



Summer 2013

Message From the CEO: Introducing CHA's Plan Forward



Dear Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program Families,

In April, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and I announced the Chicago Housing Authority's new strategic plan—*Plan Forward: Communities That Work*.

The Plan details how CHA is committed to building quality housing in vibrant

neighborhoods and helping create opportunities for low-income residents to enter the global economy. Holding 32 Stakeholder input sessions gave more than 160 organizations, 800 CHA residents and 300 community members an opportunity to contribute to the development of *Plan Forward*. *Plan Forward* builds on the *Plan for Transformation* established in 2000 and will continue CHA's commitment to revitalizing Chicago communities.

Three key goals of Plan Forward are:

- Re-imagine the final phase of the Plan for Transformation to develop vibrant communities
- Ensure that CHA housing is safe, decent and sustainable
- Expand services to more residents and make sure those services meets their needs

You may also notice that we have introduced a new logo and look, as a part of *Plan Forward: Communities that Work*; you will see more in the coming months.

For more details about *Plan Forward*, visit www.thecha.org.

We, at CHA, look forward to continuing to work with all of our partners in implementing *Plan Forward*.

Sincerely,

Charles Woodyard

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Meet Our Board Members - Commissioner Adela Cepeda



The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Board of Commissioners makes decisions about CHA policies and programs to guide CHA's current and future programs. In this series we introduce you to new and sitting board members. For this issue, we present Commissioner Adela Cepeda.

Adela Cepeda is President of A.C. Advisory, Inc. and has led the company to a national leadership position in municipal financial advisory services. In 2005, Cepeda founded a full-service broker dealer, Alta Capital Group, LLC, focused on the municipal markets. Cepeda serves on the boards of Window to the World Communications, Inc. (PBS Channel 11 WTTW); Ravinia Festival Association; and The Chicago Community Trust. Cepeda also has 12 years of service as a commissioner for the Public Building Commission of Chicago. Cepeda received her bachelor's degree from Harvard College and earned her MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Customer Service Call Center Upgrades

Have you called into CHA lately? If not, you may not be aware of the significant enhancements to CHA's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System.

Highlights of CHA's recent IVR upgrade include:

Voice Continuity

Callers will now hear the same, easy-to-understand voice throughout all parts of the system.

Dual Language Functionality

Callers will be given the option to speak with a Spanish-speaking representative much sooner than the old system allowed. Once the language is selected, the entire call will continue in Spanish from that point on.

System Organization

The Caller will be prompted if they are an Applicant, Participant, Owner or Other Type of Call at a much earlier point in the call than with the prior system.

System Integration and Self-Service

Information such as Next Inspection Date, Next HAP Payment, HAP Amount, etc. can be gathered at any time, without needing to talk to a Call Center Specialist. You no longer need to wait for the Call Center to open each weekday at 8:30am to get the information you need, as this system can be accessed 24/7.

Customer Service Integration

If the caller enters their specific information (SSN/ Tax ID AND the voucher number), their tenant's account information will automatically appear to the Call Center Specialist, giving the Specialist more time to review your



account ahead of the call, and eliminating the need for you to give these details over the phone.

The new Owner Portal and the IVR Upgrades are just some of the many ways CHA will continue to Plan Forward.

From the Property Manager's Desk

CHA is pleased to announce a new section of Owner News entitled From the Property Manager's Desk. CHA cares what you think and this new feature will allow Owners and property management professionals to discuss program-related topics that are important to them.

If you would like to write an article for From the Property Manager's Desk, please send an e-mail to ownerinfo@thecha.org and include "Owner News: From the Property Manager's Desk" in the subject line.



CHA Stays on the Cutting-Edge with New Technologies: Owner Portal

Have you visited the CHA's Owner Portal yet? If not, you're missing out on a wonderful opportunity to simplify the way you do business with the Housing Choice Voucher Program. CHA's state-of-the-art Owner Portal is your one stop shop for managing and administrating your HCV properties. The site has been entirely redesigned with several user-friendly upgrades, targeting our Owners' most common property management needs.



The following are just a few features of CHA's cutting-edge new system:

Umbrella Logins

Owners with more than one vendor ID in the Program can now link all of their accounts based on the e-mail address CHA has on file.

