

# Owner News

For property owners and managers participating in the Chicago Housing Choice Voucher Program



## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Property Owner,

Greetings. As the newest CEO of the CHA, I look forward to working with you as full partners to ensure that Chicago's Housing Choice Voucher program sets a new standard of excellence for the nation.

We have a great responsibility. As we saw this spring when more than 259,000 applications were received for the lottery that will determine the Wait List for the HCV program over the next years, the need for quality, affordable housing is as great as ever. Together we can assure that in Chicago that need is well met.

We are already making improvements. In April we listened to and heard the concerns of program participants and the need for change.

With the help of partners Quadel Consulting Corporation and CVR Associates, Inc., which now share administration of the program, and their subcontractors Thomas and Herbert and McCright and Associates, the CHA has started to carry out some of those changes, which are highlighted in this issue of Owner News. Among the asked for improvements which we made are:

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## Improving Customer Service through Full Service Satellite Offices

As part of the CHA's vision for the Voucher Program, all satellite offices will now be full service. Most Owners can now conduct virtually all of their business for a particular property in one satellite office. Additional staff and resources are now in place and available at all locations to provide improved customer service. The opening of a new satellite office on 75th Street provides even more convenience. See page 2 inside for a list of satellite offices and their zip codes served.

Owners will be assigned a particular office location for each property based on its zip code. On some occasions you may be referred to another location for a specific matter, so be sure to keep any letters from the CHA.

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## New Technology Delivers Online Access to Inspections Results

As part of the CHA's goal to provide state of the art technology to program Participants, we are pleased to announce the latest enhancement to our Inspections Department. Our new web-based system puts inspection information at your fingertips. Both Owners and Participants will have online access to results as quickly as one business day after the inspection is performed. CHA will continue to mail the inspections report to the Owner.

Online access is simple and provides information, such as:

- pass or fail status
- specific deficiencies
- date and type of inspection performed.

All inspections are performed using high-tech hand-held computers which increase both the efficiency and timeliness of inspections. The inspections data is now downloaded directly into the system thereby eliminating the time required for the data entry process. Once fully implemented, this process will significantly expedite the Owner's access to the inspection results and your ability to make repairs.

Appointments will be scheduled using routing software which reduces the inspectors' travel time, consequently shrinking your appointment time window. Owners will receive an automated phone call specifying the date and time window for their appointment. A reminder call will also be made to the Owner approximately 24 hours prior to any appointment. Owners may still call to personally schedule or re-schedule any appointments including re-inspections.

We encourage you to view a demo of this new technology by logging onto <http://results.mccright.com>. Just select Landlord and type "C957UV" in the field marked Event ID as shown to your left. Then click "Login" at the bottom of the screen.

We look forward to introducing additional services to our Voucher Program customers.

## Direct Deposit of HAP Checks Required by Year End

In our continued efforts to improve service and ensure timely payments to Owners, direct deposit of HAP checks will be required by year end. This process will provide you immediate availability to your funds on the payment date and eliminate the risk of potential mail fraud.

After you have submitted the necessary documents listed below, the CHA will transfer one cent (\$.01) into your account as a test transaction. The next HAP check payment will be deposited automatically into your account. You will receive a monthly written statement itemizing each property address and the corresponding payment amount.

### Documents Required to Initiate Direct Deposit:

- Voided Check (if using a checking account)
- Deposit Slip (if using a savings account)
- Completed IRS W-9 form
- Completed Direct Deposit Authorization Form

Registration is simple and free of charge. Just download and complete the Direct Deposit Authorization Form and IRS W-9 Form from [www.thecha.org](http://www.thecha.org) or pick them up at any of the CHA's four offices and submit along with the other documents as outlined above.

### Ways to Submit Required Documents (fax or mail):

- Fax 312-786-3661 Attention Ms. Payne
- Chicago Housing Authority  
HCV Finance  
Lynitra Payne, Landlord Specialist  
60 East Van Buren – 11th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60605-1207

Take advantage of this program by signing up today and join the over 5,000 other Owners who are already participating in direct deposit. Remember, all Owners will be required to participate in the direct deposit program by the end of the year.



### Questions about the Direct Deposit program?

Contact Lynitra Payne in the Finance department at 312-786-3118 or e-mail at [directdeposit@thecha.org](mailto:directdeposit@thecha.org)

## Improve Your Internet Skills Through Local Classes

As the CHA transitions toward more online access of services, we will increasingly use email as a means to communicate. Programs such as Direct Deposit will require Owners to have an email address. For those of you who are not yet computer savvy, listed below are some locally offered classes, many of which are free.

