



Message From the CEO:



Dear Housing Choice Voucher Participants,

Since my appointment as CEO, one of my primary goals has been to ensure an open line of communication, especially between myself and our HCV participants as well as CHA residents. As you know, building strong, vibrant communities throughout the City of Chicago and helping participants on their road to self-sufficiency are cornerstones of our strategic initiative - Plan Forward. That is why I made a commitment to provide you with ongoing updates regarding the agency as we work together to help our communities thrive.

I would like to personally invite you to join me and my staff to learn more about CHA initiatives at the upcoming Resident Forum from 6-8 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 10 at Phoenix Military Academy, 145 S. Campbell. In this latest resident-only forum, I will discuss key CHA topics that will be of interest to you and your families. I encourage you to attend, ask questions and get involved in such a worthwhile endeavor.

Among the good news items I hope to discuss are the 19 participants and residents who were awarded more than \$45,000 in scholarships by the Michaels Organization. Our youth will now attend some of the various colleges throughout the United States.

Also, CHA recently hosted a “Take Flight” College Reception event for more than 100 participants and residents who are attending college outside of Chicago. This outstanding class of outgoing CHA collegians is the largest since CHA began with the event four years ago. And 70 percent of the attendees received CHA scholarships.

CHA remains committed to helping young people achieve their dreams, while building strong, vibrant communities throughout the great City of Chicago.

The agency also stands with Mayor Rahm Emanuel in encouraging Chicago residents to promote a violence-free city and participate in positive neighborhood activity. Promoting safe housing and communities requires a continued partnership between CHA, our participants, property owners and the Chicago Police Department. In this newsletter you will find information regarding safe ways to stay cool during the summer months, smoke free housing options, proper ways to reduce mold, and a list of resource contacts. Let's work together to make sure that HCV participants and CHA residents have access to safe, secure, and quality housing and communities.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Merchant



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Featured HCV Participant Council Member: Tomiko Holt



The Chicago Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program appointed Tomiko Holt to the Participant Council in 2011.

Since being appointed, Ms. Holt has been instrumental in providing insight, experience, and suggestions on various HCV topics and program improvements. By regularly attending council meetings, focus groups, and workshops; Ms. Holt continues to further her understanding of the program. This knowledge has enhanced her community involvement, as an advocate for low-income residents.

Ms. Holt has been a supporter for progress and improvement for as long as she can remember. She works tirelessly to aide and assist less fortunate members of her community. Her work within the city's west side communities has resulted in appointments to various local organization boards and committees, where she continues to be an active and vocal advocate.

Tomiko Holt is the proud parent of three children and holds professional training and certification as a Journeyman Carpenter, a skill she used to start her own business (Okimot Construction Corporation).

Tips to Keep Cool in Summer Heat

Chicago residents know summers in Chicago can be dangerous if one doesn't take necessary precautions to protect themselves and their loved ones from the hot temperatures. Central air conditioning and portable air conditioners can be expensive – luckily for HCV Program Participants, CHA is happy to share tips on keeping cool and practicing summer heat safety.

Staying Cool

Be aware of the heat. Pay attention to the temperature and adjust your activities as needed.

Hydrate yourself. Drink plenty of fluids while outside, especially cool water.

Stay in cool areas. Many public places – libraries, shopping malls, movie theaters – are air conditioned and can help keep you cool.

Use a fan. Portable fans are typically inexpensive.

Maintain a healthy diet. Eat well-balanced, light and regular meals.

Wear lightweight clothing. Loose-fitting and light-colored clothes are best for hot temperatures.

Cover windows. Shielding rooms from the sun can help keep your home cool.

- Pale skin.
- Muscle cramps.
- Feeling tired and weak
- Confusion and disorientation.
- Headache.
- Becoming semi-conscious or passing out.
- Nausea or vomiting.

