



Message From the CEO:



Dear HCV Participants,

As we enter this new year, I am proud of the progress that CHA has made as we work to help build strong, vibrant communities throughout Chicago and support programs that improve access to education, important information, and resources.

Building on the work of last year, we are increasing our focus on ensuring that families have access to important program-related information and resources. To start, we are scheduling free workshops throughout the year, featuring various topics and guest presenters, to assist you in navigating the HCV program and to aid you in enjoying the comfort of your home. Look for more communication about these workshops in the mail and at our regional offices. We are also improving the materials available in our resource centers, to provide you with information on housing options as well as health, career and educational resources.

Let me take a moment to underscore our continued emphasis on education.

Every year, dozens of public housing and Housing Choice Voucher students prepare for their journey into higher education at CHA's annual "Take Flight" College Send-Off. Many receive scholarships from CHA's college scholarship program, to attend some of the most prestigious schools in the nation, including Amherst, Cornell, Yale and Morehouse. This past year, thanks to a partnership with CNA Insurance Company, it was the largest Take Flight event ever.

Early this year, some of those students returned for "Staying Power" – a retention check-in that focused on college resiliency, maximizing connections and building a professional network. The CHA college students reconvened and shared their stories from the first semester and garnered new resources before heading back to school for their second semester.

Some of the helpful topics covered at the event included: summer classes at City Colleges of Chicago, Section 3 jobs, and maximizing financial aid. With such great enthusiasm at this year's inaugural event, we look forward to the 5th annual "Take Flight" slated for this summer.

That is just one of many CHA initiatives geared toward education. Besides the aforementioned CHA college scholarship program, which offers scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for residents attending accredited colleges or universities, CHA public housing residents and HCV participants can obtain a degree or certificate from City Colleges of Chicago at low or no cost through a partnership between CHA and CCC. CHA helped almost 600 residents attend the City Colleges of Chicago in 2014 – a 16 percent increase from 2013.

CHA also offers a range of educational and other opportunities for youth during out-of-school time.

In all, CHA engaged more than 6,000 youth in academic, career and wellness/recreational programs in 2014. We expect to improve on that in 2015.

For more information, check out the Youth Opportunities page at www.thecha.org.

Sincerely,
Michael R. Merchant

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Meet New Board Member Francine Washington



Francine Washington was appointed to the Chicago Housing Authority Board of Commissioners in June 2014.

A longtime and respected voice in the Chicago resident leadership community, Washington was recently elected as the President of the Central Advisory Council, and is also President of the Washington Park Local Advisory Committee. She has also served on many other important Boards in the city, including the Bronzeville Alliance, the National Public Housing Museum, and has served as at-large president of Stateway Gardens/Park Boulevard Local Advisory Council. She is also a member of the Stateway Associates Working Group.

In her various roles, Washington has aggressively addressed important issues that affect communities and residents, such as community safety, building maintenance, and the need for public housing residents to be recognized and supported. She has also seen to it that CHA residents are healthy, serving as Director of the Summer Food Program, in which CHA residents are provided healthy meals free-of-charge. She has selected sites for the program, hired and trained staff, provided management and prepared applications, contracts and applications for the program.

Please join CHA in welcoming Ms. Washington to the Board of Commissioners.

Spring Cleaning Tips

Though it may not seem like it, Spring will be here soon and tenants are encouraged to organize their units to get a fresh start with the new season and warmer weather. Cleaning an entire apartment can be overwhelming, but tenants can use the following tips to help make spring cleaning more enjoyable and effective:

- **Wash windows.** Pick a cloudy day to wash windows, otherwise the cleaner will dry quickly and leave streaks. Rubber-edged squeegees are more effective than cloth or newspaper, but a paper towel will work just fine. If no window cleaner is available, mild dish soap will get the job done too.
- **Wash walls, cabinets, baseboards, and woodwork.** Dust doesn't always go straight to the floor. In addition to dusting all surfaces, walls, and ceiling fixtures, give them a good scrub-down as well. Be sure to clean underneath furniture and appliances as well.
- **Clean light fixtures.** Use a microfiber or lint-free cloth to dust fixtures and bulbs within reach. Use a damp cloth to wipe down light bulbs to ensure lights are shining bright;

DO NOT make the metal coil wet – avoid that section with the damp cloth.

- **Get organized.** Gather some containers and clean up any clutter in the bedrooms, living areas, kitchen, etc. Consider having a box for “garage sale” items, another box for “donation items,” and a garbage bag for items to be thrown away.
- **Make it fun.** Playing music while cleaning is a great way to help pass the time and enjoy the chores. Tenants who have children can encourage them to help by making a game out of it by giving a “prize” to whoever finishes the chore quickest and most clean.