- Neighborhood Technology Resource Center, 773-722-5653, [www.ntrconline.com](http://www.ntrconline.com)
- Jane Adams Hull House, Community Technology Centers, 312-906-8600, [www.hullhouse.org](http://www.hullhouse.org)
- Erie Neighborhood House/La Casa Erie, 312-563-5800, [www.eriehouse.org](http://www.eriehouse.org)
- Abraham Lincoln Center, 773-373-3775, [www.abelink.org](http://www.abelink.org)
- Chicago Public Libraries, [www.chipublib.org](http://www.chipublib.org)

## Improving Customer Service

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Services performed at all satellite offices include:

- Annual & Initial Recertifications
- Interim Recertifications
- Request For Tenancy Approval (RFTA)
- Sign HAP Contract and Turn-in Lease
- Inspections Issues
- List Properties

Owners should continue to contact the CHA Finance Department to do the following:

- Replace a lost HAP check
- Request 1099 tax statement
- Change ownership or management of a property
- Change Owner's mailing address for HAP checks
- Submit an application or find out the status of an application for the HCV Property Tax Savings Program

An Owner with Tenants participating in Special Programs may be assigned to an office not corresponding to their zip code due to the specialized nature of such services. Again, it is particularly important in this case to refer to future CHA correspondence as it will outline the designated office location. Special Program Participants include:

- Family Unification
- Family Self Sufficiency
- Mod Rehab
- Homeownership/CTO
- Mainstream
- Project-Based Vouchers

The CHA is delighted to announce extended office hours in the fall at all satellite offices. Details will be provided in the next issue of this newsletter. We are also planning to open more satellite offices in the future as we strive to bring program services even closer to your home and business.

### Central Office

#### SATELLITE 60

60 E. Van Buren Street, Chicago, IL 60605

#### Zip Codes Served

60610, 60611, 60613, 60614, 60616, 60618, 60622, 60625, 60626, 60630, 60631, 60634, 60635, 60639, 60640, 60641, 60645, 60646, 60647, 60651, 60656, 60657, 60659, 60660, 60040, 60104, 60153, 60155, 60409, 60411, 60419, 60425, 60426, 60429, 60438, 60478, 60707

### West Satellite Office

#### SATELLITE 33

3333 W. Arthington, Suite 220  
Chicago IL 60624

#### Zip Codes Served

60605, 60607, 60608, 60612, 60623, 60624, 60644

### South Satellite Office

#### SATELLITE 75

1741 E. 75th Street  
Chicago IL 60649

#### Zip Codes Served

60615, 60637, 60649, 60653

### Southwest Satellite Office

#### SATELLITE 88

1150 W. 88th Street  
Chicago IL 60620

#### Zip Codes Served

60601, 60609, 60617, 60619, 60620, 60621, 60627, 60628, 60629, 60632, 60633, 60636, 60638, 60642, 60643, 60652, 60655, 60658, 60827

## New Team Introductions

On June 1, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) implemented a new business model for administration of its Housing Choice Voucher Program. This new model is designed to improve customer service and streamline a number of processes through a community-based delivery system.

Three key members of the new leadership team are Janice Stewart, Cathy Pennington and Philip Fairweather, who will work together to bring about positive change for the Voucher Program through new and exciting online services and overall program enhancements. The opening of additional satellite offices allows this new community-based approach to provide increased accessibility for both Participants and Owners.



Janice Stewart

Leadership team member Janice Stewart has over 25 years of experience in assisted housing including extensive experience in the administration of other Housing Choice Voucher Programs in various capacities. Ms. Stewart's 12 years experience in property management for multi-family living and 15 years of national, state and local training experience will serve her well in her new role. Prior to joining the CHA team, she transformed three Housing Choice Voucher Programs from severely troubled status into industry-recognized "high performers". She will oversee the Satellite 88 office, the Customer Service Center (Call Center), and will be actively involved in supporting the CHA's efforts to communicate with the community-at-large about the program.

*"I'm excited about the opportunities CHA's program presents for us all," says Ms. Stewart. "Drastically reducing the average hold time for customers calling the Customer Service Center has already resulted in positive feedback. We look forward to improving overall customer service and streamlining many processes, including transfers and recertifications. Our approach will also include increased accountability for everyone — the Property Owners, the Participants and ourselves as the administrators of the program."*



Cathy Pennington

Another key team member, Cathy Pennington has more than 17 years of experience in the subsidized and affordable housing industry. She was involved in Louisiana's housing recovery program for victims of Hurricane Katrina, and was instrumental in the organizational set up of three of its key service departments. Ms. Pennington has served in multiple management roles within the voucher program for both the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Cleveland Housing Network.

As a member of CHA's leadership team, Ms. Pennington is responsible for planning and administration of departments such as the Admissions and Resource Department, and Special Programs, which includes the Family Self Sufficiency Program (FSS), the Housing Opportunity Program (HOP) and the Choose to Own Homeownership Option (CTO).

