



Q1 2014

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THE LOCATION OF YOUR HCV PROGRAM REGIONAL OFFICE MAY HAVE CHANGED...

EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2014:

To more efficiently serve our clients, the CHA Housing Choice Voucher Program has reassigned the zip codes serviced by each regional office. Please review the lists below to see if your location has changed. If your zip code is not listed, continue to visit your servicing office.

Zip Codes to be moved to the West Regional Office:

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| • 60646 | • 60707 | • 60629 |
| • 60631 | • 60639 | • 60636 |
| • 60656 | • 60651 | • 60621 |
| • 60630 | • 60609 | • 60652 |
| • 60634 | • 60632 | • 60655 |
| • 60641 | • 60638 | • 60643 |

Zip Codes to be moved to the Central Regional Office:

- 60642

NEW OFFICE HOURS EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2014:
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Message From the CEO:



Dear Housing Choice Voucher Program Families:

As the new Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Housing Authority, it is an honor to help CHA residents increase their potential for long-term economic success and a sustained high quality of life. With the support of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Mayor Rahm Emanuel, CHA will continue to provide safe and affordable housing for Chicago's low-income families as we work to build vibrant communities throughout the

city. I am equally proud of our ongoing commitment to implement the strategies set forth in our new vision – Plan Forward.

Plan Forward's new approach accounts for the ever-changing economic marketplace, reconsiders existing strategies and develops sound forward-thinking policies that will help strengthen Chicago neighborhoods. In addition, CHA is working to build holistic communities with institutions, organizations and physical spaces that foster strong communities inclusive of education, recreational and commercial opportunities.

CHA is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in this great city as evidenced by the record attendance at last year's Owner Symposium and the grand opening of the new Near North Target on the former Cabrini-Green development area this fall. As part of this project, more than 200 job opportunities were made available, including 75 for public housing residents. Additionally, the Shops & Lofts project, a multi-million dollar complex that will be anchored by a neighborhood Wal-Mart, is another key indicator of building successful communities to help strengthen the lives of CHA residents. Shops & Lofts, to be located at E. 47th St. and Cottage Grove Ave., will also help develop a vibrant community and create more affordable housing opportunities. In the future mixed-income development area that will include both residential and commercial retail components, more than 100 permanent jobs will be created.

Thank you for your vested interest in the work of the agency and I look forward to a successful new year as the best is yet to come.

Sincerely,
Michael R. Merchant

Meet Our Board Members: Commissioner Matthew Brewer

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 Matthew Brewer.



On November 13, 2013, the Chicago City Council approved the appointment of Matthew Brewer as a member of the CHA Board of Commissioners.

Matthew Brewer is a partner at the law firm Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott, LLP, where he practices commercial litigation in federal and state courts and advises clients on legal and business issues. His practice includes breach of contract, patent infringement, false advertising, employment, antitrust, and other commercial disputes.

Brewer attended Stanford University where he served as student body president and obtained his B.A. with honors. Brewer earned a J.D. from Yale Law School and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. At Harvard, he received the prestigious Bert King Award, which recognizes individuals for their dedication to service as well as their academic, professional, and leadership accomplishments.

Understanding Lease Terms

Once an applicant has been accepted into the HCV Program and has found a unit that meets his/her housing needs, it is time to sign a contract agreement with the Property Owner – also known as a Lease.

A typical Chicago Lease can be up to five pages long; while this may seem overwhelming, it is very important to carefully read through all information included within the document. Once the Lease is signed, both the Property Owner and the Participant are responsible for abiding by the rules and regulations outlined in the agreement. Otherwise, severe consequences may ensue.

