

## Message from the Director

**S**ummer has arrived, and with it comes the season when we get out in the community, interact more with neighbors, work on property improvements and move to new homes. This edition of the *Housing Choice Voucher Program News Update* addresses many of these seasonal issues. I encourage Program participants and property owners alike to spend a few minutes considering this information, designed to keep our 3-way partnership in good standing.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind property owners of the need to carefully screen prospective tenants. The same thorough consideration of a tenant's credit, criminal and rental history should take place whether the prospect is an unassisted tenant or a participant in the Voucher Program. It is also important to research neighborhood rental rates and to understand that a reasonable rent, as compared with market conditions, and household income are the primary basis for determining the contract rent the HCVP can offer.

In addition, it is the responsibility of owners and renters alike to stay informed of and comply with local ordinances. It is a good idea to visit the local municipal offices to understand community rules and tips for successfully living and operating a business (such as rental property management) in that community.

First and foremost, make sure rental registration and certificate of occupancy rules have been followed. This applies to rental properties in the City of Cleveland, as well as the suburbs. Failure to do so has resulted in some owners losing subsidy when their Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) was abated. In some instances the HCVP has even cancelled contracts.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) HCVP has committed 25 of our vouchers to Ohio's HOME Choice Program. This will allow residents of nursing homes, who are able to live independently but have not moved out of these institutions for lack of affordable housing, to move back into the community.

On behalf of the entire staff at the CMHA HCVP, have a safe, fun and successful summer!



## Participants: What to do when a contract cancels!

**T**he HCVP promptly sends out alerts to program participants when the HAP Contract for their unit is cancelled. The alert informs the participant to come in as soon as possible to a Movers Session.

When the movers packet and voucher are received it is critical that the participant immediately look for a new housing unit. Participants can only be without a contract for 120 days. If they have not moved into a unit under a new contract before that deadline, they will be withdrawn from the program and lose their voucher.

Don't put a voucher and affordable housing at risk. Participants must act fast to find new housing once the contract on the current unit is cancelled.

## New HCVP Office Hours Now in Effect

Monday through Friday:  
8:00 – 11:45 a.m. and 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.  
Preliminary rent determinations processed in the morning until 11:30 a.m.  
Preliminary rent determinations processed in the afternoon until 4:00 p.m.

Saturday:  
8:00 – 11:45 a.m. and 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.  
(by appointment only for Client Re-exams; Movers Sessions and Landlord Briefings as published)

The building is closed Monday through Saturday, 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and all day on Sundays and holidays.

## Reminders for Movers:

- HCVP Participants can move after one year in accordance with the terms of their lease and if all household members over the age of 18 pass a criminal background check. Participants must also have completed their current re-exam.
- Movers must give their current landlords 30-days notice of their intention to move. If it seems to be taking longer to find or process the new unit, participants should keep their landlords informed.
- Movers must move out of their old unit on a timely basis in accordance with the move-in date in the new lease. Participants who stay or leave personal belongings in their old unit past the end of the month of the move-in date are responsible for paying the full contract rent for the original unit to that owner.



## Avoiding Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are becoming an increasing problem within residences of all kinds. Bed bugs are small wingless insects that feed on warm-blooded animals. Favored hiding sites include the bed frame, mattress, and box spring. Because bed bugs readily hide in small crevices, it is possible to transport them with luggage, furniture, clothing, pillows, boxes, or other objects when moving between apartments, homes, and hotels. Individuals and families who are traveling should be careful to inspect their belongings to avoid bringing bed bugs into their homes.

HCVP participants should watch for signs of bed bugs and their eggs. If bed bugs appear to be present, residents should contact their landlord so the owner can call a licensed pest control expert. This expert can advise the best course of action and help design a plan to combat the problem.

CMHA has posted an informational flyer about bed bugs on its website at [www.cmha.net](http://www.cmha.net). Please log on for more information

## Calendar of Events

**Please arrive on time; latecomers will not be admitted.**

### Mover's Session Schedule

(Bring current photo ID)  
Every Tuesday and Thursday  
10:00 to Noon and 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.  
Plus the following Saturdays  
10:00 to Noon:  
July 11, August 8, September 12

### Landlord Briefings

(Required for new landlords before signing an HCVP contract; attendance is limited to 35 persons per Briefing)

Monday July 6.....	3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday, July 15.....	8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
Saturday, July 25.....	10:00 – 11:30 a.m.*
Wednesday, July 29.....	Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Monday, August 3.....	3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
Saturday, August 15.....	10:00 – 11:30 a.m.*
Friday, August 21.....	8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
Friday, August 31.....	Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Friday, September 11.....	3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
Friday, September 18.....	8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
Saturday, September 26.....	10:00 – 11:30 a.m.*
Wednesday, Sept. 30.....	Noon – 1:30 p.m.

\*Reservations are required for Saturday sessions: call 216-426-2808 or e-mail [daughert@cmha.net](mailto:daughert@cmha.net).

### Landlord Briefings on the Road at Cuyahoga County Libraries:

July 16  
in North Olmsted, 27403 Lorain Road at Noon  
August 13  
in Gates Mills, 1491 Chagrin River Road at Noon  
September 25  
in Garfield Heights, 5409 Turney Road at Noon

### Contract Signing Sessions

(Bring current photo ID)  
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:

July 8 and 20, 2009  
August 5 and 19, 2009  
September 2 and 21, 2009



## Don't Let Vicious Animals Jeopardize the HAP Contract and Voucher

**T**he Annual inspection of units under contract with the HCVP is a federal requirement. Owners and participants share the responsibility of ensuring that the HCVP Inspector can enter the housing unit without obstacles when the annual inspection is scheduled.

**An individual over the age of 18 must be present at the housing unit so that the inspector may enter and inspect the entire living area.** The inspector must also have access to all common areas in multi-family properties, as well as the exterior grounds.

**Any animals on the premises must be restrained.** If they present any obstacle in terms of menacing or vicious behavior or if the only restraint used prohibits inspection

of the entire unit, the participant will be responsible for the unit failing the inspection. If the HCVP Inspector cannot gain access to the unit due to a vicious animal within the three allotted inspection dates, the participant will be proposed for termination from the HCVP and lose the voucher for failing to comply with program rules.

Also, keep in mind that the presence of any animals must comply with municipal ordinances. If the municipality advises the HCVP of the presence of any animal in violation of local codes, warnings, which could lead to termination, may be issued.

It is in the best interest of owners and participants to make sure that their rental unit can be inspected completely.