



# Going Places Q4 2024

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



CHA  
CHICAGO HOUSING  
AUTHORITY

## A Note from Chief Cheryl L. Burns



We hope you've had a wonderful fall. This issue of *Going Places* is all about making sure HCV participant families know about the addition of HCV Resources as well as a News and Announcements section to RENTCafé, the launch of CHA's redesigned website and waitlist application, and tips for protecting your personal data online.

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

### HCV Program FAQs

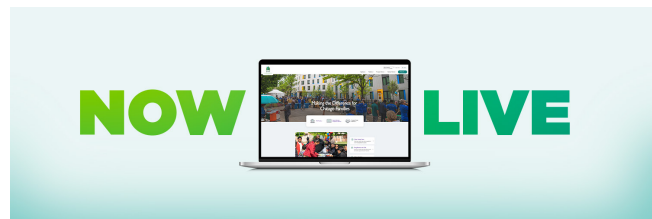
Tuesday, January 28 | 1-2:30 p.m.

Do you have questions about the HCV Program? We've got answers! Whether it's about using CHA's online account management tool, RENTCafé, the moving process, inspections or something else, CHA staff will be on hand to answer the most common questions and concerns regarding the HCV Program.

Have you checked out the **HCV Webinar Library**? Dozens of webinar topics are available on-demand, 24/7, including mental health, homebuying, financial literacy, and more! All you need is a Wi-Fi connected cell phone or computer. Take advantage of all the educational resources available to you today at [gotostage.com/channel/chahcvparticipants/](https://gotostage.com/channel/chahcvparticipants/)

## New CHA Website

**Big news!** CHA's redesigned, mobile friendly website and streamlined waitlist application are now live!



Along with a new look, simplified navigation and an enhanced search experience were added to help you quickly access the information you need to manage your voucher and take advantage of the services and support available, including HCV Program policy information, upcoming events, Resident Services programs and more!

If you haven't done so already, check out the new site today at [thecha.org](https://thecha.org).

## Utility Reimbursement Payments

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) is in the process of changing the provider of the Utility Reimbursement Payment Debit Card Program from KeyBank to U.S. Bank. Beginning January 1, 2025, HCV participants who receive Utility Reimbursement Payments will now have their deposits issued to a new prepaid Visa® debit card from U.S. Bank. Be on the lookout for a communication from CHA as well as your new debit card.

**Note:** If you currently have a KeyBank Card, you will still have access to your existing debit card funds until the balance reaches zero. However, no further payments will be issued to that card after December 2024.

## RENTCafé: Your One-Stop Shop for HCV Account Management

We are excited to announce that all CHA account information, including relevant news and helpful resources for participant families, is now accessible via **RENTCafé**. Not only can you use CHA’s online account management tool to complete your Re-Examination Appointment or report a household change, but you can also use it to view high-level inspection results and upcoming appointments, download HCV Program forms and documents, read current and prior issues of *Going Places*, watch online tutorials and more. 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!

### Important Notice

As a result of this update to CHA’s RENTCafé, the HCV Participant Portal and CHA Inspections Portal will no longer be available for use beginning December 16, 2024.

**Not registered for a RENTCafé account yet?** It’s easy! Just make sure to register before December 16 for uninterrupted access to your CHA account information!

To get started, visit [res-par.thecha.org](https://res-par.thecha.org) and click ‘Resident Login’ in the upper right corner. Then, select ‘Click here to register’ and you’ll be prompted to enter a personalized registration code. *Reminder:* Every code at CHA starts with **4935-T** followed by the voucher number. So, if the voucher number is **m123456**, then the personalized registration code would be **4935-Tm123456**.

Once the registration code is accepted, simply fill in the rest of the fields including the Head of Household details, the email address on file with CHA and an account password. Accept the Terms and Conditions, then click the green Register button and you’re all set!

**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](mailto:hcv@thecha.org) or **312-935-2600**.



## Mobility Counseling Program: Working to Improve the Lives of CHA Residents

CHA’s Mobility Counseling Program helps families with children ages 0-16 use their voucher to move into designated Mobility Areas — neighborhoods with low poverty (less than 20%) and low crime rates — located throughout the city of Chicago.

Eligible participant families who join can take advantage of many benefits, including:

- Unit search assistance.
- Workshops and trainings on budgeting, fair housing, tenant rights, etc.
- Up to \$1,000 to be used toward a security deposit, move-in fee or other moving expenses.

To learn more and begin your journey toward self-sufficiency, visit [thecha.org/mobility](https://thecha.org/mobility).

## Tips on How to Avoid Fraudulent Websites and Online Scams

Practicing online safety can help protect your personal data, including your financial accounts. You should always be mindful when navigating the internet as it's a common place for scams and fraudulent activity. Here are some tips for keeping yourself (and your information) safe.

**Always double-check a website address.** A common scamming practice is setting up fraudulent URLs by making small changes to the address to pose as the actual brand or website. For example, hackers will use a deceptive URL such as 'Amazon.co' (instead of Amazon.com) to get access to your information.

**If it seems too good to be true, it probably is!** Fraudulent sellers will often list items for unbelievably low prices to collect your credit card information. If a price is suspiciously low, it's always best to err on the side of caution.

**Only make payments on secure sites.** A secure website will have a URL that begins with 'https.' The 's' indicates the website is secure and is using an SSL (Secure Sockets Layer). A secure website will also have a padlock icon in the web browser which indicates the website is authentic and your data is protected.

**Be cautious when it comes to emails.** If you receive an email from someone you do not know, be extra attentive to any links or requests for personal information. Scam emails often contain grammatical errors, so if you notice any misspellings, it may be fraudulent.

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## Health & Wellness Corner: Beating the Winter Blues

The cold months of winter can have a major impact on emotional and physical health ... causing feelings of sadness, lack of motivation, oversleeping, and changes in appetite. These mood and behavior changes can often feel overwhelming. But there are things you can do to help beat the winter blues and improve your health.



**Plan Activities** — These can be social, such as an outing with friends, or physical, such as exercising. Not only will this help you stay active, but it will also give you something to look forward to, which is great for your mental health. Physical activity can help regulate your mood and boost your energy levels.

**Prioritize Sleep** — Sleep deficiency can cause anxiety, depression, and irritability. Adults need at least seven (7) hours of sleep a night to support good health. Plus, a consistent sleep schedule can even help improve your overall brain performance.

**Get the Right Nutrition** — Did you know your gut and brain are physically linked and can send signals to each other? Mindful eating can help improve your brain function. Focus on foods with plenty of vitamins and minerals (i.e., fruits, vegetables, whole grains).

**Talk about Your Feelings** — Express what you're going through to friends and loved ones. This can help you feel less alone and more connected to the people in your life. You can also talk to a trained mental health professional who can help tailor treatment options to your needs.

**Practice Mindfulness** — Activities such as yoga and meditation can help clear the mind and create a calm atmosphere. Getting in touch with your mind and body can help alleviate feelings of depression and anxiety.



CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY™

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## Going Places

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## Save money and energy in your home!

The Home Energy Savings offering can help single-family homeowners and renters save money and energy with a...

- **FREE** home assessment
- **FREE** report with personalized recommendations for your home
- **FREE** and discounted energy-saving products to help you save on natural gas, water, and electricity

Call **855-660-9378**, visit **eessavings.com/cha** or use this QR code to schedule and start saving today!

