



Message From the CEO



Greetings,

We've survived a winter that wasn't nearly as bad as we thought it'd be, and the Chicago skies are sunny again. Consequently, we are looking forward to a busy, fruitful and productive summer.

As we continue the momentum from a highly successful 2016, in which we utilized Housing Choice Vouchers in a way that profoundly met the community needs, it is important that we put extra emphasis on the summer months to get things done. As with every summer, it will be a time of new moves and new environments for many, therefore it is important for owners to understand their responsibilities, whether it be new potential conflicts or new city requirements. We encourage you to be proactive and protect yourself, your property and your tenants by having a plan and addressing possible future concerns now – rather than later.

CHA offers many workshops to help educate owners, including multiple HQS workshops. We also recommend that owners of all experience levels attend an information briefing, so to stay fresh on new goings-on. It's helpful to brush up on program knowledge if you haven't attended in a while or, especially, if you're planning to bring on new tenants over the summer.

We also are encouraging owners to indicate a language preference to ensure receipt of all correspondence from us in your preferred language. This is vital to our successful partnership with you. You can provide us with your language preference by clicking the link on page 3 of this newsletter, or by logging in to the Owner's Portal, where you will see a menu item on the left directing you to submit this information.

So take a read of the newsletter and make sure that you are prepared for the future. And enjoy the weather!

Regards,



Eugene Jones, Jr.
CEO, Chicago Housing Authority

In This Issue:

- Message from the CEO
- An HCV Owner's Guide to Lease Documents
- Indicate Your Language Preference Online
- Are You Receiving All of Our Emails?
- GoSection8.com
- **Choose Conflict Resolution, Not Retaliation**
- Making Chicago a Lead-Safe City
- City Services Reminders
- Use Your Owner Portal
- Note From the Inspector General
- HUD/VASH Program
- Inspections Policy Change Reminders
- 2017 Administrative Plan Changes
- MOD Fund Program
- Upcoming HCV Owner Workshops and Briefings

An HCV Owner's Guide to Lease Documents By: Jacqueline Hawkins, Owner Services

A good lease is your most important tool as a successful property owner or manager! Your lease should outline terms and policies as specifically as possible, while maintaining compliance with federal, state, and local laws. Below are some tips from our Owner Services team about drafting a comprehensive lease document that will protect you, your property, your business, and your tenant.

A basic lease should include the following:

1. The name of the tenant, which should match the head of household name on the voucher.
2. The names of all authorized occupants, which should match the household members on the voucher. No other individuals' names may be included as authorized occupants.
3. The full contract rent amount.
4. The security deposit or move-in fee amount, and terms for reimbursement (if applicable).
5. The lease term, which must be 12 months in length for an initial lease. All subsequent lease renewal terms are at the discretion of the tenant and the property owner.
6. Utilities and appliance responsibilities.
7. A list of late rent fees, key replacement fees, and standard repair charges.
8. An acknowledgement of receipt of each of the Chicago Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance mandated disclosures and pamphlets.
9. An overnight guest policy, equal to or more stringent than the CHA Guest Policy listed in the HCV Family Obligations.
10. A regular schedule of pest control services, including a statement requiring that the tenant allow access to the unit for the service to be performed.
11. A policy requiring that tenants allow landlords or appropriate maintenance staff access to the unit to conduct repairs when proper notice is given.
12. A policy prohibiting tenants from adding, removing, or changing locks on the unit.
13. A statement acknowledging that the tenant is considered to be in possession of the unit as long as they possess keys to the unit.
14. A statement acknowledging that the landlord will move forward with eviction if rent is not received by the 5th of the month.
15. Original signatures by both the tenant and landlord, including the date signed.

