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Message From the CEO:



Dear Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program Families,

Along with the changing of the seasons, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) continues to foster transformative progress with persistent implementation of the Plan Forward. A key component to the Plan Forward is ensuring that participating families have access to quality housing and neighborhoods, as well as effective resources. In practice, CHA has partnered

with the Mayor's office and the Chicago Police Department to help implement the Safe Passage program as students prepare to start the school year. We have also partnered with Operation Warm for its 6th annual coat drive, an event that provides warm coats to over 10,000 children of CHA and Housing Choice Voucher program households.

As we remain committed to continued partnerships with other programs, businesses and agencies, we will continue to host an array of community events and workshops in order to maintain our strong connection with our participating families.

CHA is dedicated to serving the city of Chicago and we look forward to preparing for a better tomorrow in partnership with you all.

Sincerely,

Charles Woodyard

GET THE SKILLS. GET THE JOB.

CHA residents are eligible for training and educational opportunities at low or no cost.



City Colleges of Chicago representatives will be available **every month** to answer your educational questions:

South Office - 1st Wednesday
West Office - 2nd Thursday
Central Office - 3rd Thursday

Partners in education:



Meet Our Board Members: Commissioner Myra King

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 Myra King.



On July 22, 2009, Mayor Richard M. Daley appointed Myra King to the CHA Board of Commissioners.

Since moving into Lowden Homes in 1991, Commissioner King has been an active and vocal advocate for CHA residents. As president of the Trumbull-Lowden Local Advisory Council, Commissioner King has facilitated working group meetings as part of the Plan for Transformation, including working with other LAC members to monitor rehabilitation and redevelopment projects under the Plan.

Commissioner King was instrumental in the opening of the U-Learn Computer Center at Lowden Homes in February 2009 and is a proponent of residents building their technology and computer skills. That same year, Commissioner King was elected Chair of the Central Advisory Council.

A mother of two and grandmother of five, Commissioner King holds a bachelor's degree from Chicago State University and a master's degree from DePaul University.

Safe Passage: Help Create Safe Communities

It's that time of year when local children and families prepare to start the new school year. In an effort to ensure that students have a safe route to and from their schools, the CHA has been working with the City of Chicago to foster a welcoming environment for returning students.

Join the effort to make communities safer by utilizing the following tips:

- **Help maintain your community** – Please pick up bottles, trash and other litter around your property and report any hazardous materials to your property owner or manager.
- **Report suspicious activity** – Please report any suspicious activity to the police.

- **Don't loiter** – Discourage your children and guests from loitering on sidewalks and porches during school hours.

- **Direct route** – Walk your children to school, if possible. If not, encourage your children to go directly to school and return directly home.

Creating a safe community for children requires the involvement and commitment of the entire community, including parents, students, property owners and CHA.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Customer Call Center at 312-935-2600 or visit www.cps.edu.



Stamp Out Smoking in Your Home

Best Practices Shared by Matt Maloney, Respiratory Health Association

Smoking can cause serious health problems, whether you are a smoker or live with one. Exposure to secondhand smoke increases a person's risk of heart attack, stroke and lung cancer. Furthermore, studies suggest that secondhand smoke can cause Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), asthma attacks, respiratory infections and ear infections in children.

There is no safe way to smoke in your home. Even if you close doors, open windows or use air filters, the smoke still spreads. No air ventilation system or air purifier can remove every toxin found in cigarette smoke. Allowing smoking anywhere in your home could cause you and your family to inhale more than 7,000 chemicals.

One way to protect yourself and your

family from the dangerous effects of smoke is to ban smoking inside your home, declaring it "Smoke Free." Require family members, friends and other guests to smoke outside. Remove any ashtrays, lighters and matches from your home to make it clear that smoking is not allowed inside.

Once you make your home "Smoke Free," consider talking to your neighbors about doing the same. As much as 65% of the air in any given unit is shared with other units in a building. If your neighbors smoke in their units, it's possible that you and your family are inhaling their secondhand smoke. You may want to think about asking your neighbors to smoke outside, or even suggesting to your Property Owner/Manager that the building be "Smoke Free."

For more information and/or resources on how to make your home "Smoke Free," visit the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago's website at www.lungchicago.org/smoke-free-housing or call 1-888-880-LUNG (5864).

