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Press contact:
Office of Communications – Chicago Housing Authority
Matthew Aguilar: (312) 935-2646; maguilar@thecha.org;

CHA OCCUPANCY REACHES 98% *TOP PERFORMER IN HUD CHALLENGE*

CHICAGO (Sept. 19, 2011) – While still in the midst of ongoing construction and rehabilitation of buildings as part of its Plan for Transformation, the Chicago Housing Authority reached a major milestone this month, achieving a 98 percent occupancy rate for its public housing portfolios and winning the praise of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

“The CHA has exceeded their goals and our expectations for which we are pleased, said Steve Meiss Director, Illinois Office of Public Housing at HUD. The achievement of over 99% occupancy in its Senior Housing Portfolio is particularly impressive.”

His comments followed a conference call with CHA and other Housing Authorities last week concerning HUD’s 2011 occupancy goals.

Specifically, the leasing efforts in CHA’s senior housing (99.8%), mixed-income (98.3%) and family housing (98.5%) were among the strongest of any public housing agency in the nation, and they meet the steep leasing goals set forth by HUD earlier this year. Over the past 6 months, CHA has leased nearly 2,000 units to Chicago families and seniors, helping to meet the housing needs of low-income Chicagoans. 400 of these leases were signed in the last 60 days.

CHA and its private sector partners have employed aggressive leasing strategies throughout the Plan for Transformation during which virtually every CHA holding is to either be demolished and replaced or rehabilitated.

New and rehabilitated public housing units continue to come online. In the private, mixed income developments 297 units will be coming on line soon. As for the CHA owned public housing properties, an additional 300 units will be available for lease before the end of the year. Families on CHA’s wait list are eligible for these units.

Throughout the Plan for Transformation units can be designated offline, and therefore not available to lease, for a variety of reasons, including redevelopment, various community planning processes, retrofits to meet ADA requirements and overall updates and improvements.

As is often the case during redevelopment, specific sites or properties are shut down, either for assessment, planning or building purposes. The residents who lived on the site are relocated to either another public housing property, or they are provided a Housing Choice Voucher that allows them to move to any neighborhood in the City of Chicago. Once it is time to make their final housing choice, those who relocated from the property have a Right of Return to the redeveloped property.

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