Update Alerts

Owners now receive e-mail alerts based on updates to their moves and rent increase requests in progress. Owners also receive an e-mail alert if a new blog entry is posted on the Owner Portal.

Abatement Status *(new)*

Owners can now see past and pending abatements.

Change of Address Requests *(new)*

Owners can submit change of address requests through the Owner Portal and receive an automated e-mail confirmation once the request is processed.

Online RTA Packet Uploads *(new)*

Owners can upload RTA packets for new moves directly to the Owner Portal.

Rent Increase Requests *(new)*

Owners can now submit Rent Increase Requests directly through the Owner Portal through the use of

electronic signatures.

Search Functionality *(new)*

Owners can much more easily search the Owner Portal now using the top-left hand search box.

Owner Excellence Application *(new)*

Owners in the Owner Excellence Program can apply for an enhanced inspection, sign-up for workshops, apply for a vacancy payment, or communicate directly to OEP staff through a webform.

Inspection Appointments and Inspection Results

Owners can view their upcoming inspection appointments and previous inspection results directly in the Owner Portal.

Track In-Progress Moves

Owners can track pending moves through the use of the Moves Tracker,

which helpfully breaks down the moves process into eight simple steps.

Track Rent Increase Requests:

Owners can track pending rent increase requests through the Rent Increase Tracker which breaks down the rent increase process into five easy steps.

Payment Statements and 1099s

Owners can view and print their HAP remittances and 1099 statements directly through the Owner Portal.

Program Forms

Owners can access program forms for viewing and printing directly on the Owner Portal.

For more information or to register, please visit the Owner Portal at www.thecha.org/hcvportal.



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CHA Owner Portal

Sign Up Today!

www.thecha.org/hcvportal

Program Enforcement - Owner Suspensions

CHA will limit the participation of owners and property managers if CHA terminates three (3) or more HAP contracts as the result of HQS non-compliance for an owner during a 12 month period. CHA will not exercise its right to terminate all HAP contracts, but CHA will deny the leasing of new units and will not process any Requests for Tenancy Approvals (RTAs)—(moving papers). CHA will review and gather this information at least quarterly.

CHA must terminate a HAP contract if a unit has been abated for 60 days or more due to Housing Quality Standards (HQS) failures. Part of CHA's mission is to help families pay for quality housing in Chicago. A unit that does not pass HQS inspection does not fit CHA's standards for quality and therefore HCV Program Participants cannot reside in such a unit. If the Participant is living in a unit that the Property Owner/Manager does not maintain in compliance with HQS, the Participant will be required to move.

CHA has the authority to terminate a HAP contract for reasons outlined in Part B of the contract. These reasons are also listed in the CHA Administrative Plan section 13-I.C—www.thecha.org/adminplan). A Property Owner that develops a pattern of HAP contract non-compliance is not the type of Property Owner with whom CHA wants a partnership.

Owner News - Chicago Housing Authority
HCV Program Communications
60 E. Van Buren, 8th floor Chicago, IL 60605
Contact Us: Phone: 312-935-2600 E-mail: hcv@thecha.org

Inspections Corner

Failed Annual Inspections

If you have failed two (2) Annual Inspections (Owner Fail Items), you must pay a \$75 fee prior to requesting a 2nd re-inspection. To pay the fee with a major credit card or with a PayPal Account, go to <http://reinspections.chaownerservices.org>. The deficiencies must be cured, and the 2nd re-inspection completed, within 60 days of abatement or you risk HAP contract termination.



Inspection Appointment Timeframes

CHA Owners have many options to check their inspection appointment timeframes, including on CHA's Inspections Website, the new Owner Portal or through the Call Center. To obtain your inspection timeframe on the Inspections Website, go to www.chainspections.org and enter your inspection ID number in the "Inspection Appointment Lookup" search field. To access this information via the Owner Portal, visit www.thecha.org/hcvportal, login with your user ID and password, click "Inspections" on the top navigation bar and then click "View My Inspection Appointments" on the menu that appears. All inspection appointments linked to your account will show up automatically. Lastly, to access your inspection timeframes by phone through the Call Center, call (312) 544-0302 and enter your inspection ID number followed by the pound sign.