Lease terms can be somewhat intimidating and, in some cases, confusing for the Participant. Furthermore, all Property Owners and Managers have different rules

that they enforce and different services that they offer. Below are some tips that may help the tenant understand what is expected of them while residing in the unit:

- **Analyze every single word of the Lease:** If a word or phrase seems vague or unclear, ask the Property Owner for clarification.
- **Know the basics:** The Lease should outline all rules that the tenant must abide by while residing in the unit. Participants are encouraged to ask questions regarding their specific desires. For example, are pets allowed? Is the property/unit smoke-free? Are there assigned parking spaces on the premises? Knowing these answers can help avoid disagreement or confusion over the duration of the Lease.
- **Define permissions:** The Lease may specify what modifications to the unit are allowed or not

allowed. Some Property Owners or Managers allow tenants to paint walls or replace carpets, while others do not.

- **Look for services included:** Know the types of services and systems that the Property Owner provides, such as garbage receptacle areas on the property and/or garbage incinerator. Participants are also encouraged to find out specifics regarding bug and rodent prevention or treatment before signing the Lease.

With careful review and consulting the Property Owner, understanding the Lease can be easier than one might think.

Participants are encouraged to read the Participant Reference Guide or call the CHA Customer Call Center at (312) 935-2600 for more information.

Family Obligations - Do's and Don'ts

All Participants should be well aware that once they are approved for housing assistance with HCV, all household members must follow obligations listed on the Voucher in order to continue participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Failure to do so could result in termination of the Voucher.

Examples of these rules are listed below:

Do's:

- **Supply information:** Voucher holders are required to provide any information that CHA or HUD determines to be necessary, including evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status, information for use in a regularly scheduled re-examination or interim re-examination of family income and composition, and any information to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.

- **Promptly notify CHA IN WRITING:** Voucher holders are

required to notify the CHA of the following - when the family is away from the unit for an extended period of time in accordance with CHA policies (typically 30 days or longer); of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child; and if any family no longer lives in the unit.

- **Attend required meetings:** Voucher holders are required to attend informational briefings and required appointments including but not limited to those scheduled to discuss violations of the Family Obligations and allegations of criminal activity in the family's unit, building, or neighborhood.

Don'ts:

- **Own or have interest in any other unit:** Voucher holders must not receive another housing subsidy for the same unit or a different unit under any other federal, state, or local housing assistance program; receive housing assistance while residing in a unit owned by a spouse, parent, child, grandparent,

grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family (unless CHA has determined that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities).

- **Engage in or allow guests to engage in illegal or prohibited activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises:** Voucher holders must not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the HCV Program; engage in or allow guests to engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity; abuse of alcohol; abusive or violent behavior toward CHA personnel or its representatives; possess or use a firearm or aggravated assault weapon in violation of federal, state, or local criminal or civil laws.

- **Engage in criminal or drug related activity:** Voucher holders must not be a registered sex offender in any state or territory of the United States, or be convicted of a drug-related crime for the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

For a more comprehensive list of the Family Obligations, Participants are encouraged to carefully read their HCV Program Voucher or consult the Participant Reference Guide.



Featured HCV Participant Council Member: Adele Barksdale



Adele Barksdale is a Participant in the HCV Program and serves as a nonprofit advocate for empowering parents, schools, and communities. A resident of the Ashburn neighborhood, Ms. Barksdale volunteers her time every year to help families in her community get ready for the new school year, including gathering and distributing school supplies and other items for children.

When her children started attending school in the early 90's, Ms. Barksdale wanted to help improve the environment they grew up in – which continues to motivate her to this day: “When the community goes down, you go down . . . I try to help all children and all families.” Ms. Barksdale appreciates how CHA shares this mission by offering the HCV Program for low-income families.

As a Participant Council Member, Ms. Barksdale encourages HCV Participants to get to know their neighborhoods – including schools, police department, stores, park district, etc. – attend workshops and meetings, and update CHA on everything by contacting HCV Program staff as needed.

Ms. Barksdale hopes to eventually become a homeowner and go back to school to further her education. In the meantime, she continues to assist fellow HCV Participants in any way she can.

Are You Ready to Buy a Home?