By following these tips, tenants can ensure their apartments will be like new and will help them start fresh after winter.

Featured Participant Council Member: Janie Wilkie



The Chicago Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program appointed Janie Wilke to the Participant Council in 2009.

Ms. Wilke is involved in various organizations, including serving on the steering committee at Access Living, volunteering on the Tenants' Rights Hotline at The Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO), and serving on the planning committee for Chicago Housing Initiative (CHI). Ms. Wilke has been recognized for her work within the community with two certificates for leadership and conflict resolution.

Ms. Wilke tries to help other HCV Program Participants by reaching out to them and sharing information whenever she can. She also volunteers her time to help

others learn more about computer use and develop technical skills to navigate the HCV Program online via the CHA website.

Ms. Wilke is motivated by her personal mission to make change and learn more ways on how to accomplish that mission, including her work on the Participant Council. She appreciates the HCV Program for assisting low-income families with housing options.

When asked what advice she has for first-time HCV Program Participants, Ms. Wilke encourages them to *"Listen to what CHA is saying . . . become more of a team member, instead of a separate group, to help make things better."* CHA commends Ms. Wilke for her work within the community and on the Participant Council and supports her continued success.

Good Tenants are Good Neighbors

HCV Participants search far and wide for the perfect apartment that they can afford – and when they find it, it almost seems like a miracle. When everything is moved in and the tenant has settled in to the unit, the experience could be ruined by a bad neighbor or two.

CHA encourages HCV Participants to get along with not only their landlords, but also their neighbors. While people cannot control the behaviors and attitudes of others, they can control their own. HCV Participants already have guidelines such as the Family Obligations that can help them be great tenants – however, these guidelines can also help them be great neighbors as well.

- **Don't damage the unit or premises** – all tenants should respect the property on which they live, including the unit and areas around it. If a landlord cannot determine who is responsible for damaged property, all tenants living in the building or on the floor might be punished, and no one will be happy. *Refer to the CHA Family Obligations section on pages 63-64 of the Participant Reference Guide for more information.*

- **Don't disturb the peaceful and quiet enjoyment of others** – keep noise and music to a minimum or at least at a low volume. If pets are allowed on the property, control the pet's noise-making (i.e. barking) as well. Make sure children, other family members, and guests are not disturbing the safety or peaceful and quiet enjoyment of others.
- **Don't engage in criminal activity** – illegal activity brings unwanted attention and company to the area. Tenants shouldn't be put in danger due to the actions of a neighbor.
- **Take an active role** – monitor what is going on in the household. Know what household members are doing in the residence. Tenants should consider joining or volunteering in an organization that promotes building safer communities.

HCV Participants should keep in mind that CHA cannot mediate conflicts between tenants, but rather shares information and resources they can use to resolve their own conflicts and make sure they are being the best tenant they can be.

Steps for Landlord-Tenant Conflict Resolution

A positive Landlord-Tenant relationship is important when trying to develop a healthy and happy lifestyle. When landlords and tenants do not get along, the situation can be stressful for everyone involved.

Conflict can make the simplest interactions much worse – for example, if a tenant needs repairs done to his or her unit, communication may be difficult if he or she does not get along with the landlord.

CHA encourages landlords and tenants to resolve their issues whenever possible – hence, below are tips that tenants can use if he or she needs something in the unit repaired but are having trouble communicating with the landlord:

- **Is the tenant being a “good tenant”?** Following the Family Obligations and cooperating with the landlord will help foster a positive relationship, which will improve understanding and communication among everyone involved. Refer to the article “Good Tenants are Good Neighbors” on the previous page for more information on how to be a good tenant.
- **Keep open lines of communication.** Does the landlord have the most updated contact information for the tenant? Does the tenant have the most updated contact information for the landlord? Tenants should make sure they have the correct phone number or office address for the landlord, rather than assume he or she is avoiding them.
- **Keep calm.** Don’t let emotions get in the way of a positive interaction with the landlord. Becoming angry or upset will keep both tenants and landlords from accomplishing the goal.
- **Hear the landlord out.** There may be a good reason that the landlord hasn’t gotten around to the repair. He or she could be waiting for parts, dealing with other tenants, or working through a personal issue. It’s possible that the landlord has a to-do list to get through.

Keep the above tips in mind while interacting with the landlord and notifying him or her of repairs needed.

Below are steps to take if/when this happens.