For support and free resources to help you quit smoking, visit the Illinois Tobacco Quitline's website at www.quityes.org or call the quit line at 1-866-QUIT YES.



Featured HCV Participant Council Member: Rose Green



Rose Green is a participant in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program and is dedicated to the fight against source-of-income discrimination. She is a resident of the Rogers Park Community where she also serves as president of New Directions for Change, an organization that advocates for low-income tenants. Ms. Green has a reputation in her community as a member of the Rogers Park Community Action Network (RPCAN), along with her excellent organizational skills, and

is the recipient of the 2nd Annual Ralph Scott Award for Tenant Leadership. Her active approach to establishing a sense of community and mutual support among HCV Program participants is valued and applauded.

The CHA congratulates Rose Green on her recent award and recognizes her for her relentless community leadership.

Offsite Participant Briefings

The CHA conducts offsite briefings with new participants throughout the community. The increased presence of CHA representatives throughout the neighborhoods of Chicago has been well-received by the attending participants. The CHA understands the importance of keeping a strong connection with our stakeholders; holding briefing sessions in alternative convenient

locations for participants accomplishes this goal.

New participants or participants that choose to relocate with their voucher are provided information on the most important areas of the program, including:

- Re-examinations
- Family Obligations
- Moving, Special Programs
- Program Resources
- Fraud and Terminations
- Discrimination
- Caring for the Apartment
- Being a Good Tenant

The briefings are designed to completely educate each participant,



leaving no question unanswered.

Offsite briefings are conducted at various venues throughout Chicago, such as Woodson Regional Library on 9525 S. Halsted St., and also in partnership with organizations, such as the Illinois African-American Family Commission.



Selecting a Good Unit

Moving is a universal practice that virtually everyone has experienced. Taking the time to plan in advance can make the transition to your new home a smooth one. When the time comes for your family to relocate to a new home, it is very important to take the essential steps to ensure that you are making the best choice.

Here are some suggestions for selecting a good unit:

Set a Price Range – Examine your personal finances in order to identify a monthly rental price range that your family can afford (be sure to consider your HCV Program assistance and bedroom size eligibility). Create a general budget of your estimated cost (including move-in, desired rent,

and security deposit). Once you've completed this step, choosing the most suitable unit for you will become considerably easier.

Identify your Ideal Neighborhood

– Consider which areas would best suit your family's needs and desires. Do you want to live somewhere close to public transportation or in the same area as your children's current school? Remember – your Voucher is usable throughout the United States, so you are not limited to renting only Chicago-based properties. Furthermore, the CHA's Mobility Counseling Program can help you use your Voucher to move to an Opportunity Area neighborhood.

Find your Unit – Search

for properties that fit your specifications through newspaper listings, posted signs, and (most effectively) the internet. One of the most efficient internet resources available is CHA's Housing Search tool, which can be found by clicking the "HCVP" link on the CHA website (www.thecha.org). This web resource also provides additional moving tools such as:

- Rental Checklists
- Budget Worksheets
- Foreclosure Alerts
- Guidance on Rental Affordability
- Identifying Moving Costs

With thoughtful planning and taking advantage of all resources available, you will successfully find the ideal unit for you and your family.

How To Be a Good Tenant

Being a good tenant is necessary for the partnership between CHA, participants and property owners to work efficiently and properly. As a tenant, it is beneficial to engage in behavior that will aid in a comfortable living environment, ensure the return of your security deposit and even help you obtain a good reference when you would like to move.

Below are practices to follow to be a better tenant:

Read your lease - Make sure that you read, understand and agree to the rules and policies in your lease before you sign it. A property owner's lease can tell you a lot about how she conducts business. As a result, you are more likely to make informed decisions about the property owners



from whom you rent.

Be considerate of your neighbors - Part of being a good tenant is being considerate and respectful of the other tenants who live in your area. Loud sounds early in the morning and late at night are examples of inconsiderate neighborly behavior. The best practice is to treat neighbors as you wish to be treated.

Maintain your unit - Keep your unit in good shape by regularly cleaning inside and around it, maintaining the appliances in your household and by cleaning up after your pets. Also, allow access to your unit so that repairs can be made.

