



Q2 2014

Message From the CEO:



As we head into spring following a record-breaking winter, HCV students in high school and college are also rounding the home-stretch of the 2013-14 school year. Besides working hard to achieve academic excellence as so many HCV participants have done in the past, there is also often the need to secure financial aid for college.

That is why I am very proud to announce a new CHA scholarship program that could help alleviate some of the collegiate financial burden on HCV families.

Over 100 scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500 will be issued as part of a new CHA scholarship program that started this year, based on an applicant's financial need and academic merit. Applicants may include current high school seniors, undergraduate and graduate students and adults seeking to start a post-secondary program in Fall 2014. Applications are being accepted for this special opportunity through May 15.

The new scholarship program is just one of the many new initiatives designed to help CHA families on the road toward self-sufficiency. CHA's strategic initiative, "Plan Forward," is dedicated to provide safe and affordable housing for low-income families. But it is more than bricks and mortar. We work hard to positively impact the lives of CHA residents, whether it is through educational, recreational or commercial opportunities.

Further, CHA has been busy working on a new Section 3 website that allows public housing residents, HCV participants and low-income Chicago area residents to apply for all Section 3 jobs with CHA and its contractors, as well as any other jobs posted by the agency. The Section 3 program ensures that employment and other economic opportunities funded by HUD are directed toward low and very low-income individuals.

The website, <https://section3jobs.thecha.org>, will streamline the process for CHA's Section 3 community. It is user-friendly and efficient.

And, to round out this theme of opportunity, CHA recently helped to open the "Buffett Place," – a new supportive and green housing development that provides key services for individuals with mental health needs, the homeless and those with disabilities at 3208 N. Sheffield. Formerly The Diplomat Hotel, the Buffett Place will house 51 studio apartments after a total gut renovation of the vacant four-story building.

CHA is providing rental subsidy for all units of this supportive housing development through its Property Rental Assistance (PRA) program.

All three of these programs show CHA's continued dedication to providing not only housing, but support services and opportunities to HCV and public housing families.

Thank you for your interest in the work of this agency, and we look forward to achieving great heights in 2014.

Sincerely,
Michael R. Merchant

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Meet Our Board Members: Commissioner Rodrigo A. Sierra

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 Rodrigo A. Sierra.



Rodrigo A. Sierra is chief communications and marketing officer and senior vice president of the American Medical Association (AMA). At AMA he leads a transformation of the 165-year-old organization to reclaim a leadership position in shaping the evolving healthcare system for the nation. A brand repositioning, media and public affairs expert, Sierra is responsible for AMA public relations, enterprise marketing and communications, digital and social media, leadership positioning and brand strategy.

Over a distinctive and award-winning career, Sierra has been instrumental in achieving meaningful results in high-profile corporate, media, government and regulatory positions. He has a proven record of developing innovative solutions for individuals, companies, governments and not-for-profits in challenging marketplace circumstances. His brand and crisis management expertise and experience in strategy, policy and organizational issues have equipped him to create and implement proactive initiatives that effect positive change for both brand and social impact.

Sierra served on the Chicago Board of Education with a mandate to overhaul the public school system with an annual operating budget of \$5.2 billion to ensure the 400,000 students it serves graduate college and career ready. He also served on the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund board with fiduciary responsibilities for a \$10.4 billion fund.

Sierra earned an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management through the Executive Master of Business Administration program in June 2008. He holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Northwestern University.



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.

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

**Note: Zip code changes do not apply to Participants of Moderate Rehabilitation (MOD), Project Based Voucher (PBV), Choose-To-Own (CTO), and the Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) Programs.*

How to Properly Move - Tips for HCV Participants

HCV Program Participants can move and continue to receive rent assistance if they have lived in their current unit for 12 months, have given Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) and the Property Owner or Manager at least 30 days' notice, and are in good standing with the HCV Program.

CHA will only grant permission to move if the HCV Program Participant is not violating the lease or any of the HCV Program rules, not under eviction or termination, or within 120 days of the next re-examination.

HCV Program Participants who wish to move must first go to their servicing office to submit a written request for moving papers.

Note: Participants are encouraged to look for housing and find another unit before requesting moving papers, and should make sure the new unit selected is likely to pass an HQS inspection the first time.

Once the HCV Program Participant has submitted his or her request to move, the following steps must be completed:



1. Eligibility verification by CHA to include a criminal background check for any household member over the age of 18

2. Attend a Participant (voucher) briefing

3. Provide the Owner and CHA a Notice to Vacate

4. Submit to CHA a completed Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) packet

5. If CHA approves the request to move, the HCV Program Participant and Owner will receive an Acknowledgement to Vacate Notice that includes the move-out date and other important information

6. Wait for the new unit to pass inspection and for CHA to determine the rent with the new Owner

7. Sign the lease

8. Complete a move-out inspection of the unit being vacated with the unit's Property Owner or Manager

9. Move in to the new unit

HCV Program Participants should also be sure to have the utmost consideration while moving out – just like when first moving into the unit. The following is required:



- Leave the unit in the same condition (clean and undamaged) as when the HCV Program Participant first took possession. All items and trash should be removed from the unit and all rooms should be restored to their original condition.