1. **Contact the Landlord.** If something in the unit needs to be repaired, consult the landlord **FIRST** for repairs. Explain what the problem is and how important it is for this item to be repaired. For example, if the stove is not in service, consider the following:
 - **Is it the stove?** If the stove is provided by the landlord, the landlord is responsible for this repair.
 - **Is it the gas service?** On the other hand, cooking gas is usually considered the tenant’s responsibility – the landlord is usually not responsible for this repair. If the cooking gas in the unit is not working for whatever reason, and both the lease and the HAP contract state that the landlord is responsible for this utility, then it is up to the landlord to restore service.
2. **Contact the CHA Inspections Department.** If the landlord is not responding to phone calls, notes, etc. or does not fix the heat at all, then the tenant should request a complaint inspection. Since broken heat service is considered an emergency HQS fail item, CHA will send an inspector out to the unit within 24 hours to inspect the complaint. If the inspector determines the repair is the responsibility of the landlord, then the landlord will have 24 hours to repair the broken heat service and resolve the issue.
3. **Notify CHA in writing.** Keep track of any problem that may happen with the landlord, and how he or she handles it. CHA needs to know about any violations to ensure that the landlord is following the rules that apply to him or her as well. Tenants can also call the City of Chicago at 311.

CHA aims to provide safe and decent living conditions for low-income families. HCV Participants can help with this mission by trying to work together with the landlord as a team, and resolving issues through avoiding conflict or using conflict resolution is both beneficial and crucial in achieving this goal.

Participant Resources

Senior Services

Y Active Older Adult Fitness Program

The Southside YMCA offers a healthy living and fitness program located at 6300 Stony Island. For questions, call 773-947-0700.

Chicago Fitness Plus Program

Free Strength and Training classes offered twice a week at 48 locations around city of Chicago. Find your nearest location by calling the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services at 312-744-4016

Senior Citizen Rights

Adult Protection Services Program assists people age 60 and older with disabilities who are victims of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. Call the Adult Protective Services hot line at 866-800-1409 or 888-206-1327 (TTY).

Youth Programs

Child Care Assistance Programs (CCAP)

CCAP provides low-income, working families with access to quality, affordable child care that allows them to continue working. To apply, call 877-202-4453 or submit online application at www.dhs.state.il.us.

School Age Child Care Program

A subsidized child care program for children ages 5 to 12. Programs operate when school is not in session including afternoons, holidays, and breaks. To find a School Age Child Care Program near you, call 312-823-1100.

Chicago Public Art Group

Paid internships to paint murals in low-income communities. Please visit the website www.cpag.net or call 312-427-2724.

Youth Service Project

YSP has many youth focused programs and job placements. Contact 773-772-6270. Youth programs for west side residents of Chicago. For more information, please visit www.chicagoareaproject.org or call 312-666-9552.

After School Matters

Apprentice or intern with ASM in sports, the arts, technology, and much more. All info and application is available online at www.afterschoolmatters.org. For any questions regarding the program, please call 312-742-4182.

South Chicago Art Center

The Art center provides free quality arts programs and experiences to youth in south Chicago. Please visit www.happyartcenter.org or call 773-731-9287.

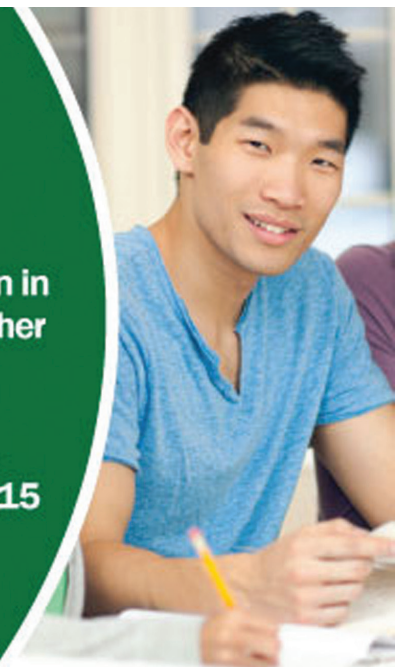
**Take
Advantage
of the
2015-2016
CHA
Scholarship
Program!**

**CHA plans to award over 200
scholarships ranging from
\$1,000-\$2,500**

**Applicants must plan to enroll in an
accredited post-secondary institution in
the Fall of 2015. A GPA of 2.5 or higher
is recommended**

**Applications are now available online
and must be submitted by May 20, 2015**

**Learn more and apply today!
www.thecha.org/scholarship**



Understanding Utility Responsibility

When HCV Participants and their Property Owner/ Manager complete the HAP contract, it is up to the Property Owner to specify which utilities and appliances he or she will be providing, and which ones will be the responsibility of the Participant.

The Property Owner must also include this information in the lease agreement signed by the Participant. In other words, when drafting the lease agreement to be signed by the participating family, the provided utilities must be specified and be consistent with what is indicated on the HAP contract.

Any changes to the originally agreed upon utility responsibilities must first be approved in writing by CHA, and will require a new rent determination after the first year of the HAP contract/lease agreement. Changes cannot be made within the first year of the HAP contract/lease agreement. The identified responsible party (Owner or Participant) must ensure that the utilities are on at all times.