Signs of Overexposure to Heat

Overexposure to heat is not something to take lightly. Pay attention to the following warning signs:

- Heavy sweating. *Note: if a heat stroke sets in, the body can no longer compensate and stops sweating.*



How to Select a New Home

Finding a unit that fits the needs of HCV Participants and their families is not always easy. Tenants often face challenges when their lease expires and they want to find another place to live. HCV Participants are encouraged to consult their Housing Specialist for details regarding their situation – however, below are some general best practices to follow when the time comes to look for a new home.

1. Make a list of “must-haves”:

Before even looking for a new home, it is best to sit down and decide what is needed in a new home, which will vary from person to person. Participants are encouraged to come up with at least ten things that are important to him or her – for example, close to the L, good school district, allows pets, etc. Ranking these items in order of importance is also helpful.

2. Do the Research: HCV Participants who want to move should look for housing and find

another unit before requesting moving papers. Visit the CHA website at www.thecha.org and navigate to the “Housing Choice Voucher Program” on the left side of the page, then click on “Voucher Holders.” The first item on the list is “Find a Place to Live,” here, HCV Participants can use the “Housing Search” tool to find units that are available for rent. *Note: Make sure the newly-selected unit is likely to pass an inspection the first time.*

3. Finalize the Move Process:

After selecting the perfect unit, HCV Participants must complete the following steps:

- **Provide the Owner and CHA a Notice to Vacate** (see page 122 in the Resources section of the Participant Reference Guide).
- **Submit to CHA a completed Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) packet** (see pages 74-89 in the Resources section of the Participant Reference Guide).
- If CHA approves the request

to move, the HCV Participant and Owner will receive an Acknowledgement to Vacate Notice that includes the move-out date and other important information.

- **Wait for the new unit to pass inspection** and for CHA to determine the rent with the new Owner.
- **Sign the lease.**
- **Complete a move-out inspection** of the unit being vacated with the unit’s Owner or Property Manager.
- **Move into the new unit!**

Moving into a new home is no easy task, but with preparation and following CHA HCV Program guidelines, Participants can find a unit that is perfect for them and their families.

For more information about searching and moving into a new home, HCV Participants can refer to the Participant Reference Guide, under the “Moving” section.

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

HCV News for Participants

Changes to the Utility Allowance Policy

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently made changes to its policy concerning Utility Allowances. As a result, CHA has also adjusted its policy to match the HUD policy.

The utility allowance for a family shall be the lower of:

1. The utility allowance amount for the family unit size (voucher size); **OR**
2. The utility allowance amount for the unit size of the unit rented by the family

Families affected by this policy are current HCV Participants with a reexamination effective on or after October 1, 2014 and tenant-based vouchers issued after July 1st, 2014.

Changes to the Exception Payment Standards

Under its Moving To Work (MTW) Program, CHA administers a set-aside of tenant-based vouchers for use in a demonstration program to expand affordable housing choices within housing opportunity areas in the City of Chicago. In order to access housing in these areas, CHA has previously approved special exception payment standards on a unit-by-unit basis up to 300% of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published Fair Market Rent (FMR) for the City of Chicago.

Effective August 11, 2014, CHA will only approve exception payment standards that do not exceed 150% of the FMR.

To find out if you are affected by this change, or to learn more about this update, please contact the CHA Customer Call Center at (312) 935-2600.

Changes to the Interim Policy

An interim re-examination is conducted if there is a change to the household composition, which CHA must approve before it goes into effect.

Reasons for an Interim change can include:

- A decrease in income (Must provide two consecutive check stubs or termination letter).
- Increase in income (**ONLY** zero income families have to report an increase in income at an interim. Families with current income are not required to report increases until their next annual reexamination appointment. Participants or families joining the Family Self-Sufficiency Program will have interims processed for an increase in income).
- Household member changes (additions, deletions, and change of head of household).
- Reasonable Accommodations (must have proof of the need) for Participants with disabilities.

Interim requests can take up to 30 business days to process. Interim requests submitted will be effective for the following month. *(For example, if the interim is requested 7/15/14 when processed, it will be effective 8/1/14).*

Please note: Interims are not processed until all of the requested and proper documentation has been received.