- Take photos to provide proof of how the unit was left prior to vacating.

- Turn in the keys to the Property Owner/Manager
Note: The Participant is still considered to have occupancy of the unit if he/she has not returned the keys to the Owner.

For more information or tips about moving, please consult the Participant Reference Guide or contact the CHA Customer Call Center at (312) 386-2600 or hcv@thecha.org.

Featured HCV Participant Council Member: Jacqueline Paige



Jacqueline Paige, third from left

Jacqueline Paige is a Participant in the HCV Program and recent graduate from the CHA Business Entrepreneurship and Development Program (BEDP). A former Robert Taylor B resident, Ms. Paige is associated with various housing organizations such as the HCV Program Participant Council Resident Advisory Board, Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO), and Chicago Housing Initiative (CHI), serving as a strong advocate for HCV Program Participants taking advantage of all the resources available to them.

For years, Ms. Paige had preferred to work “behind the scenes” as support for those on the front line of community work and service. It wasn’t until she lost her son to street violence that she became motivated to improve herself and help her community grow: “He didn’t believe there was anything for him after getting an education . . . I want to help young men become employed and get them working - that’s why I got into staffing. I see a lot of points and I want to connect them. My motto is ‘bridge the gap.’”

Ms. Paige appreciates all of the resources offered by the HCV Program and CHA, such as BEDP. The entrepreneurship program helped her build the confidence she needed to expand her outreach efforts, such as asking an investor for his business. “He gave me a shot, and I wouldn’t have had the confidence to ask if it weren’t for the program.”

As a HCV Program Participant Council Member, she wants to help fellow HCV Program Participants learn how to solve their own problems, have faith and confidence in themselves, and encourage them to take advantage of services that CHA provides. “I believe in teaching a man to fish. You have to be the change you want to see, or else change will not happen.” CHA commends Ms. Paige for her accomplishments as an entrepreneur and supports her continued success as an HCV Program Participant.

Take Advantage of the 2014-2015 CHA Scholarship Program!

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 before 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.

Preparing for Inspections: Participant Responsibilities

In order to pass an HQS Inspection, Property Owners must follow the criteria outlined in the Property Owner Reference Manual to render the unit “Rent-Ready.” However, Participants also have to fulfill responsibilities to ensure their unit passes the inspection.

The HCV Participant is responsible for the following:

- **Complying with the terms of the lease**
- **Maintaining the unit in good condition** except for normal wear and tear to ensure that the unit complies with HQS requirements
- **Paying for any utilities for which the family is responsible**
*Note: this **MUST** be outlined in the HAP Contract and must match the lease.
- **Maintaining any appliances** (e.g. stove, refrigerator) that the family is required to provide in working condition

- **Allowing the Owner entry to the unit** for purposes of inspecting the property after reasonable notice to the HCV Program Participant

- **Informing the Owner of any required repairs** and, if necessary, allowing the Owner or the Owner’s agent access to the unit to make the required repairs

- **Allowing CHA or its contractor’s inspector access to the unit** to conduct periodic inspections after reasonable notice to the HCV Program Participant and providing a representative that is 18 years of age or older at the time of the inspection.

By maintaining sanitary conditions within the unit, HCVP Participants can do their part to ensure the living space passes HQS inspection. Below are just a few HQS requirements:

- Area for food preparation and storage
- Adequate space and security
- Heat
- Lighting and electricity
- Quality structure and materials
- Acceptable interior air quality
- Acceptable water supply
- Lead-based paint is not present
- Acceptable site and neighborhood
- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

A full list of guidelines can be found in the HQS Inspections Guidebook. For more information about HQS Inspections, please visit the CHA website at www.thecha.org and navigate to the “About Housing Inspections” page under “Voucher Holders.”



Scholarship Opportunities for Low Income Residents!

The National Leased Housing Association (NLHA) Education Fund is seeking applications for its scholarship program.

Applicants may apply under one of the following categories:



The AIMCO Cares Scholarship

Funds will be available to assist college freshmen or returning undergraduates.



The Mary Lou Manzie Memorial Scholarship

Assistance will be provided to benefit non-traditional students in pursuing higher education or training.



The Bill Gandert Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship program is directed to graduating high school seniors interested in studying a specific trade.