A comprehensive lease should also include:

1. A direct deposit policy, requiring the tenant's monthly rent portion to be automatically transferred from the tenant to the landlord on the first of the month.
2. A statement acknowledging the landlord's right to report rent delinquencies to the credit bureau.
3. A no pet policy, except in the case of service animals.
4. A renters' insurance requirement with minimum coverage outlined.
5. An addendum demonstrating the move-in ready condition of the unit, with time-stamped photographs.
6. If a tenant is responsible for any utility, a statement that nullifies the contract if the tenant is unable to obtain a utility service account under his/her own name.
7. A monthly or quarterly maintenance visit policy, in which the tenant agrees to allow the landlord regular access to inspect the property for maintenance needs.
8. An acknowledgement of surveillance cameras in common areas for multifamily homes or large properties.
9. Contact information for next of kin, for use only in case of medical emergencies.
10. Tenant and landlord initials at the end of each lease item or page acknowledging that the item has been read and understood

Remember: For leases with HCV participants, your lease must also be compliant with the HCV Housing Assistance Payment Contract (HAP Contract), and HAP Part B Tenancy Addendum.

For more information on laws regulating residential leases in the City of Chicago, please visit:

https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/rents_right.html

Indicate Your Language Preference

CHA is sensitive to the needs of CHA applicants, CHA participants, and residents of the City of Chicago at large who are Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals. The LEP communities served by CHA include CHA applicants, CHA participants/residents, and HCV owners.

Language assistance that CHA may provide to LEP persons includes, but is not limited to:

- Oral interpretation services
- Bilingual staff
- Telephonic interpretation line
- Written translation services

To comply with federal regulations, CHA must regularly report on the language preferences of its HCV Program property owners.

Please click the link below to complete this VERY BRIEF survey to help us meet HUD guidelines.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q7OGFQF>

Note: if you have already completed this survey on the Owner Portal, or by using the link sent by email in April, you do not need to complete the survey again.

Are You Receiving All of Our Emails?

With CHA's new "paperless" initiative now in place, it's more important than ever to ensure that you are receiving all of our important and often time-sensitive notices, forms, and letters.

Here are some tips for keeping CHA emails out of your SPAM, Junk, or Bulk Mail folders:

1. Add **@thecha.org** to your "Approved Sender" list (also called a "Whitelist" or "Safe Sender" list, depending on your email program).
2. Add **@thecha.org** to your email program's Address Book
3. Regularly check your SPAM, Junk and/or Bulk Mail folders. If you find our email there, select the message and click "Not SPAM" or "Not Junk." This will help future messages to get through.
4. Please DO NOT mark any CHA email as SPAM, even if that particular email is not of interest to you! Marking **any** CHA email as SPAM could prohibit other, highly important emails from reaching you in the future.

Need to change your email address? Your email addresses cannot be changed on the Owner Portal! Call the Customer Call Center at (312) 936-2500 or email us at hcv@thecha.org



Choose Conflict Resolution, Not Retaliation!

Every property owner and tenant relationship is unique and faces unique challenges when conflict arises. Below are recommendations from CHA staff on how to avoid, de-escalate, and resolve landlord-tenant conflict.

Know Your Tenants

Get to know your tenant's habits and needs during the screening process. Does your tenant have odd working hours? Does your tenant like to entertain? Does your tenant spend some nights away from the unit? Is your tenant hard of hearing? Does your tenant know his/her neighbors? The more you know about a tenant, the better equipped you are to discuss your concerns up front. Building this relationship is very important, since the tenant should always be your first point of contact for any concern.

Communicate Clearly

Establish a preferred method of communication with your tenants from the beginning of the lease term. Does your tenant have email? Does your tenant have a strict workplace policy against phones or personal email? Is cell phone reception bad in the unit? Knowing the best method and timeframe to communicate with your tenants is key to avoiding phone tag or a frustrating back-and-forth over time.

Keep records of all communication with your tenant. If you speak to a tenant on the phone, take notes during the conversation. Save all texts, emails, and mailed correspondence.

