regional Offices, listed above.

**Note:** U.S. Mail has been experiencing delays, and so this option is least preferred.

The Interim Re-Examination request is available on the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](http://cha.participantportal.org) under FORMS.

### ***I submitted an Interim Re-Examination request to CHA. How long will my request take to process?***

COVID-19 has not impacted CHA’s ability to process Interim Re-Examination requests. CHA will approve or deny your Interim request within 30 days of receiving the request and supporting documents.

Approved Interim Re-Examination requests are effective starting the first of the month following the submitted request, regardless of processing time. For example, if an Interim request is received on March 25<sup>th</sup>, but not processed until April 10<sup>th</sup>, the change effective date will be backdated to April 1<sup>st</sup>. Similarly, if an Interim request is received on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and processed on April 10<sup>th</sup>, the change will be effective on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Note:** It is imperative that participants submit an Interim Re-Examination request as soon as possible after experiencing a change, especially a decrease in income, in order to prevent an unnecessary financial burden. Participants who are not able to report a decrease in income in a timely manner due to extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Additionally, CHA recommends that participants notify the property owner when they have submitted an Interim Re-Examination request due to a decrease in income as part of a larger conversation to discuss options for payment of any outstanding rent.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

### ***I was scheduled for a remote Re-Examination appointment. How does this process work?***

As of March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the HCV Regional Offices are closed to the public. As such, CHA is conducting Re-Examination interviews with participants by email, phone, U.S. Mail, and/or through RENTCafé®, CHA’s new online account management tool for Re-Examinations and Interim Re-Examinations.

When you are due for a Re-Examination, a letter will be sent via email or U.S. Mail instructing you to complete your Re-Examination using RENTCafé by a certain date.

- In order to complete a Re-Examination through RENTCafé, you must first set up an account using the personalized registration code included in a RENTCafé welcome letter.
- If you have yet to receive or cannot find your welcome letter or registration code, please contact the CHA Customer Call Center by email at [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

If you are unable to use RENTCafé, please contact CHA to be scheduled for a remote Re-Examination appointment with a housing specialist. To ensure that participants are available and prepared when a housing specialist calls, CHA will then send a “remote” appointment notice by email or U.S. Mail.

- Just like an in-person appointment notice, the remote appointment notice will list the date, time and information you will need to successfully complete the appointment.
- At the appointed time, a housing specialist will call at the number listed on the appointment notice and guide you through the Re-Examination.
- Calls will come from the CHA Customer Call Center number, **312-935-2600**. If the housing specialist cannot reach you, they will leave a message with call back information and try to call again.
- During the appointment, you will be required to sign documents. If you have access to a smart phone, tablet or computer, the specialist will have you sign documents digitally. If not, the housing specialist will send documents for you to sign and return via U.S. Mail.

**Note:** As U.S. Mail has been experiencing delays, CHA is encouraging participants to provide an email address to facilitate important account transactions. If you do not have an email address, you can create one for free through **Google, Yahoo** or **Microsoft**.

If you have experienced a change that you were planning to report at your Re-Examination appointment, you should report the change to CHA immediately. Please see the **REPORTING & REQUESTING CHANGES** section of this document for instructions on how to submit an Interim Re-Examination.

***I missed a call from a housing specialist for a remote appointment. How do I reach them?***

If the housing specialist cannot reach you by phone for your remote appointment, they will leave a message with call back information and try to call again. You can also connect with them by calling the CHA Customer Call Center at **312-935-2600**.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

## INSPECTIONS

***The unit is scheduled for an inspection. How has CHA updated its inspection protocols to ensure the safety of the tenants residing in the units?***

With families spending more time at home than ever before, it is critical that units are safe, decent and sanitary as well as inspected in a timely fashion. In the interest of everyone’s safety, and wherever possible, CHA has expanded the opportunities for inspection compliance to be demonstrated without an in-person inspection.

