

News Update

Message from the Director

As 2012 begins, I want to take the opportunity to thank all of the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Participants and Landlords for working with the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) throughout a year of change and challenges. While we will continue to employ technological innovation to serve our stakeholders in the future, we know from inquiries coming into our on-line portals and phone lines that information about our basic procedures need to be revisited.

This newsletter highlights a couple of key processes for the HCVP. There is a review of the key criteria required to prepare a unit for an initial inspection, as well as the need to always establish rent reasonableness for a new contract rent.

We also address a difficult subject: evictions. Unfortunately, some landlord/tenant relationships do not work out. If ending that relationship involves an eviction, the landlord must follow the law, but also notify the HCVP.

This month, we also feature our Family Self-Sufficiency Program, designed to assist HCVP participants achieve economic self-sufficiency and be rewarded financially in the process. You will be seeing more about the Program as the year progresses, but this issue will introduce our new dynamic FSS team.

Please take some time to read through the entire newsletter, and let us know if you would like information published about any other topics in future issues. Landlords should send inquiries and suggestions through the Landlord Portal at www.cmha.net/LLportal, and applicants and participants can do so through the Applicant/Participant Portal at www.cmha.net/apportal.

May you have a prosperous New Year!

Initial Inspections

Prior to signing a Housing Assistance Payment contract, each property must pass an HCVP inspection. Owners should be aware that weather deferrals or conditional approvals cannot be issued for new contracts. The HCVP is not permitted to make exceptions to this process.

Owners should also ensure the following when preparing for an HCVP initial inspection:

- All utilities must be on and operable.
- All furniture should be removed from the unit.
- Owner-provided appliances must be properly installed and operable.
- The unit must be in compliance with city codes.
- All owners should pre-inspect their unit with the information available at www.cmha.net/hcvp/hqsinspectionchecklist.

Remember, units proposed for new contracts must be in compliance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS), within 2 inspections.



from left to right: Lita Prestamo, Tara Lamont, Noelle Minter, Siobhan Dupree

CMHA Welcomes New FSS team

The new Family Self-Sufficiency team is thrilled to be of assistance to HCVP families looking to achieve their goals for success. To learn more about how our new and improved resources can benefit you and your family please contact Tara Lamont, FSS Manager, at lamontt@cmha.net or 216-271-2438 or visit www.cmha.net/apportal.

Requesting a Rent Increase

Federal regulations require that any new contract rents meet the criteria for rent reasonableness. They must be consistent with market rents for other comparable unsubsidized units in the neighborhood. They cannot be higher.

Landlords who are requesting a rent increase should complete the form available at <http://www.cmha.net/hcvp/docs/rentincreaserequestform.pdf>. Before submitting the completed form, please read the instructions and qualifications thoroughly. Keep in mind that if the required rent reasonable test shows comparable units are commanding market rents that are lower than the unit's current rent, the HCVP will be required to **reduce** the contract rent.

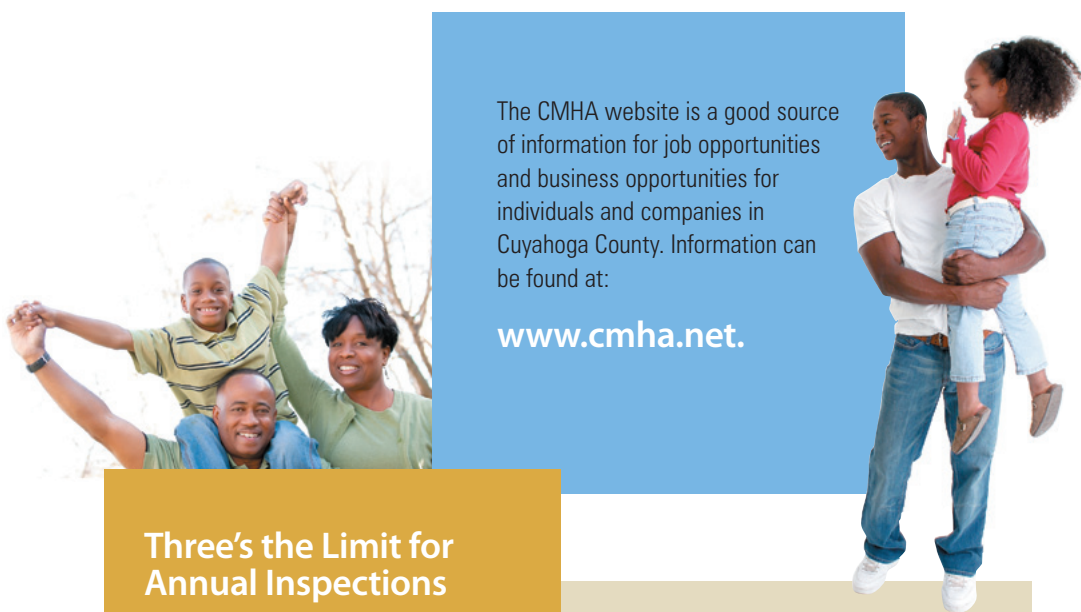
Eviction Process

THE HCVP DOES NOT ASSIST WITH THE EVICTION PROCESS BETWEEN THE TENANT AND THEIR LANDLORD.

