

The Housing Choice Voucher Program

News Update



Message from the Director

This issue of the Housing Choice Voucher Program's (HCVP) quarterly newsletter really puts the "News" in "News Update."

I am very pleased to announce the launch of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority HCVP Landlord Portal. This tool is now available on the CMHA website (www.cmha.net), and it is designed to provide all rental property owners with information faster and at the time of day that is most convenient for them—particularly outside of regular office hours.

Through the Portal, landlords can obtain detailed information regarding Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) for the last year, 1099 information for the last three years, and inspection results, with details about any failed items. It also provides easy access to contact the HCVP, eliminating the need to allocate time from business hours to make phone calls to the Program office.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the 42 property owners and managers who have participated in the HCVP Landlord Portal Pilot. They attended an introductory demo in August and have helped test out the site in the intervening weeks. Through their helpful comments, we have been able to make some simple enhancements, as well as set up a plan to add other helpful information to the Portal in the future.

Property Owners and HCVP Participants, alike, should regularly check the HCVP web page for new and helpful information. Recent developments include a new, updated Landlord Manual, more detailed information on the moving process and helpful community resources.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Please spend some time exploring the HCVP web page, as well as the other pages on the CMHA website. It will be well worth your time. And have a great Autumn here in Northeast Ohio!

Introducing the CMHA HCVP Landlord Portal

We all agree time is money, and the ability to choose how and when to address business matters is crucial to maximizing revenues in the 21st Century. In response, the CMHA HCVP is pleased to launch a new internet tool for property owners: A Landlord Portal that will make it possible to obtain information 24-hours a day about rental units under a HAP contract.

Effective, October 1, 2009, owners can access all the details of their current year's payments from the HCVP; 1099 information for the last three years, and the results of past inspections. Owners can also use the Portal to request account information changes and contact the Program with questions, requests or suggestions.

stating, "This is the best innovation CMHA has made in 10 years." Even more gratifying are the suggestions offered by owners in the pilot about other information they could use to more efficiently manage and operate their rental property.

Already we are planning future upgrades to the Portal to provide even more information—including tenant specific updates—with even greater flexibility. Owners can anticipate that the Portal will be expanded on a regular basis with new features and information.

The key to making the Portal truly valuable will be owner feedback. The HCVP encourages all owners to send comments and suggestions back through the Portal, because communications



Registration is easy, with prompts clearly indicated to help owners through the process. And registration does not require an e-mail address. So whether owners are heavy internet users or they generally shy away from technology, the HCVP Landlord Portal will be easy to use.

Late in August, the HCVP ran a pilot demo and gave a small group of owners the opportunity to "test drive" the Portal. The result has been overwhelmingly positive with one owner

View Details	View Statement	View Inspection	Tenant
			Abram, Edward
			Adams, Deborah
			Adams, Rosemary
			Adon, Glenn

move through the Portal in two directions. And owners' questions, comments or suggestions can be sent any time it is convenient. With the Landlord Portal, the HCVP is effectively open for business 24 hours a day. And all HCVP responses will be sent within 24 hours.

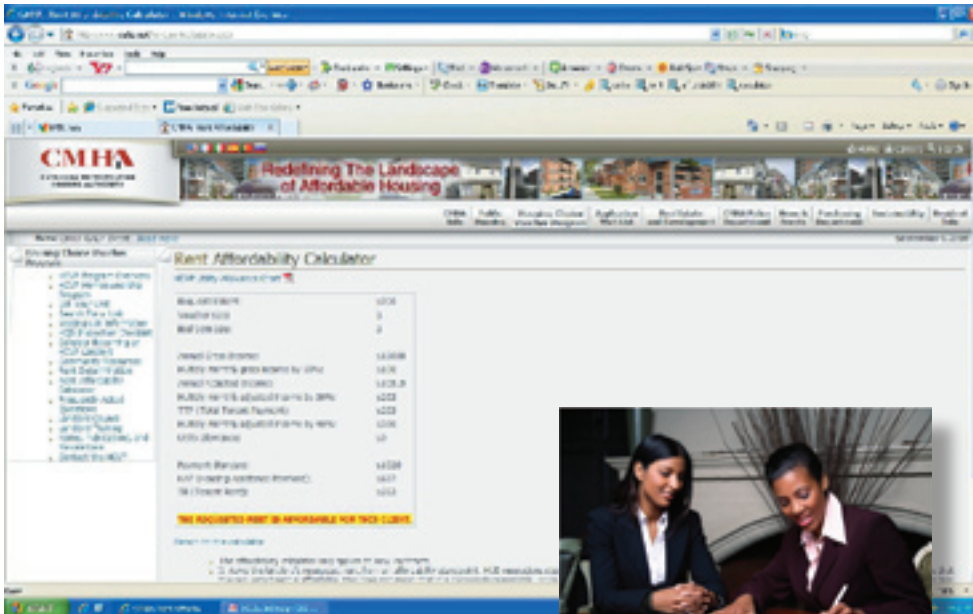
Maximize lease-up rates (and revenues) with the Rent Affordability Calculator