- Select Regular Inspections are now eligible for a hybrid virtual inspection via video conference and self-assessment. See below for more information on virtual inspections.
- Property owners and participants have the option to self-certify select minor fail items in place of a Re-Inspection.
- Select non-emergency fail items that cannot be self-certified may be re-inspected virtually.
- Select non-emergency hazards may be eligible for a virtual Complaint Inspection.

If an in-person inspection is required, rest assured that the CHA Inspector will conduct the inspection with local health and safety guidance in mind:

- Participants will be required to complete and return a health questionnaire prior to the inspection and will be asked to verify their health status when the Inspector arrives at the unit.
- If any evidence indicates that conducting the in-person inspection that day would endanger the participant family and/or Inspector, the inspection will be rescheduled.
- During the inspection, as few people as possible should gather in the unit.
- CHA asks that any persons present for the inspection over the age of 2 wear a face covering and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from the Inspector wherever possible.
- The Inspector will wear a mask and gloves during the inspection. Gloves will be changed between each inspection.

### ***How does CHA determine if a unit is eligible for a virtual inspection?***

CHA has begun to conduct virtual inspections via video conference for Regular Inspections, Re-Inspections and Complaint Inspections that meet specific criteria.

To be eligible for a virtual Regular Inspection, the unit must NOT require a lead-based paint visual assessment (i.e., must not be built prior to 1978 with a resident child under the age of 6).

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

- Lead-based paint
- Mold or air-quality
- Infestation
- Flooding or sewage

If the unit is selected for a virtual inspection, the Inspections Department will contact the property owner and participant to schedule the inspection. The person “conducting” the inspection will receive an email with a unique link to join the video conference at the appointed time.

### ***I have been scheduled for a virtual inspection. How does this process work?***

CHA conducts virtual inspections via Zoom, with the participant or property owner walking through the unit/property to allow the Inspector to check for hazards. As such, it is critical that the person “conducting” the virtual inspection has access to every room in the unit as well as the basement, boiler room, etc.

- Participants who refuse to grant access to any area in the unit for a virtual inspection will be referred to the Program Integrity department for appropriate enforcement action.
- Participants and property owners are still accountable for their respective failed items, regardless of whether they are present for the virtual inspection.

While it is helpful for the person who will be assisting with the virtual inspection to have experience with Zoom, the CHA Inspector will provide instructions regarding joining the video conference. To learn more about Zoom, please visit the “Get Started with Zoom” Frequently Asked Questions page on Zoom’s website at [bit.ly/2MxknDv](https://bit.ly/2MxknDv).

To conduct a virtual inspection, the participant or property owner must have the following available:

- A smart phone, tablet or other portable internet-connected device with a fully charged battery,

a camera and the ability to run a Zoom meeting.

- A strong, reliable internet connection that supports video conferencing.
- Tools to verify the repaired items such as a step stool, flashlight, measuring tape, level, laser temperature reader and outlet tester.

### ***What items is the Inspector looking for during a virtual inspection?***

The same Housing Quality Standards (HQS) criteria will be used to verify repairs, regardless of whether the inspection is virtual or in-person. You can learn more about HQS in the HQS Inspection Guidebook, which is available on the CHA website at [www.thecha.org/forms](http://www.thecha.org/forms) as well as the Owner Portal at [chahcvportal.org](http://chahcvportal.org) and the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](http://cha.participantportal.org) under RESOURCES.

During the virtual inspection, the Inspector will instruct the property owner or participant on the items that need to be reviewed and will ask for the camera to be held over specific items so a photo/screenshot can be taken.

For virtual Regular Inspections, the participant must also complete a brief HQS Unit Assessment questionnaire and submit it to CHA prior to the inspection.

