



## Message From the CEO



Greetings,

Summer is always a busy time for all of us and this year, there are many opportunities at hand to help you stay up to date and be the best property owner you can be.

I had the chance to address a gathering of the Chicagoland Apartment Association recently and met with many property owners, managers and their representatives. It provided a good chance for me to listen to the issues and concerns as

well as highlight the successes of property owners. I am always pleased when I am able to talk directly to our partners.

As property owners who serve CHA voucher holders, you have formed a partnership with CHA through your HAP Contract. Like all of the partnerships at CHA, I view this as a valuable and important part of our mission to provide quality, affordable housing.

CHA remains committed to helping low-income Chicagoans find the best housing choice and opportunity for themselves and their families, and our efforts have been a success. Today, CHA voucher holders live in all 77 communities of the city of Chicago, a fact of which I am very proud. We will continue to look for ways to expand housing opportunities and, with your support and participation, we can achieve positive outcomes.

In this issue of Owner News, you will find information on rent determination, recent HCV Program policy changes and inspection procedures, and the importance of fraud prevention. CHA continues to promote and protect the integrity of the HCV Program by preventing fraud and you play an important role in that ongoing effort.

As always, CHA is pleased to provide a variety of workshops to keep you up to date on all of the program rules and policies as well as offer helpful information to support you as a well-informed property owner. Don't forget to register for the Owner Symposium, which is set for Saturday, September 30 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

As we move through summer, I also hope you will take time to enjoy the many opportunities our city has to offer in summer — the beautiful lakefront, our parks, free neighborhood festivals and more. Here's to a safe, happy and productive summer!

Regards,



Eugene Jones, Jr.  
CEO, Chicago Housing Authority

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# How your rent was determined

The GoSection8 database helps your housing authority determine if the rent is reasonable. If you don't think you are getting a fair rent for your unit/s, **submit your own comparables to the GoSection8 database.**

## Rent is determined by using similar nearby comparables

Follow these guidelines to help your housing authority consider your rentals:



**Similar Location.** In urban areas, the best comparables are usually within 1/4 - 1/2 a mile of your own.



**Similar Property Size.** Good comparables have similar square footage, and numbers of bedrooms and bathrooms.



**Similar Amenities.** Good comparables have similar amenities, like free parking or paid utilities.



**Credibility.** Good comparables should be recently active or rented, and reflective of the market.



**Signed lease and/or tenant contact info.** If you are unable to provide a lease agreement of the comparable unit and/or the tenant's contact info, please do not submit it as a comparable.

## FAQ



**What if my comparable doesn't follow these tips?** Another comparable may be chosen in its place.



**How many can I submit?** Submit as many as you like, especially if they meet the tips provided here.



**Can a housing agency make me provide comparables?** No, but they may suggest you do so to support your requested rent.



**How long do my comparables stay in the system?** One year.



**How does Rent stabilization affect the GoSection8 valuation report?** Rent stabilization is a mechanism used by the government to control rent amounts. Rent stabilization has no effect on the GoSection8 valuation report.



**GoSection8**  
hasupport@gosection8.com  
(561)362-1099

**Disclaimer:** Adding a comparable to theGoSection8 database does not guarantee that the comparable will be used.

## How Your Rent Was Determined

When making a rent offer, HUD regulations require that the amount is supported by the market. The rental value of the unit is determined by examining comparable units using location, property size, and structure type.

In order to accurately reflect the market, CHA uses comparables that are closest to the mean. In many cases, there could be similar units that support a higher rent amount, although if they are outliers, CHA most likely won't use them.

GoSection8.com, the vendor that generates our comparables, uses Similarity and Credibility to rate each potential unit and determine the appropriate ones to use for rent reasonableness.

Similarity takes into account the various characteristics of the comparable unit in relation to the subject unit. For example, how do they match up in similarity with number of bedrooms/bathrooms, square footage, as well as different amenities.

Credibility ratings are unit to market comparisons. For example, how does the rental price for a specific comparable match up to other units within a neighborhood.