CHA & Partners Help Teen Moms

In order to provide a wide variety of resources for HCV Program Participants, CHA often develops partnerships with various organizations across Chicago. One of those partnerships involves the Department of Family and Support Services at the University of Illinois at Chicago Center for Literacy, SGA, and the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services.

CHA has partnered with these organizations to provide a paid summer program for teen moms – the Chicago Teen Mom Summer Jobs Program. Young women ages 16-20 who are expecting or have a child under age six may participate in a comprehensive seven-week program.

Teen moms who take advantage of the program can obtain a part-time position in a Head Start Center, as well as receive training and mentoring in parenting and personal development. Candidates will work 14 hours a week in a Head Start Classroom and spend six hours a week in parenting and personal development training, totaling 20 hours per week.

Some responsibilities of the position include assisting the Head Start teacher in daily classroom activities, conduct early literacy activities such as storytelling, reading books with children, assisting with children on field trips and outings, and teaching letters, numbers, shapes, colors, and rhymes.

CHA is excited to provide both housing and employment opportunities for HCV Participants, with the help of educational institutions in Chicago.



Protect Your Health - Ask for Smoke-Free Housing

Recommendations by Matt Maloney, Respiratory Health Association

Living in a smoke-free environment is particularly important for children diagnosed with asthma.

Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke in the home have an increased risk of asthma attacks and infections caused by tobacco smoke. Living in a building where smoking indoors is allowed also increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, lung cancer and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Reducing asthma triggers like secondhand smoke in the home is essential to managing the disease. In a multi-unit building, 35 to 65 percent of the air in any given unit is shared air

from other units and common areas. No air ventilation system or air purifier can remove all of the toxins found in cigarette smoke, so residents are breathing in what their neighbors are breathing out.

Living in a smoke-free building means your family will be safe from secondhand smoke in all indoor units and common areas of your building. Encouraging a smoke-free policy for your building is an important way to promote healthy living and ensure a safer living environment.

Landlords and property managers are already aware of potential savings associated with smoke-free housing.

There are lower costs for clean-up and turnover in smoke-free properties, as well as a decreased risk of fire. Property managers need to hear that you want smoke-free housing.

Respiratory Health Association has developed a toolkit to provide information needed to make a property smoke-free. If you would like to learn more about how you can start the conversation for a smoke-free policy in your building, visit www.lungchicago.org/smoke-free-housing or contact Matt Maloney at (312) 628-0233 or mmaloney@lungchicago.org.

Everyone deserves to breathe clean air, especially at home.

Reducing Mold Growth

Part of being a good tenant is to maintain a clean unit and sanitary living conditions. However, doing so can be difficult if weather such as flooding, rain, or high humidity should occur and result in mold growing inside the home. Mold can be destructive not only to the unit, but also to personal belongings inside the unit. Individuals who are prone to allergies or sensitive to mold spores can develop respiratory difficulties as well.

Below are some ways to identify mold growing inside the home:

- Water in the basement
- Water leaks or stains on the ceiling
- Condensation on windows and walls
- Rotting wood
- “Musty” smells
- Damp fabric such as clothing or furniture

HCV Participants who notice these signs can prevent mold growth by taking the following steps:

- **Keep all surfaces dry and clean.** Wipe bathtubs, countertops, and other surfaces in the kitchen and bathroom with disinfecting cleaner.
- **Open windows or use exhaust fans when cooking or bathing.** The kitchen and bathroom are considered “high humidity rooms” where moisture is likely to build up. Opening windows can help keep these areas cool and dry.
- **Drain and clean the pan underneath the refrigerator.** Doing this periodically can help reduce mold buildup.
- **Keep closet doors open.** Air flow

can help keep areas cool and dry.