If you have additional questions about virtual inspections, please contact the Inspections Department via the Owner Portal at [chahcvportal.org](http://chahcvportal.org), via the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](http://cha.participantportal.org), by email at [hcvinspections@thecha.org](mailto:hcvinspections@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include “VIRTUAL INSPECTION” in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

### ***I cannot make my scheduled virtual inspection. What is your cancellation or no-show policy?***

For both in-person and virtual inspections, CHA observes the following policies regarding “no show” and “no entry”:

- The Inspector will wait for up to 10 minutes and will attempt to contact the property owner or participant by phone before classifying the inspection as a “no show” and rescheduling (depending on inspection type).

**Note:** CHA asks that property owners and participants wait up to 10 minutes for an Inspector who may be coming from an inspection running longer than expected.

- If a participant refuses to grant access to the unit, the inspection will be classified as a “no entry” and may be rescheduled (depending on inspection type).
- Participants and property owners who repeatedly do not show up for or refuse to grant access to the unit for inspections will be referred to the Program Integrity department for appropriate enforcement action.

If you are unable to make your scheduled inspection, please contact the Inspections Department as soon as possible via the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](http://cha.participantportal.org), via the Owner Portal at [chahcvportal.org](http://chahcvportal.org), by email at [hcvinspections@thecha.org](mailto:hcvinspections@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include “RESCHEDULE” and either the Inspection ID or voucher number in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

***The unit should have been scheduled for a Regular (annual or biennial) Inspection, but it was delayed. When will it be conducted?***

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued multiple waivers in 2020 granting housing authorities some administrative flexibilities in providing assistance to families during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of these waivers granted CHA the flexibility to delay Regular (annual or biennial) Inspections that have come due during the COVID-19 pandemic, by having the property owner complete a form, certifying that no life-threatening (emergency) conditions exist at the property.

If a unit qualifies under this waiver, the property owner will receive an email with instructions to complete the SELF-CERTIFICATION OF HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS) COMPLIANCE – COVID-19 form. Property owners who have an inspection delayed can expect CHA to conduct a full Regular Inspection (virtual or in-person) of the property to confirm HQS compliance as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than December 31, 2021.

***The unit recently failed an inspection. When will my Re-Inspection be scheduled?***

Based on the failed items identified in the inspection, CHA will take one or more of the following approaches to re-inspect the unit.

- CHA allows property owners and participants to self-certify minor fail items identified during a Regular or Complaint Inspection in the place of a Re-Inspection.
- Select non-emergency fail items that cannot be self-certified may be eligible for a virtual Re-Inspection via video conference.
- Re-Inspections with emergency fail items or non-emergency fail items that cannot be verified remotely will require an in-person Re-Inspection.

If a virtual or in-person Re-Inspection is required, both the property owner and participant will receive at least 14 days' advance notice of the scheduled Re-Inspection appointment date.

***The unit is in abatement, but repairs cannot be completed due to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Can I request an extension?***

Abatement cannot be lifted unless the unit passes inspection. While extensions specific to COVID-19 are no longer available, CHA may grant a Non-Weather Related Extension for circumstances beyond a property owner's control on a case-by-case basis.

The property owner must provide third-party documentation to CHA verifying the unique circumstances. Property owners can download and submit a Non-Weather Related Extension request form on the Owner Portal at [chahcvportal.org](https://chahcvportal.org).

For more information regarding Non-Weather Related Extensions, please contact the Inspections Department by email at [hcvp inspections@thecha.org](mailto:hcvp inspections@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include "ABATEMENT" and the voucher number in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

## MOVING

### ***I want to move. How can I request moving papers?***

As of March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the HCV Regional Offices are closed to the public. There are three (3) ways you can request moving papers:

1. Visit the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org). Under the MOVES menu, click on “Request a Move”, then follow the prompts to submit your request.
2. Contact the CHA Customer Call Center at **312-935-2600**.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

3. Email [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org). For fastest processing, please include “MOVE REQUEST” and your voucher number in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** In order to request moving papers, you must be eligible to move. To learn more about eligibility to move and the moving process, visit the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org) and browse the resources under the MOVES menu.