Follow the rules - One of the most important parts of being a good tenant is paying your rent on time. Additionally, be sure to regulate your guests by reminding them to conduct themselves at a higher standard when they are visiting you.

Keep these tips in mind as you continue your participation on the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. Be sure to communicate with your property owner and strive to be the "perfect neighbor" that you would like to have as well.

Operation Warm

CHA and Operation Warm Provide Coats to CHA Children

For the sixth year in a row, the CHA and Operation Warm will distribute brand new winter coats to children who live in CHA households, including HCV Program Participants. To participate, simply follow the steps below:

1. Pre-register at www.chayouth.org. All you need to enter is your last name and either a) your CHA Client ID (Voucher #) or b) the last four digits of your social security number. Then, select your child's gender and specific coat size. Make sure you make a selection for each eligible child on your lease, as coats will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis by gender and size.

2. Pick up your coat(s) at the UIC Forum, located at 725 W. Roosevelt, on Saturday, November 2, 2013. A confirmation letter will be mailed to you with the specific time for you or a designee (you must name your designee during the online registration process) to pick up your coat(s). Coats not picked up by noon will be made available to families on a stand-by list.

3. Stop by the Service Fair that also takes place at the UIC Forum on Saturday, November 2, 2013. Here you will have access to an array of services and giveaways including licensing services from



the Secretary of State, free flu shots, utility assistance, free grocery products, and more.*

Don't forget to visit www.chayouth.org on or after Tuesday, September 3rd to pre-register. *If you experience any issues with the registration process, please call the CHA Operation Warm help line at 312-786-3621.*

*Some giveaways may be limited or not available to all who attend the resource fair.

Note: Only those families who pre-register at www.chayouth.org and have eligible children on their lease will be able to attend this event.

Protect Your Family From the Cold

Coping with Extreme Temperatures and How to Watch for Symptoms of Exposure

Winter is fast approaching - Chicago's colder months can be gruesome, but you can make the best out of a frigid situation by playing it safe with these simple recommendations:

- **Preserve the Heat** – Make sure that your windows are completely closed and locked. Also, cover the interior of your windows with plastic to keep heat from escaping from your home.
- **Keep your House Stocked** – Store plenty of the necessities in your home (like medication, canned foods and a manual can opener, candles and matches, blankets, a radio with batteries, etc.). It's better to be over-prepared than short-handed during an emergency.
- **Prepare for the Elements** –

Purchase rock salt for melting ice in your walkway, obtain a solid shovel for removing snow from your paths and ensure that you have a good-quality coat, hat, scarf and pairs of gloves and boots.

The effects of long-term exposure to the elements cause other extreme weather-related issues. Quickly go to a warm place if you begin to experience any of these symptoms:

- **Numbness/tingling and a possible paling of the skin are symptoms of Frostnip**, a mild form of cold injury. The effects of this condition revert when you begin to warm up.
- **Pale or blue skin that feels cold, stiff or rubbery to the touch are symptoms of Frostbite**, a condition

that occurs when the skin and the underlying tissues freeze due to extended contact with below-freezing temperatures.

- **Eye pain or vision changes** may occur in high winds and cold weather as well. If these symptoms persist, put on protective eyewear or go inside to rest your eyes.

By being prepared, staying aware of your surroundings and following these guidelines, you will be ready for any extreme weather condition.



New Healthcare Program for Eligible Individuals

Affordable healthcare is something that every person needs in order to take care of themselves and their family. The CHA wants all of its participating families to care for their health as well as their homes, which is why we want them to stay informed about current programs.

Uninsured adults in Cook County who are not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare can apply for CountyCare, a program that offers healthcare insurance coverage to low-income individuals. CountyCare provides a wide range of preventative and critical health services, including emergency services, doctor's appointments, nursing home care,

mental health and substance use services, and more.

Interested individuals can apply in one of two ways:

1. In Person:

- John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County
- Provident Hospital of Cook County
- Participating Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's)

2. By Phone (Monday-Friday 8am-8pm; Saturday 9am-2pm):

- (312) 864-8200
- (855) 444-1661 (toll free)

Applicants will need the following documents:

- **Proof of identity:** Social Security Card and Photo ID (i.e. Illinois driver's license, State ID or school ID)
- **Proof of income:** Income for the last 30 days, such as pay stubs/statement or benefit statements
- **Proof of residency:** Current lease, rent receipt or utility bills

For more information regarding eligibility, participating FQHC locations, and other details, visit www.countycare.com.