Take Advantage of CHA Choose-To-Own (CTO) Homeownership Program

Most people view the American dream of homeownership as unachievable. The CHA Choose-To-Own (CTO) Homeownership Program provides qualified Public Housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) families with the opportunity to own a home.

The CTO process is similar to the conventional home buying process. Families can purchase a single family home, townhome, condominium or cooperative anywhere within the City of Chicago. CTO has helped over 400 CHA families make the transition from renting to owning.

According to the National Association of Realtors, the housing market is on its way to recovery. Therefore, those interested in purchasing a home are strongly encouraged to attend a CTO orientation session to find

out more about the program and steps to achieving homeownership. Join us at one of the following sessions (*Dates listed in green are in Spanish and English sessions*):

Tuesday, March 4th
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
CHA South Office
10 W. 35th St.

Wednesday, March 12th
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
CHA Central Office
60 E. Van Buren

Thursday, March 13th
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Spanish Coalition for Housing
1922 N. Pulaski

Tuesday, March 18th
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
CHA South Office
10 W. 35th St.

Thursday, March 20th
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Neighborhood Housing Services
1279 N. Milwaukee

Thursday, March 27th
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Spanish Coalition for Housing
1922 N. Pulaski

New Affordable Health Insurance option: are now available for Illinois residents!

Most people qualify for financial assistance. In fact, 6 in 10 uninsured Americans can find a plan for less than \$100 a month.

Sign up today for the peace of mind that comes with knowing your family is insured!

Representatives are at the CHA Regional Offices during the following days and times:

CHA Central Office
60 E Van Buren St
Mondays @ 9:00 am-1:00 pm
Fridays @ 9:00 am-1:00 pm

CHA South Office
10 W 35th St
Thursdays @ 8:30 am-12:30 pm

Enroll by phone 24/7 by calling
(800) 318-2596

Enroll online at
www.GetCoveredIllinois.gov

More information about financial help and new insurance options can be found at
www.GetCoveredAmerica.org



Removing the Snow from Sidewalks - It's the Law

Chicago residents know that winters in the Midwest can be challenging – even more so when inches of snow begin to pile up. Clearing sidewalks of snow and ice is not only a courtesy to each other, but in Chicago, it is the law.

According to the City of Chicago municipal code, it is not just the owner's responsibility but, "every lessee, tenant, occupant or other person having charge of any building or lot of ground abutting upon any public way or public space shall remove the snow and ice from the sidewalk," more specifically, a five-foot-wide path along all sidewalks adjacent to an individual's property must be cleared.

Tips on How to Shovel Safely

- Wear warm layers of clothes and gloves.
- Start early to get to the snow before it builds up and becomes harder to shovel.
- Work slowly, take breaks often and stay hydrated by drinking water regularly.
- Don't pick up heavy loads of snow – this can strain the heart, back and neck. Push instead of lifting and use a small shovel to make sure the load is not too heavy.

Individuals who do not comply with the sidewalk snow removal ordinance can face fines of \$50, while businesses can face fines from \$250-\$500 per day of violation.

Chicago residents can report locations with uncleared sidewalks by making a "Snow – Uncleared Sidewalk" request to the City of Chicago Service Request line (Dial 311) or online at www.cityofchicago.org/311. **Note: DO NOT use this category to report snow on streets, parking lots, or alleys.**

Without a wide, clear path through snow and ice, it is especially difficult for people with disabilities, seniors and children to walk safely. All Chicago residents benefit from having a safe, clear and continuous path to travel – therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure the sidewalks are clear of snow and ice.

Take Advantage of Free Tax Preparation Services!

Federal and Illinois tax return preparation and e-file are offered for free in partnership with the Center for Economic Progress and Ladder Up, which annually prepare thousands of returns with the help of trained volunteers.

Families earning up to \$50,000 and individuals earning up to \$25,000 may be eligible to use the free

services and may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), and/or student financial aid for college.