### ***I requested moving papers. How will I receive them?***

Once CHA receives a request to move, the participant will be screened for eligibility to move. CHA will then contact the participant by phone or email with instructions on how to sign the voucher and receive moving papers remotely.

**Note:** As U.S. Mail has been experiencing delays, CHA is encouraging participants to provide an email address to facilitate important account transactions. If you do not have an email address, you can create one for free through [Google](#), [Yahoo](#) or [Microsoft](#).

Since the offices are closed the public, moving papers are primarily issued via email using DocuSign, an online tool to collect signatures and send documents securely. Receiving your moving papers remotely is a multi-step process:

1. A housing specialist will send the family an email via DocuSign with multiple documents to sign: The Voucher, Addendum to the Family Obligations, Rent Burden Worksheet and Lead Education Initiative Checklist.

**Note:** CHA will not appear in the email sender’s name; it will come from a housing specialist via a [@docusign.net](mailto:@docusign.net) email address with the subject “Please DocuSign”. The body of the email will be branded with CHA’s logo.

If you can’t find this email, please check your spam or junk folder and/or add DocuSign to your safe senders list to ensure you receive your documents.

2. Open the DocuSign email, follow the instructions to set your digital signature, digitally sign the documents and click Finish. DocuSign may prompt you to make an account to save a copy of your documents, but this is not required.
3. Within 3 business days, CHA will countersign the documents, and you will receive an automated confirmation email from DocuSign and a link to download a copy of the signed documents.

A housing specialist will also directly email you with your Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) packet, attached as a PDF. At this point, you may print or email the RTA packet to a prospective property owner to start the move.



If you have questions about receiving your moving papers, please contact the CHA Customer Call Center via the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org), by email at [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include “MOVING PAPERS” and your voucher number in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

***I am required to move. How will I receive moving papers?***

CHA defines “required moves” as participants living in units without a HAP Contract, participants living in units under abatement and participants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking seeking protections under the Violence Against Women Act. For more information about your rights under VAWA, visit [www.thecha.org/VAWA](https://www.thecha.org/VAWA).

Similar to requested moves, CHA will contact participants who are required to move by phone or email with instructions on how to sign the voucher and receive moving papers remotely. See above for more information on receiving moving papers remotely.

If you have questions about your requirement to move, please contact the CHA Customer Call Center via the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org), by email at [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include “REQUIRED MOVE” and your voucher number in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

***I have my moving papers, but my voucher expires soon. How can I request an extension?***

While extensions specific to COVID-19 are no longer available, participants can request a one-time extension of up to 60 days to continue their search.

To request a voucher extension, please contact the Moves Team via the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org), by email at [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include “VOUCHER EXTENSION” and your voucher number in the subject line of your email.

***I was already issued moving papers, but I need a duplicate set. How can I request those?***

If you were issued your moving papers via email, you are able to download or print duplicate copies of your moving papers as needed from the email that you received from the housing specialist.

However, do not reuse your old moving papers if CHA is already processing a RTA packet for a move! In this scenario, you must contact CHA to cancel the RTA packet in process and be issued a new set of moving papers with a new expiration date.

If you received your moving papers by mail, or are having difficulty downloading a duplicate set from your email, please contact the Moves Team via the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org), by email at [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include “DUPLICATE PAPERS” and your voucher number in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

***I would like to move outside of the city of Chicago. How can I move with my voucher?***

In order to move outside of Chicago, you must complete the “Porting” process to transfer your voucher to the Housing Authority that manages the area where you wish to live — you would “port out” of Chicago and “port in” to the new Housing Authority.

If you have not already been issued moving papers and wish to “Port Out”, you must first request moving papers or be considered a “required move”. Please see the beginning of this section for more information on requesting to move.

If you have already been issued your moving papers, you can request to “Port Out” by contacting the Moves Team via the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org), by email at [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-935-2600**. For fastest processing, please include “PORT OUT” and your voucher number in the subject line of your email.