Focus on the Issue at Hand

Don't let the other stresses in your life carry over to interactions with your tenants. Be professional, courteous, and to the point when discussing your concerns with a tenant and encourage your tenants to do the same. When discussing your concerns, do not bury your points in small talk and leave the issue unclear – if you have evidence, present it clearly and discuss next steps so that all parties can have timely and fair resolution.

Improving Properties Initiative & Fraud Hotline

(312) 786-3135 or 1(800) 533-0441
hcvipi@thecha.org

Follow the Law

The Chicago Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance (RLTO) includes protections for property owners and tenants alike. For example, a property owner does have the right to access the unit, but he/she must provide the tenant at least 48-hours advance notice except in the case of emergency. Failure to allow the property owner access to the unit is not only a violation of the RLTO, but also the HCV Family Obligations.

Remember: Lockouts are illegal – you cannot simply lock your tenants out of their unit, remove their personal property, disconnect utilities, or make a unit otherwise uninhabitable for non-payment of rent or other lease violations.

Be Consistent and Enforce Your Lease

Enforce all aspects of your lease equally and without favoritism. While timely rent payment is a high priority, forgetting or refusing to enforce some items of your lease can undercut your authority when you try to enforce other items, like rent payment. Allowing one tenant an exception and not another can be especially harmful to all of your landlord-tenant relationships.

In the case of lease violations, any remedial agreements or payment plans should be made in writing so that both the property owner and tenant are clear on the terms.

Submit Notice to CHA

CHA is not a party to the lease, and as such encourages property owners and tenants to resolve issues independently. However, if you have evidence of an HCV participant violating the Family Obligations, please notify CHA immediately. Such evidence would include: 5-day notice for non-payment of rent, 10-day notice for lease violations, police reports, proof of unauthorized tenants, proof of unit abandonment, proof of unit damage, etc. CHA investigates all claims made against HCV participants and may propose termination from the Program for serious violations.

Making Chicago a Lead-Safe City

Chicago City Ordinance requires that all properties are free from lead hazards. Rather than wait for a city inspector to issue citations and face fines for non-compliance, landlords are encouraged to learn about lead and fix problems before they become hazards.

Assistance is available to reduce lead paint hazards in homes and apartments occupied by low-income Chicago residents. The Chicago Department of Public Health administers grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Cook County Department of Public Health to control lead paint hazards in Chicago housing. The Chicago Department of Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention and Healthy Homes Program provides funding and technical assistance to eligible homeowners and rental property owners.

The program will provide technical assistance at no cost to the property owner in form of comprehensive lead paint testing, hazard identification, specification development, contractor selection assistance, construction management, clearance testing, and laboratory analysis.

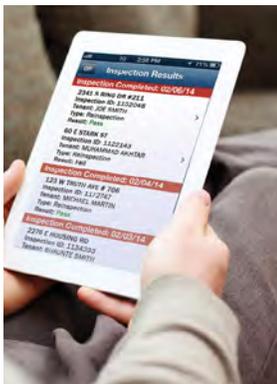
Highest priority is give to units occupied by lead poisoned children, then to other occupied or likely to be occupied by children under age six.

For more information, please call the Lead Poisoning Prevention & Healthy Homes Program Staff at (312) 746-7834

Housing Choice Voucher Program

OwnerPortal

Paper Correspondence Has Ended! Use Your OWNER PORTAL!



Effective January 1, 2017, CHA has discontinued ALL paper/USPS correspondence and begun communicating with HCV property owners exclusively via email.

Your CHA Owner Portal account gives you access to the documents and information you need to manage your HCV properties. You can view inspection information, request a rent increase, track your moves, download CHA forms, and upload documents through the Portal.

Access to the CHA Owner Portal is free and easy to set up with your Vendor ID. Simply visit www.chahcvportal.org to get started. If you do not yet have a Vendor ID, you can view your inspection results at www.chainspections.org.



Chicago City Services Reminders

Concerned about your water bill? A property owner may request that water bills be sent in attention to the name of a tenant; however, this does not relieve the owner of the subject property from liability for unpaid utility charges. Contact the Chicago Department of Finance, to complete a Change of Owner Name/Mailing Address Form to include the tenant's name in the mailing address.