Owners who are not satisfied with the offer they received can submit their own comparables, however there is no guarantee that it will change the initial offer.

To submit comparables, please visit **www.gosection8.com**, and sign in to your account. From your dashboard, click the 'ADD NEW COMPARABLE' button in the left-hand menu, then click 'START COMPARABLES PROCESS'. You will be prompted to enter information about the comparable such as address, ZIP code and rent amount.

Remember, all comparables must be market-rate units and must not currently house tenants receiving any form of government assistance. CHA may require further documentation to confirm that the comparable rent amount is true and accurate.



2017  
**Owner**  
**SYMPOSIUM**  
 Saturday, September 30 | Hyatt Regency Chicago

*The premier event for Chicago property owners, managers, and real estate investors*

*Hot topic sessions and panel discussions on...*

**Fair Housing | Property Management | Inspections | Evictions  
 Rent Determination | Tax Savings | and more!**

*Bonus features include:*

**Plated luncheon and keynote presentation | 10,000 square-foot exhibit hall  
 Networking with over 1,000 industry professionals**

*Hosted by the Chicago Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program,  
 in support of safe, affordable housing and strong, healthy neighborhoods in Chicago*

*For more information and to register, please visit:*

**WWW.CHAOWNERSYMPOSIUM.ORG**

## Protecting HCV Program Integrity By: Jacqueline Hawkins, Owner Services

***“CHA remains committed to preventing and stopping fraud and unethical behavior, and has improved the internal audit department to ensure that there is greater oversight of CHA operations.” — CHA CEO Eugene Jones, Jr.***

While it is often the perception of the public that fraudulent activities occur predominantly on the participant side of the HCV Program, CHA has recently noticed an acceleration of this type of behavior from property owners and managers that is evening the score.

Those receiving housing assistance through the HCV Program are required to report any changes that would impact their subsidy, such as a change in family composition, income or deductible expenses. Failure to report this information to CHA accurately and within a specified time frame is considered a breach of the HCV Family Obligations — the contract between HCV participants and CHA.

By the same token, property owners or managers found to be submitting false information, falsifying documents, withholding information or manipulating contractual agreements are in violation of the HAP Contract and may be removed from the Program.

Fraudulent behavior on the part of a property owner or manager includes, but is not limited to:

- Forging a HCV participant’s signature to receive Housing Assistance Payments
- Collecting side payments from HCV participants\*
- Renewing leases or extending lease terms without the knowledge or written consent of the HCV participant
- Allowing individuals not listed on the voucher to reside in the unit on a permanent basis\*
- Not reporting the departure\* or passing of HCV participants residing in their units, even if personal belongings still remain in the unit

*\*In these situations, the HCV participant is also in violation of their contract with CHA. However, a participant’s liability does not exempt a property owner or manager from enforcement actions as part of the overall investigation.*

Property owners or managers who are concerned about timely receipt of their HAP, unauthorized occupants, or the unexpected departure of a HCV participant should contact CHA to document the issue and potentially initiate enforcement actions.

### Request for Housing Assistance Payment Release

CHA understands that securing proper documentation from a tenant can be challenging, especially during the moves process. To improve processing of payments on hold due to a move, CHA has implemented the “Request for Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Release” form. While this form must still be physically signed by the head of household and submitted monthly until the move is either complete or cancelled, it is designed to alleviate the stress of drafting a self-certified letter.

The “Request for HAP Release” form can be found by visiting [thecha.org/documents](http://thecha.org/documents) and searching for the keyword “Release”. Once complete, this form can be scanned and emailed to [hcv@thecha.org](mailto:hcv@thecha.org). HCV participants can also walk in to their servicing office to complete and submit the document.

Deliberate defrauding of federally funded programs, such as the HCV Program, is not taken lightly. Each and every case will be thoroughly investigated and violations will result in contract termination, debarment, and prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.

Your support in maintaining the integrity of the HCV Program and all federally funded programs is greatly appreciated. If you are aware of any evidence indicating that a HCV property owner, manager or HCV participant is engaging in fraudulent behavior, please contact CHA immediately to file a complaint.