**Note:** For security, the Call Center requires callers with account-specific questions to verify account information such as the voucher number, Social Security number or current address.

The Moves Team will ask you to complete a Port Out Request form, which you can return by email or at a “no contact” drop box, located at the HCV Central Office (60 E. Van Buren St.), HCV South Office (3617 S. State St.) and HCV West Office (1852 S. Albany Ave.).

Keep in mind that many Housing Authorities are operating differently due to COVID-19. Before submitting a request, CHA highly recommends that participants first contact the new Housing Authority to learn how that agency is currently processing “Port Ins”.

***How do I submit a completed Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) packet to CHA?***

As of March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the HCV Regional Offices are closed to the public. There are three (3) ways a property owner can submit a completed RTA packet:

1. **Current HCV Property Owners Only:** Visit the Owner Portal at [chahcvportal.org](https://chahcvportal.org), log in and click “Upload My RTA” under the MOVES menu.

**Note:** Step-by-step instructions for how to create an account and navigate the Owner Portal are available on the login page at [chahcvportal.org](https://chahcvportal.org).

2. Email the RTA packet to [ownerinfo@thecha.org](mailto:ownerinfo@thecha.org) and include “RTA” and the voucher number in the subject line.
3. Drop off the RTA packet at a “no contact” drop box, located at the HCV Central Office (60 E. Van Buren St.), HCV South Office (3617 S. State St.) and HCV West Office (1852 S. Albany Ave.).

If you have questions about how to complete a RTA packet, contact the Owner Services Department by email at [ownerinfo@thecha.org](mailto:ownerinfo@thecha.org).

**WAITING LIST*****I am on the HCV waiting list. When will I be selected?***

COVID-19 has not impacted CHA’s ability to manage the waiting list, and HCV Program staff continue to follow normal procedures for pulling families from the waiting list and screening them for eligibility.

It is extremely important that your contact information is up to date when you are selected from the list. To look up your status and to update your contact information, visit [applyonline.thecha.org](https://applyonline.thecha.org).

***I was selected from the HCV waiting list. How will I receive my voucher?***

While CHA's offices are closed to the public, eligible families pulled from the HCV waiting list are not required to attend an in-person briefing in order to receive a voucher. Instead, they will be directed to watch an online briefing presentation or receive an oral briefing by phone and vouchers will be issued by email or U.S. Mail.

***Are there any waiting lists open for families who need housing?***

CHA waiting lists for Public Housing and the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Program are currently open and accepting applications. To apply for these waiting lists, visit [applyonline.thecha.org](https://applyonline.thecha.org).

To learn more about the waiting list requirements, visit [www.thecha.org](https://www.thecha.org) and click on "How Do I Apply for Housing" under the RESIDENTS menu.

**Note:** The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program waiting list is currently closed.

**CHA SERVICES*****I lost my job due to COVID-19. Can CHA help me find employment?***

Yes, HCV participants can receive job search assistance and job training through CHA's Employment Placement Services (EPS) program. Please contact any of the following workforce providers for assistance:

- **Centers for New Horizons** | Call [773-373-5700](tel:773-373-5700) or visit [www.cnh.org](https://www.cnh.org)
- **Employment & Employer Services** | Call [312-629-4761](tel:312-629-4761) or visit [www.eesforjobs.com](https://www.eesforjobs.com)
- **Phalanx Family Services** | Call [773-291-1086](tel:773-291-1086) or visit [www.phalanxgrpsservices.org](https://www.phalanxgrpsservices.org)

Additionally, the city of Chicago has partnered with the following organizations to connect persons looking for work with open positions.

- **Skills for Chicagoland's Future** | Call [312-906-7200](tel:312-906-7200) or visit [www.scfjobs.com](https://www.scfjobs.com)
- **Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership** | Text WORK NOW to [474747](tel:474747) or visit [chicookworks.org](https://chicookworks.org)

***I am interested in joining the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program. Can I still enroll?***

If you attended a FSS Information Session in the last 6 months and you are ready to join, please call the FSS Hotline at [773-672-6644](tel:773-672-6644) to discuss available enrollment options.