The new Chicago Recycling ordinance is in effect as of January 1, 2017. Under the amended ordinance, property owners of multi-unit residential, office and commercial establishments are mandated to provide source-separated, single stream recycling; the most commonly used collection method in the industry. Property owners will also be responsible for implementing an ongoing educational program that includes posting signage, providing adequate carts, and sending written notice to tenants about the changes. Enforcement of the ordinance includes a 30-day warning period and graduated penalties for non-compliance.

Building Code Violations Are Automatic HQS Fails
The Dept. of Buildings regularly reports building code violations to the CHA. Payments may be put on hold until the violation is remedied.

Accurate 311 Service requests prevent delays!
Analyze the situation carefully before reporting an issue to 311! Service delays are often caused by issues being mis-identified, which results in the wrong team being sent to resolve the issue.

Have a Valid Email on File with CHA • Monitor Your Inbox • Check SPAM/Junk Folders • Add Us to Your Contacts

Note From the Inspector General

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is an independent body within the Chicago Housing Authority whose purpose is to investigate and audit matters concerning fraud, theft, waste, abuse and misconduct within or affecting CHA.

The OIG ensures that violations, as they relate to CHA residents, employees, contractors, subcontractors or any entity receiving funds from the CHA, are investigated and prosecuted.

As a property owner, if you have any information regarding fraud in your dealings with tenants, CHA employees, or CHA contractors, you are encouraged to report this information to the OIG.

Immediate reporting, while facts are still fresh in your mind, is helpful. Complaints can be kept confidential.

If you have any information relating to fraud or unethical activity within or affecting the Chicago Housing Authority, contact the OIG by calling our Hotline at 1-800-544-7139 or send us an email at: fraud@thecha.org.



*Landlords, are you interested in helping homeless Veterans become housed?
Do you have safe and affordable rental units available?*

HUD-VASH HOUSING FAIR

Every 2nd and 4th Friday, 1:00-2:30 PM

***Jesse Brown VAMC - Prescription Conference Room
820 S. Damen Avenue, 2nd floor Damen Pavilion***

- PARKING WILL BE VALIDATED -

For more information, please contact
Lorez A. White, LCSW – Housing Specialist
(312) 569-8210 or lorez.white@va.gov

Inspection Policy Change Reminders

Missed Re-Inspections Fail Automatically

Effective January 1st 2016, if an annual inspection fails, and the inspector goes to the unit for a re-inspection and is unable to gain entry to the unit for any reason, the unit will automatically fail the re-inspection. The unit may go into abatement if the inspection is not rescheduled and passed prior to the expiration of the cure period.

Inspection Appointment Robotic Calls

The 2-business day prior and same-day robotic call and email inspection reminders have been discontinued.

Inspection reminder robotic calls and emails will now occur 7 days prior to the inspection as well as before 8pm on the business day prior to the inspection appointment. The 3-hour appointment window will be provided via the robotic call and e-mail.

Reminders will also be available online by 8 PM the business day prior to the appointment on the Inspections Portal (<https://chainspections.org>) and Owner Portal (<https://chahcvportal.org>)

Boiler Room Certificates for Multi-Family Buildings

Did you know that HCV Inspections offers Boiler Room Certificates for residential buildings with four (4) or more units as part of your annual inspection? The certificate is good for one year and expires on the anniversary of the inspection.

The certificate request is completed by the inspector after the inspection is completed. If the property owner has not received the certificate within one week, it can be requested by email: HCVPinpections@thecha.org

Certificates do not prevent HCV inspections supervisors or Quality Control inspectors from entering and inspecting the boiler area. HCV Inspectors can also enter to verify complaint inspections.