The Neil Churchill Memorial Scholarship

Provided to those eligible applicants who are seeking to complete graduate level coursework.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE please visit: www.hudnlha.com or www.nlhascholars.communityforce.com



Family Self-Sufficiency Program

Helping Participants Build Financial Confidence

Not only does CHA help HCV Program Participants afford quality housing, but also offers programs to help achieve personal goals – such as accomplishing career goals and saving money. The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program assists HCV Program Participants obtain or advance their employment opportunities and build financial assets for the future.

Involvement usually lasts five years, during which Participants identify educational, professional, and personal goals, including:

- Educational advancement

- Completion of specialized job training
- Obtaining employment
- Career advancement
- Transitioning out of subsidized housing
- Homeownership

Participants work with an FSS Coordinator to develop a plan that outlines specific activities needed to achieve their economic self-sufficiency goals. Throughout the program, the FSS Coordinator monitors Participants' progress and helps them move toward self-sufficiency.

Hundreds of CHA Families have graduated from the FSS Program and found rewarding careers in hospitality or customer service, real estate, education, and medical fields. FSS graduates have used the money saved during the program to make down payments on homes, purchase cars, pay off debt, start businesses, and more.

For more information about the FSS Program, please visit the CHA website at www.thecha.org and navigate to the "Family Self-Sufficiency Program" page under "Resident Services."

Chicago Passes Bed Bug Ordinance

HCV Program Participants who have been renting units for years know that bed bugs are nothing new. While they have been a common problem in the U.S. for quite some time now, it is important to detect and manage such pests to ensure comfortable and sanitary living conditions.

The City of Chicago has become one of the first U.S. cities to pass a comprehensive bed bug ordinance, which has been in effect as of December 23rd, 2013. Enforced by the Department of Buildings and the Department of Public Health, the ordinance is aimed towards slowing the growth of Chicago's bed

bug problem – an issue with which many tenants may be well familiar.

Both property owners/managers and tenants have defined responsibilities under the new ordinance, including written notification, inspection, treatment via best practices outlined by the National Pest Management Association, proper disposal practices and documentation of pest management measures.

CHA will offer training on bed bug management in the near future – be on the lookout for upcoming dates! In the meantime, HCV Program Participants can find more



information on safe, effective bed bug control practices by visiting the Midwest Pesticide Action Center (MPAC) website at www.midwestpesticideaction.org.

To view the full ordinance, visit www.chicityclerk.com.

Controlling Ants in Your Home

A Guide from Midwest Pesticide Action Center (MPAC)

While ants are the most common pest problem in housing, they are far from the most harmful. Ants that are common to our region do not cause health problems. If you do have an ant problem, you can take care of it using least-toxic methods.

Prevention:

What You Can Do Right Now

Prevention is essential when dealing with ants. Denying access to the food and water the ants are after in your home can go a long way. Start by inspecting the exterior of your building and notify your Property Owner:

- **Look for cracks or gaps** in the foundation that need to be repaired;
- **Keep mulch and leaves away** from the building's foundation; and
- **Caulk, screen and weather strip** windows, doors and exterior walls.



Seal food properly to keep it out of reach:

- **Store garbage in tightly sealed containers** and empty it regularly;
- **Limit eating to dining areas only;**
- **Keep counter tops, floors, sinks, and all other surfaces clean;** and
- **Store food at least 2" off of the ground** in tightly sealed containers.

Treatment: How To Act

Follow these steps to get rid of any ants that may make it into your home. It is important to note that spray pesticides are not affective

against ants because they only kill what is visible. Baits work best because the ants will bring the poisoned food back to the nest and share it with their colony.

- **Try to determine how they are getting in** and seal those entry points;
- **Spray soapy water or a 1:1 vinegar and water solution** on floors and along ant trails to remove their chemical trail.
- **Do not allow food to stay** in dog bowls or in the sink overnight.
- **Baits are the most effective pesticide control for ants.** The ants take it back to their nest, away from you and your children, and share it among the colony.

To learn more about proper steps to reduce exposure to both pests and pesticides, visit the MPAC website at <http://midwestpesticideaction.org/what-you-can-do/in-your-home/#IndoorPests>

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 gghernandez@heartlandalliance.org.



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 CHICAGO, IL 60605
www.thecha.org/hcv



GOING PLACES

Q2 2014

**Want to become an
 Empowered HCV Participant?
 Attend one of our Tenant Workshops!**



Each quarter, CHA will host a series of important workshops to promote understanding of operations within the HCV Program and bridge the gap of communication between Tenants, Owners, and CHA.

Expert speakers will cover an array of topics such as Foreclosure, Bed Bug Ordinance, HAP Contract Terms and Conditions, and much more!

**Keep an eye on your mailbox for an
 invitation to our next workshop!**



**2014 Paid Summer Opportunities
 for Youth**

Are you a CHA resident between the ages 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