If you have not attended an information session, or it has been longer than 6 months since you last attended a session, you will have to attend before you can enroll. To view the information session schedule, visit [www.thecha.org/fss](https://www.thecha.org/fss). For more information, call the FSS Hotline at [773-672-6644](tel:773-672-6644).

***I am currently enrolled in the FSS Program. How does COVID-19 affect my participation?***

While CHA's offices are closed to the public, temporary processes are in place to assist participants in fulfilling their requirements. Additionally, CHA will consider circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic as a good cause for granting FSS Program contract extensions.

- If you have been FURLOUGHED (i.e., still employed on a non-pay status and will return to work), you are still considered EMPLOYED for FSS purposes. This will not affect your employment goal as you work toward graduation.

- If you have been LAID OFF (i.e., you are no longer working, even if you expect to be re-hired), you are considered UNEMPLOYED for FSS purposes. This will affect your employment goal, depending on how long you are out of work.
- All previously scheduled in-person financial literacy classes have been cancelled; however, online courses are available.

Please contact your FSS coordinator for information specific to your situation. If you do not have contact information for your FSS coordinator, please email [fss@thecha.org](mailto:fss@thecha.org).

***I am interested in the Choose to Own (CTO) Homeownership Program. Can I still apply?***

In order to apply for the CTO Homeownership Program, you must attend a virtual orientation. To be scheduled for an orientation, please email [CTOprogram@thecha.org](mailto:CTOprogram@thecha.org).

For more information and to view the CTO Homeownership Program eligibility criteria, please visit [www.thecha.org/residents/services/choose-to-own-homeownership-program](http://www.thecha.org/residents/services/choose-to-own-homeownership-program).

***I am in the CTO Homeownership Program. How does COVID-19 affect my participation?***

If you are already in the process of purchasing a home through the CTO Homeownership Program, CTO staff should be in contact with you regarding any next steps. To reach the CTO staff, please email [CTOprogram@thecha.org](mailto:CTOprogram@thecha.org).

***I'm interested in enrolling my child in a Chicago Park District Camp. How is CHA distributing "park vouchers" for discounted camp enrollment?***

Starting in Fall 2020, HCV participants no longer need the paper "park voucher" to register for Chicago Park District programs. Instead, HCV participants must first obtain a CHA Park District membership and then register for seasonal programs online or in-person as they normally would.

To register for a CHA membership, visit [apm.activecommunities.com/chicagoparkdistrict/membership](http://apm.activecommunities.com/chicagoparkdistrict/membership). You will be required to log in or create a Park District online account and add eligible youth household members to the account. The Park District will verify all household members' HCV Program participation prior to activating the membership.

You can also secure your membership in-person at the Park District, but you must bring a current photo ID to validate residency and HCV Program participation. Park staff are also available to help you create a Park District account and add the CHA discount membership.

**Note:** The Chicago Park District continues to modify all programs in response to city and state guidance. Registration and programming calendars have been re-structured, virtual programs have been added, enrollment capacity has been significantly reduced for in-person programs and in-person Day Camp health and safety measures have been added. These plans are subject to change based on local public health guidance.

For more information, visit [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/programs-memberships/day-camp](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/programs-memberships/day-camp).

***I am a person with a disability. Can CHA offer me assistance in navigating the HCV Program?***

If you are a person with a disability (a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities) and need assistance to comply with HCV Program requirements or use and enjoy your unit/building, you may be eligible for a reasonable accommodation. Accommodations include, but are not limited to, extra bedrooms, live-in aides, alternate communication (braille, sign-language interpretation), an exception payment standard, renting from a relative, or additional utility allowance.