### Improving Properties Initiative & Fraud Hotline

**312-786-3135 or 800-533-0441**

[hcvipi@thecha.org](mailto:hcvipi@thecha.org)

## HCV Program Reminders and Updates

### Tax Savings Program

Under state law, Illinois property owners who rent to participants in the Housing Choice Voucher Program may receive property tax abatement ("tax savings") in an amount up to 19% of a property's Equalized Assessed Value (EAV). The actual amount will depend upon tax rates, the state equalizer, EAV and the number of qualified units rented to HCV Program participants.

For eligibility information and application, please visit: [www.thecha.org/landlords/leasing-with-hcv](http://www.thecha.org/landlords/leasing-with-hcv) and scroll to the bottom of the page.

### Landlord Incentive Payments

In order to provide an incentive for property owners to rent units to CHA voucher holders in "Opportunity Areas," the Chicago Housing Authority has implemented a program that provides owners an additional lump sum payment equal to the monthly contract rent for every new unit leased to a voucher holder after June 1, 2017 in these designated areas. Owners are not eligible for this payment if the voucher holder moved into the Opportunity Area unit prior to the implementation of this program.

Opportunity Areas are census tracts with a poverty rate of less than 20% and low concentration of subsidized housing.

For more information on this initiative, please see our [Frequently Asked Questions Flyer](#) by visiting [www.thecha.org/landlords/leasing-with-hcv](http://www.thecha.org/landlords/leasing-with-hcv).

### Modified Owner Suspension Policy

Effective May 1, 2017, if a property owner meets the following thresholds, they will be issued a formal warning letter and will be required to attend an upcoming CHA-HQS Training.

- For smaller owners (20 units or less in HCV), two or more HAP Contracts were terminated due to Housing Quality Standards (HQS) violations within a 12-month period; or
- For larger owners (21 units or more), 10% or more of their HAP Contracts were terminated due to HQS violations within a 12-month period.

If after receiving this letter another HAP Contract is terminated due to HQS violations within the next 12 months, the property owner will not be allowed to enter into any new HAP Contracts for one year.

### Monthly HAP Certification

Property owners are reminded that monthly receipt and acceptance of your Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) certifies all terms and conditions of the HAP Contract (Section 8. Owner Certification).

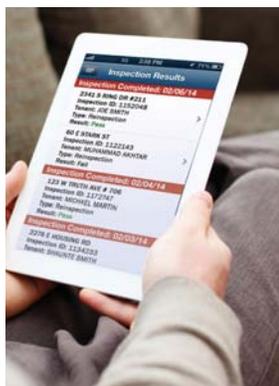
### Timely Document Submission

Timely and complete submission of requested documents is vital to processing moves, changes of ownership/management, enforcement cases, and inspection disputes. Property owners are advised that failure to return requested paperwork within the designated time frame will lead to transaction cancellations and/or enforcement actions.

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](http://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](http://www.chainspections.org).



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 800-544-7139 or send us an email at: [fraud@thecha.org](mailto:fraud@thecha.org).



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

## **HUD-VASH HOUSING FAIR**

**Every Friday, 1:00-2:30 PM**

***Jesse Brown VAMC – Prescription Conference Room  
820 S. Damen Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Damen Pavilion***

**- PARKING WILL BE VALIDATED -**

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

## Inspections Reminders and Updates

### Transferring Initial Inspection Results

As of June 2017, in cases where an Initial Inspection passes, but the voucher holder does not move into the unit, the owner may use that passed inspection for another voucher family, if the subsequent RTA is submitted within 30 days of the inspection pass date.

However, this cannot be done if the original inspection was done for a family who did not have a child under the age of six residing in the unit and the subsequent family does.

### Disputing Inspection Results

Did you know that inspection results can be disputed? If you believe that the results of your inspection are incorrect, you can submit a dispute request within five business days of the inspection date.