- **Place furniture away from the walls.** Mold buildup may spread to cloth if touching walls with mold growth.
- **Open windows on warm, dry days.** Again, this helps keep high humidity areas cool and dry.
- **Never accumulate wet and dirty laundry.** Wet towels or clothes contribute to mold growth if not cleaned in a timely manner.
- **Do not store items in cardboard boxes in damp areas.** If clothing

must be stored in the basement, ensure that it is dry and in an airtight container.

- **Dry wet items immediately** and discard fabrics and boxes that may have been wet for several days due to water damage.

If mold persists after taking the above steps, HCV Participants are encouraged to notify the Property Owner or Manager, as it may be a sign of undiscovered leaks, ventilation problems, or other necessary repairs.



Choose-To-Own Program

Upcoming Dates:
Dates listed in *green* are available in English and Spanish

South W. Regional Satellite Office, 10 W. 35th St.

Tuesday, August 5th, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM
 Tuesday, September 9th, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

West Regional Satellite Office, 2750 W. Roosevelt Rd

Thursday, August 14th, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM
 Thursday, September 18th, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

The Resurrection Project, 1815 S. Paulina

Thursday, August 28th, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM
 Thursday, September 25th, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Central Office, 60 E. Van Buren 9th Floor

Wednesday, August 27th, 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM
 Wednesday, September 10th, 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Neighborhood Housing Services, 1279 N. Milwaukee

Thursday, August 21st, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM
 Thursday, September 11th, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Spanish Coalition for Housing, 1922 N. Pulaski

Tuesday, August 19th, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM
 Tuesday, September 23rd, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Participant Resources: Education

Adult Education

Free GED PREP Classes

Jobs for Youth - Chicago Inc
(312) 499-4778

Literacy Chicago
17 N State Street
Suite 900
(312) 870-1100

Instituto del Progreso Latino
2570 S Blue Island Ave
(773) 890-0055

St. Sabina Employment
Resource Center
7907 S Racine Ave
(773) 783-3760

City Colleges of Chicago Adult
Education Offices:

Richard J. Daley College
7500 S Pulaski
(773) 838-7803

Harry S. Truman College
1145 W Wilson
(773) 907-4350

Kennedy-King College
6301 S Halsted St
(773) 602-5340

Malcom X College
1900 W Van Buren
(312) 850-7300

Olive-Harvey College
10001 S Woodlawn
(773) 291-6690

Wilbur Wright College
4300 N Narragansett
(773) 481-8821
(773) 481-8823

English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes

City Colleges of Chicago Adult
Education Department
(312) 553-2725

Literacy Chicago
17 N State Street
Suite 900
(312) 870-1100

Join us at the

Phoenix Military Academy

145 S. Campbell

September 10, 2014

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

*This is the latest in a series of
CHA Resident Forums.*



CHA
CHICAGO HOUSING
AUTHORITY™

Resident Forum

Meet with CEO Michael R. Merchant and his staff to learn what's new at CHA. We will discuss key CHA initiatives and how the agency is helping to build strong, vibrant communities throughout Chicago.

All CHA Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher residents are invited to share their ideas and questions.

Please note the meeting is for CHA residents only.

Residency will be verified.



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60 E. VAN BUREN
CHICAGO, IL 60605
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GOING PLACES

Q3 2014

Achieve Your Goals with the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program

Enrollment for the FSS Program is now OPEN

Envision your life five years from now - what do you see? Some people have goals to improve their financial situation by starting a new job that will bring them satisfaction and stability.

Others may desire to start or finish their education. Some people many even want to become an entrepreneur and start their own business. Or, do you see yourself improving your credit to buy a home? Start preparing for your future TODAY by taking advantage of the CHA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program!

The FSS Program is a goal setting and savings program available to all eligible CHA residents. All participants will receive one-on-one assistance and resources from a dedicated FSS Coordinator to help you reach your goals

throughout the duration of the program.

For more information about the FSS program, contact Heartland Human Care Services at (773) 358-3854 or e-mail us at fss@heartlandalliance.org for dates to our upcoming FSS information sessions.