CHA's mission to provide housing for low-income families includes sharing resources with HCV Participants to help cover the cost of utilities. Below is a list of Utility Assistance Programs:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

800-571-CEDA (2332)

The Community and Economic Development Association (CEDA) administers local and federal grants for utility assistance via LIHEAP. LIHEAP

provides energy assistance in the form of one-time payments to utility companies and individuals to assist with winter bills.

ComEd CARE Energy Assistance Programs

888-806-CARE (2273)

ComEd.com/CARE

Residential Special Hardship Program

- Provides a grant up to \$1,500 for ComEd residential customers that identify a special hardship. This may include documented unexpected loss of employment, medical, military, senior, victim of criminal activity or disability hardships.
- Customers can be eligible for Residential Special Hardship every two years. **Grant amounts may vary while funds are available.**

ComEd Helps Activated/Disabled Military Personnel (CHAMP)

- Provides bill payment assistance up to \$1,000 for deployed activated military personnel and disabled veterans who have fallen behind on their bills and that reside within ComEd's service territory. Applications are available on ComEd.com/CARE.

Homelessness Prevention Call Center

- Provides information and administer referrals to available homelessness prevention funds including state and local resources.
- Funds provide rental, utility, and security deposit assistance to those on the brink of homelessness due to a recent, short-term crisis. Call 311 (312-744-5000) and ask for "Short-Term Help."

Earn a College Degree at Little or No Cost!

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

Attend an Information Session:

RSVP (312) 553-2830

February 25

9am | 11 am | 6 pm
Wilbur Wright College
4300 N Narragansett Ave
Rm S247

March 11

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

March 18

9am | 11 am
Olive-Harvey College
10001 S Woodlawn Ave
Rm 1205

March 4

9am | 11 am | 6pm
Dawson Technical Institute
3901 S State St
Rm 216/Nova Lab

For dates beyond March,
please call CCC at the number above.

March 25

9am | 11 am
Malcolm X College
1900 W Van Buren St
MXC Theatre

Section 3 **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Chicago Housing Authority's NEW SECTION 3 JOB WEBSITE is now online

Qualified applicants eligible for limited positions



WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Section 3 residents, defined as public housing residents and HCV participants
- Non-CHA residents who are low and very low income persons
- Section 3 residents must live in the Chicago Metropolitan Area

REGISTER NOW!

- Section 3 residents must create online job profiles and may upload resumes to apply
- Public housing residents and HCV participants must also include their tenant ID number
- Applications are reviewed by CHA or its contractors before interviewing qualified applicants

APPLY TODAY! <https://section3jobs.thecha.org>

CONTACT INFORMATION: section3@thecha.org (312) 542-8802

Resident Services Updates

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

Enrollment for the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program is now OPEN! The FSS program is a goal setting and savings program available to all eligible HCV and PH families. For more information about the FSS program, contact Heartland Human Care Services at (773) 358-3854 or via email at fss@heartlandalliance.org.

Choose-To-Owner Homeownership Program

Effective 1/1/2015, working HCV and PH families interested in submitting an application to the CTO Homeownership Program will be required to meet or exceed 50% (Very Low Income Limit) of the Area Median Income (AMI) established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL Metro Fair Market Rent (FMR) Area. The new income requirements will not apply to disabled and/or elderly families (62+ of age). For additional questions regarding the CTO program, email CTOprogram@thecha.org. For a calendar of upcoming CTO orientation sessions, visit www.thecha.org/cto.

Mobility Counseling Program

HCV families (with youth ages 0-18) that are interested in the Mobility Counseling program can learn more by contacting Housing Choice Partners (HCP). The Mobility Counseling program assists families in the HCV program to move into CHA-designated Opportunity Areas within Chicago. For more information, contact HCP at (773) 451-0203.



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CHICAGO, IL 60605
www.thecha.org/hcv



Q1 2015 Workshop Schedule

During the first quarter of 2015, HCV Program staff will present the topic “Navigating the HCV Program: Information You Should Know.” HCV staff will provide a brief overview of the responsibilities of HCV Participants as agreed to by the Family Obligations and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract, as well as cover some common mistakes made by HCV Participants. See the schedule below for a list of dates and times.

These workshops will be the first segment in a series of workshops that cover the entire list of the HCV Family Obligations.

Please note that registration is on a “first-come, first-served” basis – once the class has reached capacity, registration will be closed.

RSVP to any of the following workshops by calling (312) 542-8881

Location	Dates	Times
Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center 4859 S. Wabash Ave Chicago, IL 60615	Wednesday, February 18	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
	Tuesday, March 17	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
	Tuesday, March 17	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
	Wednesday, April 15	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
	Wednesday, April 15	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm