



Going Places Q3 2024

A newsletter for participants in the Chicago Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program



A Note from Chief Cheryl L. Burns



We hope you've had a fun-filled and safe summer. This issue of *Going Places* is all about making sure our HCV participant families know about Operation Warm, changes to the 2024 HCV Administrative Plan, the new Anti-Retaliation Bill in Illinois and how to access and use CHA's RENTCafé.

P.S. If you enjoy this newsletter, there's more! Contact CHA to add your email to your account, and you'll receive the e-newsletter version of *Going Places*, which has all the same information, plus more. Just remember, if possible, the email you put on file should be your own, since CHA also uses it for sensitive account-related information.

Upcoming Webinars

Resources & Support for Domestic Violence Victims Tuesday, October 15 | 1-2:30 p.m.

Join us as we discuss the legal protections that are in place for victims of domestic violence/sexual assault/stalking. This session will also cover how to recognize signs of abuse and best approaches for friends/family looking to safely support victims.

Winter Preparedness

Tuesday, November 12 | 1-2:30 p.m.

Does your winter checklist need some work? Join us to learn tips and tricks for making sure you're healthy and safe this winter. From energy efficiency to mental health, our experts will discuss how to set up both your mind and home for success.

Visit thecha.org/hcvparticipantevents to register!

HCV Administrative Plan Changes

The CHA Board of Commissioners has approved changes to CHA's HCV Administrative Plan, effective August 1, 2024. Below is a summary of the updates:

- The Criminal Background Check lookback period has been reduced to 180 days.
- Applicants denied assistance now have 15 business days to request an Informal Review.
- Additional items have been added to the list of "life-threatening deficiencies" for inspections.

To read the full 2024 HCV Administrative Plan, visit thecha.org/plans-reports-and-policies.

New Anti-Retaliation Bill

In an effort to prohibit retaliatory conduct by landlords, a new piece of legislature called **The Landlord Retaliation Act** has been introduced in Illinois, approved by Governor JB Pritzker and will be effective January 1, 2025. Under this Act, a landlord may not knowingly terminate a tenancy, increase rent, decrease services, bring or threaten to bring a lawsuit against a tenant for possession of the unit, or refuse to renew a lease or tenancy because the tenant has in good faith done any of the following actions:

- Made a request for repairs or a complaint of code violations
- Organized a union or be a member of one
- Testified in an official proceeding
- Sought assistance from elected officials
- Exercised any other right provided by law

To read the bill in its entirety, visit www.ilga.gov and enter HB4768 in the search box.

FAQs: Using CHA's RENTCafé

Are you familiar with RENTCafé? Have you registered your account yet? We know it can sometimes be overwhelming to learn a new online tool but we're here to guide you every step of the way. Check out the answers to some of the most common RENTCafé questions below.

What is RENTCafé?

RENTCafé is a secure online account management tool that allows HCV participants to report changes, view and download Program resources, complete forms, scan or upload documents and submit requests to CHA online. It's available 24/7 so there's no need to come into the office, call the CHA Customer Call Center or send an email! From your RENTCafé dashboard, you can:

- View your family information, such as household members and income affiliated with the account.
- Access HCV Resources and read important news and announcements from CHA.
- View your HQS inspection information, including appointments and high-level results.
- Complete your Re-Examination appointment (when it's time).
- Request an Interim when you experience changes in your household (loss of income, the addition/removal of a household member, etc.).

How do I access RENTCafé?

All you need is a computer, mobile device or tablet that's connected to the internet. RENTCafé is mobile friendly so you'll be able to use the same functions on your phone as you would on a computer.

What do I need to create an account?

First, you'll need a personalized registration code. At CHA, every code starts with **4935-T** followed by the voucher number. So, as an example, if the voucher number is **m123456**, then the personalized registration code would be **4935-Tm123456**.