To request a reasonable accommodation, complete the Request for Reasonable Accommodation form which is available on the CHA website at [www.thecha.org/forms](http://www.thecha.org/forms) as well as the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](http://cha.participantportal.org) under FORMS.

- Submit the completed form via email to [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org). For fastest processing, please include “REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION” and your voucher number in the subject line of your email.
- You can also submit the completed form at a “no contact” drop box, located at the HCV Central Office (60 E. Van Buren St.), HCV South Office (3617 S. State St.) and HCV West Office (1852 S. Albany Ave.).

For more information on reasonable accommodations, please contact the HCV Fair Housing Department by email at [fairhousing@thecha.org](mailto:fairhousing@thecha.org) or by phone at **312-913-7062**.

## GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES

### ***I think I am experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Who should I contact for help?***

If you believe you are experiencing an emergency, call 911.

For non-emergency cases, the City of Chicago has developed the Chi COVID Coach app to assist Chicagoans who believe that they have been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms. Visit [covidcoach.chicago.gov](http://covidcoach.chicago.gov) or call **312-745-4835**.

You’ll be asked to provide information about your symptoms and may receive follow up calls or texts from the Chicago Department of Public Health with day-by-day guidance.

Remember, even if your symptoms are mild, by law in Chicago, you must stay home except to get medical care. If you are living with someone who is sick or have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19, you must also stay home and monitor for symptoms.

### ***Where can I find a COVID-19 vaccine?***

As of March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the City of Chicago officially entered phase 1c of the vaccine rollout and all essential workers and adults with underlying medical conditions are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. All Chicagoans over the age of 16 are expected to be eligible for the vaccine in mid-April.

Chicagoans can find vaccine appointments in many ways, including:

- Through your normal healthcare provider, such as your primary care provider, health clinic or hospital where you have received medical care in the past.
- Through your local pharmacy, such as **Walgreens**, **CVS**, **Mariano’s**, **Jewel-Osco**, **Walmart**, **Sam’s Club** or **Costco**.
- Through **Zocdoc**, which manages appointments for the mass vaccination sites such as the United Center, the American Airlines Conference Center at Gallagher Way (Wrigley Field) and Chicago State University, among others.
- Through the **Protect Chicago Homebound Program** (limited eligibility).

For more information on how to find a vaccine, vaccine eligibility phases, and Chicago’s equitable distribution plan, visit [chicago.gov/COVIDvax](http://chicago.gov/COVIDvax) or call **312-746-4835**.

***Those around me (such as property owners, participants and/or neighbors) are not obeying the Chicago-area guidance regarding face covering and/or social distancing. What should I do?***

It is up to all of us to do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Remind them that doing this will protect their safety as well as yours. We must be “all in” to stay well.

The city of Chicago offers more information about the “Protecting Chicago” opening framework online at [www.chicago.gov/reopening](http://www.chicago.gov/reopening).

***Who can I contact for food assistance?***

If your family is experiencing food insecurity, contact the Greater Chicago Food Depository by phone at **773-247-FOOD (3663)** or visit [www.chicagosfoodbank.org](http://www.chicagosfoodbank.org) for information on nearby food pantries. The Food Depository’s benefits outreach team is also available to help Chicagoans apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid benefits.

***Who can I contact for crisis support?***

HCV participants can contact CHA FamilyWorks providers for a variety of support services. For more information about FamilyWorks or for help locating your case management provider, please visit [www.thecha.org/familyworks](http://www.thecha.org/familyworks), call **312-935-2625** or email [familyworks@thecha.org](mailto:familyworks@thecha.org).

