

Message from the Director

Most of the information in this quarter's newsletter may seem to be directed to program participants. Landlords, however, are also encouraged to carefully read through all the articles for important program reminders.

As I write this message, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) HCVP has just concluded its annual Landlord Conference. (Photos of conference highlights can be viewed on the HCVP page at www.cmha.net.)

Those in attendance reported overwhelming satisfaction with their investment in going to the conference. Both property owners and managers noted the value of learning about setting market rents, determining contract rents, equal housing

practices, municipal nuisance ordinances, legal actions available for landlords, obtaining rent increases, lead safe housing and networking.

The only disappointment related to the conference is that more property owners and managers could have attended. As we develop our seminar plans for 2009, consider letting the HCVP know your suggestions, including times, locations, topics and formats. Submit your ideas by e-mail to nogad@cmha.net with the subject line, "HCVP Seminar Suggestions." In the meantime, from all of us at the HCVP, have a great summer!

■ **Read through this issue carefully!**



Vicious Dogs

Attention has recently been given in the news to the misbehavior of pets. Some municipalities are revamping pet and vicious animal ordinances, while others are renewing the enforcement of laws that are already on their books.

Keep in mind that both landlords and their tenants have responsibilities for maintaining the peaceful enjoyment of the neighborhood. Failure to do so because of a threatening pet may impact continued assistance by the HCVP.

In addition, pets must always be secured during an inspection by the HCVP. HCVP inspectors are not required to enter a unit if an animal is threatening, subsequently resulting in a failed inspection.

Moving Guidelines for Voucher Holders

With the beautiful weather that comes during the summer, it is not surprising that many renters consider moving to another apartment or house at this time of year. There are several issues to keep in mind if moving is seriously considered as an option:

- Voucher holders must reside in their current unit for 12 months before moving. The initial Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract is for this period of time. Even if the tenant and landlord would agree to end the lease before the first year is completed, **the HCVP will not approve the move.**
- Voucher holders who have been in their current unit for 12 months or more and signed another lease for an extended period of time, must obtain landlord approval to end the lease before submitting a new RFTA.
- Voucher holders who have been in their current unit for 12 months or more must attend a movers session and obtain moving papers from the HCVP.

- Potential landlords can obtain contact information for the current and previous landlords from the HCVP in order to screen movers, upon request.
- Once a new unit is identified and a move-in date is determined, participants should give their current landlord 30 days notice.
- Participants should move into their new unit, vacating the old one as close to the new move-in date as possible. Failure to do so, could result in former landlords taking court action for an additional month's rent (including both the HAP and tenant portion) if participants (or their personal belongings) remain in the former unit after the HAP contract has ended.
- The security deposit is not the same as the last month's rent. Be sure to pay the rent, and expect to receive a refund of the security deposit after moving out. If damages other than normal wear and tear are documented by the landlord, the charges can be deducted from the refund. In this case, the landlord should send an itemized list of those charges to the tenant.

Let Your Voice be Heard!

Don't forget to register to vote in this fall's general election, November 4, 2008! Individuals who have moved should report their new addresses to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections to minimize confusion or complications on election day.

Voter Registration Cards can be obtained from the Board of Elections web site (www.boe.cuyahogacounty.us), by calling 216 443-3298 or at the Board of Elections office at 2925 Euclid Avenue in Cleveland. Voters must be registered 30 days prior to the election.





The wait for service can be lengthy.

Re-exam Walk-in Days Update

Re-exam Walk-in Days are the three days each month made available for those HCVP participants who cannot attend their scheduled re-exam appointment—possibly due to a work schedule, illness or some unforeseeable event. Unfortunately, many participants consider the walk-in days to be just another option, and have become very frustrated when they skipped the scheduled appointment for no good reason.

Here are the facts for Re-exam Walk-in Days:

- Those attending are addressed on a first come, first served basis.
- Only 185 participants can be served in one day, so any participants above this number will be turned away.
- The wait for service can be lengthy.
- There are a limited number of parking spaces at the HCVP office, and parking on the street is subject to ticketing by the Cleveland Police.
- The office is closed between 11:45 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Failure to come-in for a re-exam annually may result in termination from the program and loss of the voucher.

To avoid the anxiety and frustration, **participants are strongly encouraged to attend their scheduled appointment** rather than wait for walk-in days.

What is Needed for an Interim Re-exam?

*"My 19-year old has moved out."
"I've gotten married." "I've gotten divorced."
"I've lost my job." "I've gotten a new job."*

All of these situations, and others, may lead participants to request a review of their household income and the rent amount they must pay their landlord. But these "interim re-exams" require more than just a phone call to the HCVP. If the family composition of a household with a voucher changes, the voucher holder must submit written documentation to verify those changes. It may be a new address for the family member, contact information for the employer or a marriage license or court papers specific to the legal action that has altered the family composition.

Some changes will require the HCVP to complete a third party verification, as well. This step, if necessary, will take additional time, so the results of the interim re-exam may not be available immediately. Participants are urged to remember, however, that the process will be completed faster if correct and complete documentation is provided to the Eligibility Specialist as soon as the request for the re-exam is made.



HQS Violations

Voucher holders and landlords alike are often surprised by notification of a special inspection. In addition to annual inspections, the HCVP will schedule a special inspection as a result of a call from almost anyone. Calls have come in from neighbors, postal workers and utility repair persons. In addition, an HCVP inspector, who notices exterior problems while riding by a unit under contract with the program may initiate a special inspection.

Maintaining Housing Quality Standards is a year-round process. It is not limited to annual inspections alone.

Calendar of Events

ALL SCHEDULED MOVERS' SESSIONS AND LANDLORD BRIEFINGS ARE CONDUCTED AT 3400 HAMILTON AVENUE, ENTRANCE B, CLEVELAND, OH 44114, UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE.

Mover's Session Schedule

(Arrive on time with photo ID; latecomers will not be admitted past the quarter hour.)

Every Tuesday and Thursday
10:00 to 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.

Plus the following Saturdays

10:00 to 11:30 a.m.:

July 12th, August 9th, September 13th

Landlord Briefings

(Required for new landlords before signing an HCVP contract; latecomers will not be admitted.)

Wednesday, July 2 2:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
Sat, July 12 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
Thursday, July 17 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, July 23 2:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
Thursday, July 31 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.
Saturday, Aug. 9 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Aug. 13 2:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
Thursday, Aug. 21 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Aug. 27 2:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 4 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 13 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 17 2:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 25 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.

Contract Signing Sessions

Contract Signing Sessions for Property Owners and Agents will take place 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. in the HCVP Computer Lab (3400 Hamilton Avenue, Entrance B) on the following dates:

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Monday, July 21, 2008

Thursday, August 7, 2008

Wednesday, August 20, 2008

Thursday, September 4, 2008