Second, you'll need to make sure you have a valid, personal email address on file with CHA (*Note:* This will be your RENTCafé user name). Do not use an email address that isn't your own. If you need to change the email address on file, please call the CHA Customer Call Center at **312-935-2600** and update your information BEFORE setting up your RENTCafé account.

How do I create an account?

1. Visit res-par.thecha.org and click Resident Login in the upper right corner.
2. Under the sign in fields, click the red text "Click here to register".
3. Type in your unique registration code (include all letters, hyphens and capitalization). Remember, all CHA codes start with **4935-T** followed by the voucher number (e.g., **4935-Tm123456**)!
4. Type in personal details for the Head of Household (these must match what is on file with CHA).
5. Set your account password, accept the Terms and Conditions, then click the green Register button.

Need help creating your RENTCafé account? Simply scan the QR code to watch a short 3-minute video on how to register. If you still need assistance, contact the CHA Customer Call Center at hcv@thecha.org or **312-935-2600**.



FAQs: Using CHA's RENTCafé (continued from page 2)

If I already have a RENTCafé account, how do I log in?

1. Visit res-par.thecha.org and click Resident Login in the upper right corner.
2. Enter your email address in the User Name field and then your password. If you can't remember your password, click "Forgot password?" and enter your User Name. A temporary password will be sent to your email on file. You will be prompted to change your password once you log in with the temporary password.

How do I complete my Re-Examination appointment using RENTCafé?

- Once logged in to your account, select the 'Applications' menu on your dashboard. From there, the RENTCafé Re-Examination tool will take you through the forms and information needed to complete your online appointment. After completing each section, make sure to select "Save and Continue."
Note: Completing your Re-Examination appointment via RENTCafé requires the same information that you would normally bring to an in-person Re-Examination appointment.
- Don't forget to upload your supporting documentation! If you need to make changes to your account, have the appropriate documents ready such as IDs, Social Security cards, check stubs, benefit letters, etc.

How do I request an Interim Re-examination using RENTCafé?

- Click on the "Interim Request" menu on your RENTCafé dashboard, then select the "Interim Re-Examination Request" button. Follow the steps, fill in the fields and upload documents as needed. Similar to the online Re-Examination appointment process, submitting your Interim request via RENTCafé requires the same information that you would normally provide to CHA when reporting a household change.
- Documentation should be current and dated within 60 days. Check stubs must be consecutive. Any letters must clearly indicate the issuer and beneficiary.

Need help completing your Re-examination appointment or requesting an Interim Re-examination?

Once logged in to RENTCafé, click on the "HCV Resources" menu on your dashboard. Here you'll find several helpful tools including step-by-step instructions on how to complete these items (under Guides). If you still need assistance, please contact the CHA Customer Call Center at hcv@thecha.org or **312-935-2600**.

Health & Wellness Corner: September is National Recovery Month

This national observance was started by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) in 1989 and is held every September to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the nation's strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery in all its forms possible.

Mental health and substance use disorders affect people of all ethnicities, ages, genders, geographic regions and socioeconomic levels. 50.2 million American adults consider themselves to be in recovery from their substance use and/or mental health problems. If you or one of your loved ones are in need of treatment, there are many places in Chicago that provide mental health and substance abuse services, including:

Counseling Speaks LLC | counselingspeaks.com | **331-240-0044**

Gateway Foundation Chicago River North | gatewayfoundation.org | **312-464-9451**

Positive Sobriety Institute | positivesobrietyinstitute.com | **773-352-4560**

Ascension Behavioral Health Services | healthcare.ascension.org/locations/illinois | **847-493-3700**



CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY™

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Going Places

Q3 2024



Brand new winter coats will be distributed to children in CHA Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher households. A service fair with resources and exciting giveaways will also take place.

Saturday, October 26th

UIC Forum
725 W. Roosevelt Rd.



Register Today!

You must pre-register to receive coats.

Registration starts September 3rd.

*Children on CHA leases born on or after 1/1/2010 are eligible; residency will be verified.

Questions? Call (312) 786-3621

This annual event is made possible thanks to our sponsors.