*"As with any reorganization, there are opportunities and challenges," says Ms. Pennington. "Chicago's voucher program is the third largest in the nation. We recognize that there is room for improvement, and will be diligent in our progress toward such."*



Philip Fairweather

Philip Fairweather brings private sector experience and expertise in team building and organizational management to the leadership team. Mr. Fairweather is a successful entrepreneur who previously specialized in new business development. He has directed programs for the Chicago Urban League, the YMCA, and the Illinois Department of Human Services. In addition to his private sector experience, his expertise in team building and organizational management will be an asset to the program. As a two-time Best Practices National Award winner for "Welfare to Work" and "Economic Development" in public housing, Mr. Fairweather will employ his winning attitude in managing the Satellite 33 and Satellite 75 offices.

*"Our goal is simple — to improve efficiency and provide timely service," says Mr. Fairweather. "We will accomplish this by setting high standards and creating a work environment where there is opportunity for professional growth and development and where staff can focus on serving the needs of our clients. I look forward to the challenge."*

Look for articles featuring other team members and their role in the CHA's new vision for the voucher program in upcoming newsletter issues.

## OWNER ORIENTATION

### ***New to the CHA's Housing Choice Voucher Program or Need a Refresher Course?***

Please join us at our next Owner Orientation session, and find out how the Voucher Program works so it can work for you.

*At the end of the course, you will better understand:*

- Key provisions of the HAP contract
- Your rights as a participating property owner
- Inspections process
- How rents are determined
- Difference between terminations and abatements
- Proper way to evict Residents
- Benefits beyond steady cash flow

The next session will be  
August 28th, 6pm - 8pm at 60 E. Van Buren Street, 9th Floor

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged.  
You may register by calling 312-786-3602.

E-mail questions to [ownerinfo@thecha.org](mailto:ownerinfo@thecha.org)

Future meetings held the 4th Thursday of every month.  
Please note future locations may change to better serve our customers.

Visit us at [www.thecha.org](http://www.thecha.org)

## Update on the RentBetter Wait List Lottery

This past spring, the CHA opened registration to the wait list for the first time in over 10 years. A lottery process ensured an equal chance for a position on the new wait list to all Chicago-resident applicants. Individuals and families who submitted a wait list registration form between April 17, 2008 and May 15, 2008 were entered into the lottery.

Over a quarter-million registration forms were submitted, half of which were online submissions via a website dedicated exclusively to the wait list application process. Everyone who submitted their registration form by the deadline was entered into an electronic lottery. A computer randomly selected 40,000 names to create the new wait list.

All applicants who submitted a valid registration form by the deadline received a letter from the CHA in July. The letter indicated if they were placed on the new wait list, and if so, their registration number.



## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

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*Online Inspection Search* – Owners and participants can now check whether a unit passed or failed inspections with a few clicks of a mouse.

*Revamped Satellite Offices* – Participants can now access information and attend interview appointments in convenient satellite offices closer to home.

*Enhanced Program Staff* – Three new members with a over 40 years of experience in affordable housing and organizational management have joined the HCV administrative team. We have also added and retrained representatives in our Customer Service Call Center to increase client satisfaction.

I am confident that these changes, as well as others outlined in this issue of the newsletter, will better accommodate voucher holders and property owners, while creating a more effective program overall. I am proud to be part of a team that serves individuals and families in need of housing assistance with professionalism, integrity and compassion. We are committed to improving service to all our clients, both families and owners.

*Sincerely,*

**Lewis A. Jordan, President and Chief Executive Officer**  
**Chicago Housing Authority**

## Energy Conservation Tips

Now more than ever, it is important to make sure your property's air conditioning system is operating at maximum energy efficiency. General maintenance is simple and will keep the unit working at optimal performance.

Here are some tips to keep it running as efficiently as possible:

- professionally service system annually
- change filter regularly
- maintain adequate space around the outdoor unit to avoid restricting airflow across the coils
- vacuum dirt and dust from the indoor coil annually to prevent restricted airflow

Ceiling fans are an excellent way to help keep air conditioning energy costs down while

maintaining occupant comfort levels. Using ceiling fans during the cooling season can help keep room occupants cool due to the wind chill effect. This allows the air conditioner thermostat to be set slightly higher while maintaining the same degree of comfort. This can result in a reduction of up to 10% in air conditioning energy use, and the cost of running the ceiling fan is minimal.

Another way to maximize energy efficiency is with adequate weatherstripping for windows and doors. Repairing duct leaks can result in heating and cooling savings of as much as 30%. That's big savings for a problem that is inexpensive to locate and repair.

The key to property Owners — less strain on the HVAC system translates to a longer equipment life span and savings in your pocket.