In addition, the following organizations offer free crisis counseling and mental health resources to all Chicago residents by phone and/or text:

- **Bright Star Community Outreach Trauma Counseling Helpline** | Call **833-TURN-123**
- **Call4Calm** | Text TALK or HABLAR to **552020**
- **Chicago Department of Public Health Teletherapy** | Call **312-747-1020**
- **City of Chicago Domestic Violence Helpline** | Call **877-863-6338** or visit [www.CHI.gov/dvhelp](http://www.CHI.gov/dvhelp)
- **Crisis Text Line** | Text HELLO to **741741**
- **NAMI Chicago Mental Health Helpline** | Call **833-626-4244**
- **U.S. Disaster Distress Helpline** | Call **1-800-985-5990** or text TalkWithUs to **66746**

***Where can I find additional COVID-19 resources for Chicago residents?***

The city of Chicago has assembled a comprehensive list of resources to support all Chicago residents and provide information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. These resources include assistance related to health, mental health, food, housing, utilities, schools, employment, immigration and more. You can access all of these resources online at [www.chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://www.chicago.gov/coronavirus).

**LEARN MORE*****How do speak to someone regarding my HCV Program account?***

As of March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the HCV Regional Offices are closed to the public. However, CHA staff continue to provide service to participants and property owners by phone, email, portal and U.S. Mail.

**Note:** As U.S. Mail has been experiencing delays, CHA is encouraging participants to provide an email address to facilitate important account transactions. If you do not have an email address, you can create one for free through [Google](#), [Yahoo](#) or [Microsoft](#).

You can reach CHA through the following means:

**Online:**

- RENTCafé | [res-par.thecha.org](https://res-par.thecha.org)
- Participant Portal | [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org)
- Waiting List | [applyonline.thecha.org](https://applyonline.thecha.org)
- Owner Portal | [chahcvportal.org](https://chahcvportal.org)

**By Email:**

- General Inquiries | [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org)
- Owner Services | [ownerinfo@thecha.org](mailto:ownerinfo@thecha.org)
- Inspections | [hcvinspections@thecha.org](mailto:hcvinspections@thecha.org)

**By Phone:**

- CHA Customer Call Center | **312-935-2600** (TTY: **312-461-0079**)

Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

***How can I learn more about RENTCafé?***

CHA offers many resources for participant families looking to learn more about RENTCafé including written step-by-step guides, instructional videos and live webinars. Written guides and videos are available for download by logging in to RENTCafé at [res-par.thecha.org](https://res-par.thecha.org) and on the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org).

Recordings of account management webinars are available on-demand in our HCV Webinar Library at [gotostage.com/channel/chahcvparticipants](https://gotostage.com/channel/chahcvparticipants). To view the schedule of upcoming account management webinars, visit [cha-hcvevents.eventbrite.com](https://cha-hcvevents.eventbrite.com).

***How can I learn more about the HCV Owner Portal or Participant Portal?***

CHA has recently updated Frequently Asked Questions documents for both the Owner and Participant Portals. They are available for download on the Owner Portal at [chahcvportal.org](https://chahcvportal.org) or the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org) by clicking on the “How to Navigate” link on the login page.

***How can I learn more about HCV Program policies and initiatives?***

CHA offers dozens of forms, flyers, videos, newsletters and guidebooks that you can download as well as helpful links to partner sites. These resources are updated regularly, so we encourage participants and property owners to always reference the latest online version when seeking information.

To find these resources, visit the CHA website at [www.thecha.org](https://www.thecha.org), the Owner Portal at [chahcvportal.org](https://chahcvportal.org) and the Participant Portal at [cha.participantportal.org](https://cha.participantportal.org).

To view resources on either of the Portals, log in and click on RESOURCES in the menu bar. Resources are categorized by subject.

To view on-demand recordings of HCV Program webinars, visit our webinar libraries:

- Participant webinars: [gotostage.com/channel/chahcvparticipants](https://gotostage.com/channel/chahcvparticipants)
- Property owner webinars: [gotostage.com/channel/chahcvowners](https://gotostage.com/channel/chahcvowners)

To view the schedule of upcoming webinars, visit [cha-hcvevents.eventbrite.com](https://cha-hcvevents.eventbrite.com).