Landlords can be better prepared for an eviction by:

- Understanding Ohio's Landlord Tenant Laws
- Keeping copies of the lease, receipts, repair requests, pictures, and notices
- Issuing a receipt for payments
- Serving legally required notices

Be sure to notify the HCVP of eviction proceedings to begin the HAP holding process. At the conclusion of the court proceedings, provide the HCVP with pictures, supporting documents, and the final judgment. Please note that the HCVP does not conduct move-out inspections, it is a good idea to include maintenance inspection provisions in your lease agreement and conduct a final walk through with the tenant.



The CMHA website is a good source of information for job opportunities and business opportunities for individuals and companies in Cuyahoga County. Information can be found at:

www.cmha.net.

Three's the Limit for Annual Inspections

Each contracted unit is entitled to up to three chances to pass an annual HQS inspection, including when no one is at the unit. Effective January 3, 2011, no additional chances (four or more) will be approved. Accommodating additional inspections can affect the HCVP's ability to conduct timely, thorough inspections for other owners and participants.

Reminder: CMHA HCVP Administrative Plan

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) operates under federal regulations and an Administrative Plan annually authorized by the CMHA Board of Commissioners. Please review the 2012 changes and updates to the Administrative Plan on the CMHA website at www.cmha.net.

Calendar of Events

All sessions held at 8120 Kinsman Rd, Cleveland, OH 44104
Please arrive on time;
late arrivals will not be accommodated.

Mover's Session Schedule

(Bring current photo ID)
Tuesdays and Thursdays
10:00 am to Noon and 3:00 to 5:00pm.

Saturdays Mover's Session:

10:00 am to Noon
January 21st, February 11th, March 10th

Landlord Briefings

(Required for new landlords before signing an HCVP contract, attendance is limited to 45 persons per Briefing)

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|------------------------|----------------|
| Friday, January 6 | 3:00-4:30 pm |
| Saturday, January 21* | 10:00-11:30 am |
| Friday, January 27 | 8:30-10:00 am |
| Tuesday, January 31 | 12:00-1:30 pm |
| Friday, February 10 | 3:00-4:30 pm |
| Saturday, February 18* | 10:00-11:30 am |
| Friday, February 24 | 8:30-10:00 am |
| Tuesday, February 28 | 12:00-1:30 pm |
| Thursday, March 8 | 12:00-1:30 pm |
| Friday, March 16 | 8:30-10:00 am |
| Saturday, March 24* | 10:00-11:30 am |
| Monday, March 26 | 3:00-4:30 pm |

*Reservations are required for Saturday classes only, contact Samantha Stewart, 216.271.2442 or stewarts@cmha.net to pre-register.

Landlord Briefings on the Road at Cuyahoga County Libraries:

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| Tuesday, January 17 | Warrensville Heights | 22035 Clarkwood |
| Tuesday, February 17 | Parma-Ridge | 5850 Ridge Rd |
| Monday, March 5 | Mayfield Heights | 6080 Wilson Mills Rd |

All off-site Landlord Briefings are from noon to 1:30pm. No reservations required

Contract Signing Sessions:

After accepting the final rent offer, the Contract Specialist will advise a landlord of the date, time, and location to sign the Contract. (Please bring a current photo ID and two copies of the signed lease agreement).



Board Of Commissioners: Ronald V. Johnson Jr., Chairman; Doris V. Jones, Vice-Chairperson; Robert E. Davis, Ronnie A. Dunn, Ph.D., Natoya Walker Minor
Acting Chief Executive Officer: Jeffrey K. Patterson
HCVP Director: Priscilla Pointer-Hicks
Housing Choice Voucher Program: (216) 431-1471 www.cmha.net

CMHA's Housing Choice Voucher Program provides reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities so they may participate in our programs, services and activities. If you need an accommodation, including auxiliary aids and/or services, please contact Customer Service at (216) 431-1471 (voice) or 1-800-750-0750 (Ohio Relay Service).