

STEP 8 *SUCCESSFUL TENANCY*

Communities consist of different types of families, including married couples, single adults, elderly and disabled persons. Residents can be either homeowners or renters. When you make a decision to move into a new neighborhood, you are making a decision to accept and adjust to the values of the community. Your new neighborhood becomes your new home and you are responsible for both. People living in the neighborhood depend on each other to create and maintain a positive living environment for all persons living there. The need for belonging and acceptance in your new neighborhood is important because it makes you feel comfortable where you live. Your neighbors will be sensitive to the level of your own self-respect and it will significantly affect how your new neighbors will accept and respect you. Refer to Exhibit 5.1 for suggestions when moving into a new neighborhood. Additional tips on being a good neighbor are discussed later in this section.

After moving into your new house or apartment, you have responsibilities to CHA, to the landlord and possibly to utility companies (dependent upon the agreement with your landlord). Some of these responsibilities are outlined in Exhibit 5.2.



SUCCESSFUL TENANCY

Exhibit 5.1: Things To Do When Moving Into A New Neighborhood

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🏠 Talk with your children about changes that will take place.
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🏠 Enroll children in school and after school program.
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🏠 Find out when garbage is collected.
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🏠 Meet and greet your next door neighbors.
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🏠 Get to know your community leaders.
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🏠 Register to vote at your nearest library.
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🏠 Participate in Neighborhood and PTA Meetings, Community Organizations, and Neighborhood Watch Program.
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🏠 Identify nearest medical facility, library, parks, and recreations.
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🏠 Learn the city code violations.
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Exhibit 5.2: Participant Responsibilities to CHA and Landlord

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🏠 For the length of your lease, which must be at least one (1) year under the Housing Choice Voucher Program, you and your family are required to obey the requirements of the lease you signed with your landlord.
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🏠 You are also required to give CHA a 30-day notice, and your landlord the length of time in your lease (usually 30 days) before you move out of the unit. Your notice to move must be submitted in writing to CHA and the landlord.
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🏠 You are required to maintain the condition of your home or apartment in the same or better condition as it was when you moved in. (Damages to the unit beyond normal wear and tear may affect your security deposit.
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🏠 During your participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, you are required to make the apartment available for an annual inspection by a CHA inspector.
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🏠 At least every two (2) or three (3) years, you are required to meet with your CHA Housing Specialist to re-examine your income, expenses and family composition. At this time, the CHA will also recalculate your portion of the rent in case it has changed. Note: for Voucher Holders who are designated elderly or disabled, this process occurs every three (3) years.
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🏠 You are required to make timely rent payments to your landlord and utility companies.
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***Renter's insurance is available from insurance agencies. Renter's insurance can protect your family if your home is damaged by fire or flood or broken into.

“BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR”

Building Relationships and Communicating with Your Neighbors

The ability to communicate and get along well with your neighbors is very important because it can make a difference between a comfortable and uncomfortable living environment for you and your family. Your ability to establish good relationships with your neighbor is based on how well you know yourself. When developing new relationships, it is important to understand and respect the differences of your neighbors. You will live in a neighborhood with many people from different backgrounds. Some of these differences include: age, gender, religion, and ethnicity.

Building relationships with your neighbors is important because it enables you to:

- Build friendship, trust and respect
- Identify some things in common
- Understand differences
- Create a comfort zone
- Eliminate rumors

Your first impression is a lasting impression.

In order to make a good first impression when moving into your new neighborhood, start off by identifying some things you have in common with your neighbors. People who have similar things in common are more likely to build trust and respect for each other and build good relationships.

How to make a good first impression when meeting your new neighbors:

- Meet people by greeting them with eye contact and shaking their hands.
- Always introduce yourself by saying “Hello, my name is...? How are you doing?”
- Learn people’s names.
- Listen with your undivided attention.
- Compliment and be thankful for compliments.

Good Neighborhoods Start with YOU

What is a Good Neighbor?

A good neighbor is a law abiding citizen with a good attitude who values and respects the lives of others and is actively involved in the community. Refer to Exhibit 5.3 for tips on being a good neighbor.

Good Neighbors are People:

- You can trust and depend on
- With good attitudes
- Who abide by the law
- Who get involved and take action to strengthen their community
- Who care about their community
- Who exercise their right to vote

Become a Good Neighbor:

- Get to know your neighbors.
- Don’t bring bad habits into your new community.
- Respect the lives, opinions and property of others.
- Understand and accept your community values.
- Be accountable for your actions and the result of your actions.
- Get involved.
- Have a caring attitude for your community.

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Communication

How well you communicate with your neighbors and Owner is essential to being a good neighbor. Good communication is the key to building and maintaining effective relationships with your neighbors and landlord.

Neighborhood Etiquette

Neighborhood etiquette is used to describe what is appropriate in your community. Your neighborhood has standards of behavior which are the way people conduct themselves. See Exhibit 5.4 for a list of behaviors that are unacceptable in a community.

