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PERSISTENT CRIMINAL ACTIVITY FORCES CHA TO VACATE OLD ROWHOUSES

CHICAGO (September 1, 2011) – Due to safety concerns emanating from persistent and excessively high vacancy rates, the Chicago Housing Authority has issued 180-day relocation notices to vacate the remaining 33 households from the 73-year old, non-rehabbed section of the Cabrini Rowhouses.

The non-rehabbed portion of the Rowhouses includes 438 units with only 33 currently occupied, creating a 92% vacancy rate. The rehabbed portion of the site includes 146 units rehabbed in 2009. The rehabbed units are not subject to the relocation notice.

Significant resources have been put towards maintaining the safety of the property, but in spite of these efforts, based on the current data, it was determined that the old sections of the Rowhouses were dangerous and no longer suitable for residents. A recent incident involving illegal firearms and many other recent arrests for narcotics trafficking ultimately drove this decision to close this section of the property.

“The levels and nature of criminal activity continue to pose a real threat to the residents of the area, but it is a particularly disturbing threat due to the significant number of children in the old section of Rowhouses,” Interim CHA CEO Carlos Ponce said. “This Authority must do what’s right and vacate the property. CHA will take great care in making the transition as smooth and as comfortable as possible for the remaining families.”

Ponce said that over the last year, CHA has been working with the families living in the non-rehabbed Rowhouses to find alternate housing, including newly rehabbed rowhouses nearby. CHA will continue to help the remaining families understand their relocation options: either moving to a public housing unit in a new mixed-income or rehabilitated public housing community; or accepting a Housing Choice Voucher, which would allow them to move into an apartment owned by a private landlord anywhere in Chicago.

All families will receive relocation assistance that includes housing counseling and moving services, and all lease compliant families can choose to have an option to return to the Cabrini area once a decision on the future of the property is made.

Once vacated, the site will be secured and the Working Group composed of community residents, community stakeholders and CHA will immediately convene to discuss future plans for the site.

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