To dispute inspection results, please visit the Owner Portal. Under the 'INSPECTIONS' menu, select 'INSPECTION TRANSACTIONS'. Select the last radio button in the list, 'DISPUTE INSPECTION RESULTS'. A table will appear with your recent inspections — click on the inspection you wish to dispute to open the inspection record table. Each fail item for that inspection will have a dropdown menu on the far-right side of the table. For each fail item, you may select one of the three dispute options:

- Not HQS Deficiency
- Incorrect Responsibility
- No Access to Deficiency

You can dispute any fail item, but you will be asked to explain your reason for the dispute. Photos to support your case may also be uploaded with the request. Some fail items will require additional documentation as part of the dispute request.

An Inspections Department supervisor will review the dispute and respond to you with a response via email within 3-5 business days.

Don't have an Owner Portal account?  
 Contact the CHA Inspections Call Center!  
 Phone: 312-935-2600  
 Email: [hcvp inspections@thecha.org](mailto:hcvp inspections@thecha.org)

## Renting to a Relative?

It is a violation of the HCV Family Obligations for a HCV participant to rent a unit that is owned or managed by a relative, such as a spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless a reasonable accommodation has been requested from CHA and approved.

If CHA identifies a match in certain information between a property owner and participant at the time of a move or a change of ownership/management, CHA will require both the participant and the property owner/manager to certify that they are not related before moving forward with the move or change of ownership/management. Violation(s) will be investigated as fraud and CHA may pursue enforcement action against both the property owner and participant.

A HCV participant may only lease a unit owned by a relative if a reasonable accommodation is requested and approved by CHA *prior to the move or change of ownership/management*. When applying, the participant must describe why renting from a relative will assist in managing his/her disability. Remember, even if the accommodation is granted, that same relative may not actually live in the subsidized unit.



**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
<b>HCVP Contract Rent Determination</b>	Tuesday, August 8, 2017 3PM - 5PM	Austin-Irving Branch Library 6100 W. Irving Park Road Chicago, IL 60634
<b>Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections 101</b>	Tuesday, August 22, 2017 2PM - 4PM	Hayes Family Investment Center 4859 S. Wabash Avenue Chicago, IL 60615
<b>City Partnerships and the Improving Properties Initiative</b>	Thursday, August 24, 2017 6PM - 8PM	Beverly Branch Library 1962 W. 95th Street Chicago, IL 60643
<b>Property Damage Prevention and Clean-Up</b>	Wednesday, September 6, 2017 4PM - 6PM	Bucktown-Wicker Park Library 1701 N. Milwaukee Avenue Chicago, IL 60647
<b>Property Management Business Basics</b>	Wednesday, September 13, 2017 6PM - 8PM	Hayes Family Investment Center 4859 S. Wabash Avenue Chicago, IL 60615
<b>CHA Owner Symposium</b>	Saturday, September 30 2017 7:30AM - 3PM	Hyatt Regency Chicago 151 E. Upper Wacker Drive Chicago, IL 60601

## Upcoming Owner Briefings

<b>Afternoon Briefings (2PM - 4PM)</b> Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center 4859 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60615	
Thursday, August 3, 2017	Thursday, September 7, 2017
Thursday, October 5, 2017	Thursday, November 2, 2017
<b>Evening Briefings (6PM - 8PM)</b> CHA Central Office, 9th Floor 60 E. Van Buren St., Chicago, IL 60605	
Thursday, August 17, 2017	Thursday, September 21, 2017
Thursday, October 19, 2017	Thursday, November 16, 2017
<b>Sesiones informativas en español (2PM - 4PM)</b> Oficina central de CHA, Piso 9 60 E. Van Buren St., Chicago, IL 60605	<b>Logan Square Briefings (2PM - 4PM)</b> Wintrust Bank 2814 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60647
jueves, el 30 de noviembre de 2017	Tuesday, October 17, 2017

Register to attend a workshop or briefing online at [CHA-HCVevents.eventbrite.com](http://CHA-HCVevents.eventbrite.com).