Your music — whether being played inside your home or in your car — will disturb the peace of the neighborhood if played too loudly. When your music is heard at the edge of your property or outside the car with the windows closed, the volume is up too loud.

Personal conversations whether inside your home or on the front porch that can be overheard by others should be okay for children to hear as well. Neighborhood families often have small children who will hear and see everything you do.

Conduct yourself in a manner that will not disturb your neighbors' peaceful enjoyment of the premises.

Exhibit 5.3: Being a Good Neighbor

- In order for you to receive respect, you must give it. The first step in building a relationship with your neighbors is respecting those next door, down the street, and around the corner.
- Keep an even, calm tone when speaking. Listen to what your neighbor has to say and try to understand their point of view.
- Leave your neighbor in a friendly manner, not in anger. Offer a helpful suggestion both of you can live with. Remember this is your neighbor, someone you might see every day.
- If you and your neighbor live in the same building and cannot resolve an issue, you should contact your landlord.
- If the issue is with a neighbor on the block or in the community, you should work with your block club, CAPS Program, and Aldermanic Ward Office.

Exhibit 5.4: Unacceptable Behavior in Your New Community

- Playing loud music in your car while riding down the street and inside your home.
- Having loud parties.
- Guests blocking your neighbor's driveway.
- Allowing your dog to use neighbors' yards as a bathroom.
- Trash overflowing and garbage falling to the ground.
- Grass not cut timely, debris, paper, bottles and cans outside your door.
- Disturbing the peace.
- Getting rid of old furniture and junk by dumping it on the curb.
- Problems with unauthorized persons living in the unit.
- Poor housekeeping inside and outside of unit.
- Unauthorized pet(s).
- Inoperable vehicles parked in yard or on street.
- Child neglect, leaving children unattended for long periods of time.
- Unauthorized guests, causing trouble with your neighbors.

Basic Housekeeping Tips

- Make cleaning a family activity.
- Organization is the key to easy cleaning.
- Designate storage for items needing to be stored.
- Avoid clutter (get rid of unused items that do not have value).
- Use proper cleaning items.
- Straighten up daily.
- Clean more thoroughly during the weekend or days off work.
- Designate an area to place your laundry.
- Avoid using sheets to cover windows, use curtains instead.
- Wash dishes and remove food particles from table, floor, and countertops after each meal.

Keeping the Exterior of Your Unit Clean

- In the summer, keep the grass cut.
- Remove snow if you are in a single family dwelling.
- Keep sidewalk and driveway free of debris.

CAPS (Community Alternative Policing Strategy)

Sometimes issues with a neighbor on the block or in your community can also be resolved by attending Block Club, Beat/CAPS, or Monthly Ward Meetings.

Beat community meetings are hosted by the Chicago Police Department/CAPS and include residents, business owners, and representatives from local schools, churches and neighborhood organizations.

Find out what the police are doing in your neighborhood and what can you do to fight crime and address the problems on your block. Call 311 to find out the date, time and location of the next Beat/CAPS meeting in your area.

Security / Stability

You worked hard to select your new home — taking time to consider quality of schools, convenience, safety, etc. It is now time to enjoy the benefits of your hard work. You will be able to provide stability for your family by remaining in your new home.



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ETHICS – EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY

Recognizing that public confidence can be endangered by even the appearance of impropriety, CHA has an established Ethics Policy that prohibits CHA employees and contractors from using or appearing to use their program positions for personal gain.

Examples of prohibited staff actions which are considered ethics violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Accepting gifts of any value at any time
- Charging a Voucher Family a fee for issuing a Voucher, for performing any other program service
- Passing a unit that fails an HQS inspection or improperly approving any other program transaction in exchange for any gift, payment, or favor
- Receiving free or reduced price products or services from contractors doing business with CHA
- Having a controlling interest in a property subsidized under the Housing Choice Voucher Program
- Paying for a priority place on any Waiting List

It is important to be aware of the CHA Ethics Policy and to adhere to its guidelines. Do not offer or send gifts or favors of any kind or any value to CHA employees; this includes food or drink. CHA staff members are prohibited from accepting these gifts. If you wish to thank an employee for a job well done, a note to the executive director will be greatly appreciated. No CHA services require the payment of a fee. Do not offer to pay an employee or anyone else for any services; this includes tips.

Do not enter into an agreement with a CHA employee for construction or any other services no matter when or where these services will be provided.

CHA Fraud Hotline 1-800-533-0441

If a CHA employee asks for money, gifts, or favors of any kind for performing program services or offers to provide off-hour services of any kind do not oblige. Immediately report the matter to the CHA Fraud Hotline. All calls will be handled promptly and confidentially.

WARNING! No Side Payments

The collection of side payments from Housing Choice Voucher Program Families is a serious offense and is punishable under Federal Law. Should a Property Owner request any “payment” from a Voucher Family other than the agreed upon contract rent, please report it immediately to the CHA. CHA will report any violation to the Inspector General’s Office for investigation.