Families and individuals can find out more information by doing any one of the following:

- Call the City's 311 helpline
- Visit the City's website at www.taxprepchicago.com

- Visit Center for Economic Progress at www.economicprogress.org or call (312) 252-0280

- Visit Ladder Up at www.goladderup.org or call (312) 409-1555

- Visit IRS at www.irs.gov and type "free tax help" in the search box or call (800) 829-1040/(800) 829-4059 (TDD)

Earn a College Degree at Little to No Cost!

City Colleges of Chicago can help you build the career you want to advance your life

Attend an Information Session:

March 5
9 am | 11 am | 6 pm
Malcom X College
1900 W Van Buren
Rm 2616

March 12
9 am | 11 am
Kennedy-King College
6301 S Halsted St
Rm U156



March 19
9 am | 11 am
Humbolt Park Vocational Education Center
1645 N California Ave
Rm 109

March 26
9 am | 11 am
Harold Washington College
30 E Lake St
Rm 1115

To RSVP and for dates beyond March, please call CCC at (312) 553-2830.

Foreclosure - Know Your Rights

Information shared by the Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing (LCBH)

In the event that a bank seeks possession of a property, it is typically the result of the Property Owner falling behind on his or her mortgage payments and the bank has initiated a lawsuit to take over the property. Sometimes, the bank and Property Owner reach an agreement and the Property Owner continues to own the property – in other cases, the court allows for the sale of the property to a new owner.

Where does that leave the tenant? During this process, tenants have the same rights and responsibilities they would as if the foreclosure was never filed. If an HCV Program Participant ever finds him/herself residing in a property that is undergoing foreclosure, he/she should be aware of his/her rights as a tenant:

- **Tenants have a right to live in a safe apartment with utilities** – During the foreclosure process, the Property Owner is responsible for the maintenance of the property. If the property is not being maintained, or utilities are shut off, speak with the Property Owner first. If problems still aren't addressed, call Chicago City Services at 311. The City may investigate and require the owner to make repairs.
- **Tenants have the right to seal their court record** – If a tenant is taken to eviction court because his/her building is in foreclosure, the court record can be sealed (i.e. made confidential) to protect the



tenant's credit report and ability to rent in the future.

- **Tenants have a right to be notified in writing if their landlord changes** – The foreclosure court may enter an "Order Appointing a Receiver" or an "Order of Possession" with an "Order Confirming Sale." These "orders" indicate a change in management and the tenant must be notified of these changes in writing. The notice should inform the tenant of the foreclosure, who to contact to request repairs of the property, and how to pay rent. Failure to give this notice may provide the tenant with a defense against eviction and may allow for tenant remedies
- **Tenants have a right to receive written notice if they are asked to move** – Tenants should beware of notices posted on properties

indicating they must move out immediately. The landlord cannot terminate the lease due to foreclosure, and he/she cannot force the tenant to leave by shutting off utilities or changing locks. Tenants are entitled to receive a written notice, which may be shorter than 90 days but must still comply with the law.

LCBH will conduct informational sessions at the CHA workshops. For March and April dates, please visit <https://chatenantworkshop-foreclosure.eventbrite.com> or contact the CHA HCVP Call Center at 312-935-2600.

For more information about the foreclosure process and how it affects tenants, feel free to call the LCBH Tenants in Foreclosure Help Line at (312) 784-3507 or visit the LCBH website at www.lcbh.org.

The above information is not intended, and should not be taken, as legal advice on any particular set of facts or circumstances. Participants are advised to contact an attorney for advice on how the law applies to his/her situation.

**Have a question about the
Housing Choice Voucher Program?**

Email Us!
hcv@thecha.org

Please allow one business day for a response to your inquiry.

Mobility Counseling Program

Helping Participants Improve Their Quality of Life

The Mobility Counseling Program assists families in the HCV Program to move into CHA-designated Opportunity Areas within the City of Chicago.

Opportunity Areas are specifically identified neighborhoods that offer quality housing and positive economic characteristics. Current HCV Participants that do not currently live in Opportunity Areas, new admissions, and families porting-in from another Housing Authority are eligible to participate in the Mobility Counseling Program.