Questions? Contact the HCV Customer Call Center (312) 935-2600 and ask to speak to Inspections, or email HCVPinpections@thecha.org

2017 Administrative Plan Changes

On January 17th, the CHA Board of Commissioners approved the new Administrative Plan that was effective on February 1st. Although, there were not significant changes made, there are a few new policies, which are outlined below.

Change Language on Arrests

New guidance from HUD has clarified how PHAs can use arrest records of participants. In line with this guidance, we have removed the family obligation requiring families to notify CHA within 10 days if a household member has been arrested. Also, language in chapters 3 and 16 regarding evidence of arrests have been clarified to reflect that we will not use an arrest record as the sole reason for termination or denial.

Criminal Activity

HCV has revised its criminal look-back period for determining eligibility and continued participation in the program. Now, like in the public housing program, CHA will consider any criminal activity within the last 3 years, which is a reduction from five. In addition, CHA will no longer consider evidence of parole or recent release from prison as evidence of criminal activity.

Questions? Contact the Customer Call Center at (312) 935-2600 or email HCV@thecha.org



DID YOU KNOW THAT THE CHA OFFERS AN ACCESSIBILITY MODIFICATION FUND "MOD FUND" PROGRAM?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

The CHA's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) participants or household members with a verifiable disability, are eligible via the submission & approval of a Reasonable Accommodation request, to receive a reasonable modification (structural change) to existing premises, occupied or to be occupied by the person with a disability.

WHAT ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF A REASONABLE MODIFICATION?



Ramps Porch or Stair Lifts Roll-in Showers Accessible sinks

For more information, please contact the Housing Rights and Nondiscrimination department at **312.913.7062**

Upcoming HCV Owner Workshops

Topic	Date	Location
HCVP Contract Rent Determination	Tuesday, May 9th 2017 5PM - 7PM	Avalon Branch Library 8148 S. Stony Island Avenue Chicago, IL 60617
Housing Quality Standards (HQS) 101	Tuesday, May 23rd 2017 2PM - 4PM	CHA Central Office 60 E. Van Buren Street Chicago, IL 60605
Navigating Conflict Resolution	Tuesday, May 30th 2017 6PM - 8PM	Sulzer Regional Library 4455 N. Lincoln Avenue Chicago, IL 60625
Evictions & HCVP Enforcement	Wednesday, June 7th 2017 4PM - 6PM	Hayes Family Investment Center 4859 S. Wabash Avenue Chicago, IL 60615
How HCVP Participant Changes Can Impact Tenancy	Thursday, June 22nd 2017 2PM - 4PM	CHA Central Office 60 E. Van Buren Street Chicago, IL 60605
Housing Quality Standards (HQS) 101	Tuesday, June 27th 2017 6PM - 8PM	Hayes Family Investment Center 4859 S. Wabash Avenue Chicago, IL 60615
Proactive Property Management: Screening Prospective Tenants	Thursday, June 29th 2017 6PM - 8PM	Hayes Family Investment Center 4859 S. Wabash Avenue Chicago, IL 60615

Upcoming Owner Briefings

Afternoon Briefings (2PM - 4PM) Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center 4859 S. Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60615	
Thursday, May 11th 2017	Thursday, June 1st 2017
Thursday, July 13th 2017	Thursday, August 3rd 2017
Evening Briefings (6PM - 8PM) CHA Central Office, 9th Floor 60 E. Van Buren St, Chicago, IL 60605	
Wednesday, May 17th 2017	Thursday, June 15th 2017
Thursday, July 20th 2017	Thursday, August 17th 2017
Sesiones informativas en español (2PM - 4PM) Oficina central de CHA, Piso 9 60 E. Van Buren St, Chicago, IL 60605	Logan Square Briefings (2PM - 4PM) Wintrust Bank 2814 W, Fullerton Ave, Chicago, IL 60647
jueves, el 29 de junio de 2017	Tuesday, May 16th 2017
jueves, el 30 de noviembre de 2017	Tuesday, October 17th 2017

Register to attend a workshop or briefing online at <http://CHA-HCEvents.eventbrite.com/>