The HCVP web page on the CMHA website is also home to the **Rent Affordability Calculator**, a tool that places time and knowledge in the hands of rental property owners, and can prevent “false starts” and leaving units vacant for unnecessarily long periods of time.

Affordability can be the primary obstacle to approving an owner’s requested rent for a new contract. The rent may be fair, and it may be reasonable. But if the prospective tenant cannot afford it, why waste valuable time to find that out, including the time it takes for a preliminary rent determination and an inspection.

Using the Rent Affordability Calculator, owners are able to determine in less than 5 minutes at their office or home whether the requested rent they want for their unit will be affordable for the family who is interested in living there. If the requested rent is affordable, an RFTA can be completed and submitted to begin the contracting process. But if a unit is not affordable according to the Calculator, the owner can take the time right at the beginning of the process to decide whether a lower rent would be acceptable or the unit should be made available to a different tenant.

While a rent may be affordable, it still must meet Program rules for Fair Market Rents and rent reasonableness before it is approved. But using the Rent Affordability Calculator can help screen tenants for affordability, leading to faster lease-ups and earning the revenue a leased-up unit brings.



Reminder to Property Owners

As 2009 draws to a close, the HCVP encourages all property owners to check-in with Building and/or Housing Departments in the communities where they do business. Many municipalities require annual renewals of rental registration and certificates of occupancy, and local ordinances are different from one community to another.

Failure to comply with local ordinances will be treated as an HQS violation by the HCVP. Failure to comply will jeopardize future HAP. Contact your municipal housing/building office before the start of the new year, and ensure that you are in compliance by the specified deadlines.



Board Of Commissioners: William H. Smith, Chairman; Doris V. Jones, Vice-Chairperson; Robert E. Davis, Ronald V. Johnson, Natoya J. Walker
Chief Executive Officer: George A. Phillips, **HCVP Director,** Priscilla Pointer-Hicks
Housing Choice Voucher Program: 3400 Hamilton Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44114, (216) 431-1471, TTY (216) 426-2903 or (216) 426-2904, 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).

Calendar of Events

(Please arrive on time; latecomers will not be admitted.)

Movers 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:
 October 10, November 14, December 12

Landlord Briefings

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

- Monday, October 5 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
- Monday, October 19 Noon – 1:30 p.m.
- Saturday, October 24 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.*
- Friday, October 30 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
- Saturday, November 7 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.*
- Friday, November 13 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
- Thursday, November 19 Noon – 1:30 p.m.
- Monday, November 30 Noon – 1:30 p.m.
- Saturday, December 5 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.*
- Monday, December 14 Noon – 1:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 23 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, December 30 8:00 – 4:30 p.m.

*Reservations are required for Saturday sessions: call 216-426-2808 or e-mail daughert@cmha.net.

Landlord Briefings on the Road at Cuyahoga County Libraries:

- October 15 in Bay Village, 502 Cahoon Road
- November 17 in Parma, 5850 Ridge Road
- December 17 in Middleburg Hts., 15600 East Bagley

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:

- October 7 and 21, 2009
- November 4 and 18, 2009
- December 4 and 18, 2009