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Criminal Screening Process FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

CHA conducts background checks in a process that follows the requirements of the Cook County Just Housing Amendment to the Human Rights Ordinance for persons with criminal convictions. Learn more information at the [Cook County website](#). **This information applies to Public Housing & Rental Assistance Demonstration Programs.**

CHA also offers this FAQ as a [downloadable PDF](#).

1. Is the Chicago Housing Authority required to conduct a criminal background check?

Yes. A criminal background check is run as the final step in the screening process for all waitlist applicants, which includes all household members over the age of 18. Current CHA household members over the age of 18 are also re-screened as part of the lease renewal process.

2. What does CHA consider when reviewing a person's criminal history?

The criminal screening looks back over the past 180 days to determine housing eligibility status. Any persons convicted of 1) arson, 2) child molestation or a crime that warrants registration under a state sex offender registration program, 3) manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of any federally assisted housing will be automatically rejected.

3. What is the look-back period for the criminal background screening?

The State of Illinois has regulated the criminal screening look-back period for housing opportunities as 180 days.

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5. What happens if I have criminal findings within the past 180 days?

Property Management will issue an email with a 'Dispute Notification' letter and a copy of the background check to each screened applicant household member within five (5) business days of obtaining the background report. The notification letter informs the applicant of their right to dispute the criminal findings in a process called an "Individualized Assessment."

6. Once I receive the Dispute Notification letter, what are the next steps?

You as the applicant household have five (5) business days to provide property management with evidence that disputes the accuracy or relevance of criminal findings. The property management team has three (3) business days to evaluate your evidence and provide a determination of successful or not successful.

7. What are the next steps if I'm not successful?

If you are not successful during the "Individualized Assessment" process; your name will be removed from the waitlist. If you are interested, you may visit [CHA's website to reapply](#).

8. What are the next steps if I'm successful?

If you are successful during the "Individualized Assessment" process; you will be deemed eligible for a housing opportunity.