Mobility Counseling Program Services

A Mobility Counselor assists families to identify housing and community needs and desires, as well as locate a unit in an Opportunity Area.

Participating families work with the Mobility Counselor throughout the leasing process to assist with transition into new communities (e.g. locating community resources, enrolling children in schools). Participants can also take advantage of the following benefits:

- Workshops on home maintenance, financial management, and tenant rights
- Community tours and unit search assistance
- A grant of up to \$500 to be used toward a security deposit, new furniture or driver's license training courses

Enrollment in Mobility Counseling

Interested families can learn more by contacting the CHA's Mobility Counseling Program partners:

Housing Choice Partners

401 S. LaSalle St. Suite 1101
Chicago, IL 60605
(773) 451-0203

Housing Opportunities Unlimited

2858 W. Diversey Ave Suite 201
Chicago, IL 60647
(773) 698-6467

For more information about the Mobility Counseling Program, visit the CHA website at www.thecha.org/mobility.

2014 Paid Summer Opportunities for Youth

Are you a CHA resident between the ages of 13–24?

Are you looking for ways to earn extra money this summer? Do you want to build your resume and gain exposure to future careers? If so, apply for paid summer opportunities by visiting

<https://youth.thecha.org/>

To apply you will need:

- Basic contact information (name, address, phone)
- Email address
- CHA Client ID number*
- Last four digits of social security number of the head of household*
- Youth birthdate*

*These items are required to verify CHA residency

For more information, contact the Youth Hotline at **(312) 786-6930** or visit <https://youth.thecha.org>

Application available on April 1
The deadline to apply is May 15

HEARTLAND ALLIANCE

HUMAN CARE

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Asset Development Coordinator

Heartland Human Care Services, Inc. is seeking Asset Development Coordinators for CHA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS). To learn more about the position and apply, please visit www.heartlandalliance.org, click on "Careers," then click on "Search Jobs." In the Department menu, select "Wellness & Prevention" and click "Search." Select "Asset Development Coordinator" and create a username and password for your application. Please indicate if you are a CHA resident in your cover letter.

Questions? Contact Gloria Hernandez at ghernandez@heartlandalliance.org.



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60 E. VAN BUREN
CHICAGO, IL 60605
www.thecha.org/hcv



GOING PLACES

Q1 2014

CHA Announces 2014-2015 Scholarship Program

Pursuing a college education is a component to improving one's quality of life. CHA strives to accomplish its mission in assisting low-income families, and is thrilled to help HCV Program Participants seeking to further their education by offering the 2014-2015 CHA Scholarship Program.

CHA plans to award over 100 scholarships ranging from \$1,000-\$2,500 based on each applicant's financial need and academic merit. A 2.0 GPA or higher is recommended for all applicants. Only current CHA HCV Program Participant families are eligible, and the applicant must plan to enroll in an accredited post-secondary institution in Fall 2014.

The program also accepts applicants who are current high school seniors, undergraduate or graduate students continuing their studies, or adults seeking to start a post-secondary program in the fall. Previous recipients of the scholarship award are encouraged to reapply if they are continuing their studies during the required term.

Applications must be submitted online between January 15 - May 15, 2014. Required materials to submit with the application include transcripts, personal essays and letters of recommendation. Go to www.thecha.org/scholarship to get started today!

Note: If you are enrolled or plan to enroll in one of the Chicago City Colleges, CHA has a separate partnership directly with City Colleges that will allow CHA residents to attend their colleges for little or no cost, after financial aid is applied. Due to this special agreement, CHA residents attending City Colleges are not eligible to apply for the CHA Scholarship.

GOING PLACES

Chicago Housing Authority
HCV Program Communications,
Going Places
60 E. Van Buren, 8th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605

Contact Us:

Phone: 312-935-2600

E-mail: hcv@thecha.org