Home Energy Assistance Program Now Accepting Applications

Part of the CHA's mission is to assist families in finding affordable housing – however, we also want to help income-eligible families find the resources they need to pay for other living expenses.

Below are the types of assistance offered by Low Income Home Energy Assistant Program (LIHEAP):

- **ComEd Residential Special Hardship** – Provides a variable one-time credit equal to the past-due balances of no less than \$25 and up to \$1500 on the ComEd bills of households with a demonstrated hardship case. Documentation is required for all circumstances, and must be within six months.
- **LIHEAP Direct Vendor Payment**

(DVP) – Assists income-eligible households with energy services. A one-time benefit payment is made to the utility company and applied directly to the household's energy bills. The amount of the payment is determined by income, household size, and fuel type.

- **LIHEAP Percent of Income Payment Program (PIPP)** – Provides a monthly benefit payment towards the household's utilities, based on usage and monthly income. Customers are required to pay a reduced amount of their utility bills each month to receive benefit payments. PIPP participants who make their utility payments on time will receive credit towards their outstanding balance.

- **Share the Warmth (STW)** – Allows income-eligible customers to receive a matched grant of up to \$200. Payment must be made within 14 calendar days after the STW application is submitted. LIHEAP and PIPP applicants are eligible for STW and may receive only one grant per program year.

Enrollment Dates:

- **September 3, 2013** – Seniors and individuals with disabilities
- **October 1, 2013** – Emergency furnace, reconnection assistance and households with children under six years old
- **November 1, 2013** – General enrollment

For more information, contact (800) 571-CEDA (2332).

Remedies for Lease Violations

Best Practices Shared by Taft West,
Director of Property Management Training, Community Investment Corporation

Good Property Managers recognize that mutual good will, communication and cooperation with their tenants result in successful residential communities. When lease violations occur, the Property Manager has a responsibility to address the problem. Suggested remedies are the following:

- **Loud Music** – If the tenant plays televisions, radios, or other musical equipment in a way that disturbs other tenants, the Property Manager must first verify if the music is too loud. If it continues, the Property Manager may issue a ten-day notice.

• **Refusal of Access** – The tenant shall permit reasonable access to the Property Manager upon receiving two days' notice. In the event of an emergency, the Property Manager may enter without permission but must provide notice within two days after entry.

- **Guests in Violation of Rules & Regulations** – All guests of the tenant shall observe the rules & regulations of the building. If guests violate these provisions, they may be barred and/or arrested for criminal trespassing after they have received a barred notice and placed on a barred list.



- **Changing Locks, Installing Burglar Bars on Doors and Windows** – Illinois Law requires that Property Managers must change locks with each new tenancy. Installation of any metal gates or bars on doors or windows by the tenant is dangerous and strictly prohibited.

Remedies for Lease Violations cont.

• **Property Damage** - Whenever damage is caused by carelessness, misuse or negligence by the tenant, his family or visitors, the tenant agrees to pay. The Property Manager may repair the damage and give the tenant the bill.

• **Unauthorized Pet** - No dogs, cats or other animals shall be kept in the unit except with the Property Manager's prior consent and the conditions set forth. If the animal is a service animal used to assist the tenant with a disability, the tenant must give the Property Manager documentation from the agency who supplied the service animal, and the service animal must be allowed.

• **Non-Payment of Rent** - If the tenant does not pay the rent, the Property Manager can issue a five-day notice. If the tenant does not pay within the five-day period, the Property Manager can file for an eviction. Using an attorney is recommended for this process.

• **Late Payment of Rent** - The City of Chicago has a Landlord/Tenant Ordinance which addresses late payment of rent: the Property Manager may charge a late fee of \$10/month on rent amounts less than \$500, and a late fee of 5%/month on any portion of the rent that exceeds \$500.

Disclaimer: The above represents accepted best practices in Property management and is not intended to be legal advice – consult an attorney for legal advice

GOING PLACES

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