



# HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Issue 04  
Winter 2016

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Executive Vice President’s Message.....Page 1

Reminder – Heat and Hot Water Season.....Page 1

NYCHA Policy on 24-Hour Violations.....Page 2

Attention Section 8 Voucher Holders.....Page 2

Voucher Payment Standards Increase.....Page 2

Owners: What If Your Tenant Doesn’t Allow Access for Repairs?.....Page 2

Mayor Announces New Energy-Efficiency Program for Apartment Buildings.....Page 3

Helping Our Veterans.....Page 4

DOI Tackles Fraud.....Page 4

Tenants Save with NYCHA’s Self-Sufficiency Program.....Page 5

REES .....Page 5

## HIGH PERFORMER MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Season’s greetings!

The end of the year is here, but we are still hard at work, finding new strategies to engage and collaborate with you, our tenants and owners.

Collaboration is the key to providing safe, clean, and connected communities to our Housing Choice Voucher participants.

This year, we engaged through Owner Forums and Resident Advisory Groups. We improved services by implementing Fast 3, which allowed for faster lease ups and shorter wait times for new inspections. We also availed more online access for tenants by creating and monitoring the kiosk rooms at the Walk In Centers. We look forward to even more progress and customer service improvements in the coming year.

Happy reading,

*Cathy Pennington*

## REMINDER – HEAT AND HOT WATER SEASON



Heating season in New York City is here, which means that owners must meet some important requirements. New York City law requires that from October 1 to May 31, owners provide centrally supplied heat if the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees during the day or 40 degrees at night. Additionally, hot water must be kept at a minimum temperature of 120 degrees year-round.

NYCHA inspectors will test each unit’s heating system and all hot water sources to ensure minimum temperatures are maintained. The owner must correct any heat and/or hot water violations within 30 calendar days of the failed inspection. To avoid suspension of subsidy payments, the owner must either properly certify the repairs by submitting the Certificate of Completed Repairs (NE-2 certification) or pass a re-inspection. For more information about New York City’s heat and hot water codes, please visit the Department of Housing Preservation and Development’s website or click on this link: [NYC heat and hot water codes](http://nyc.gov/nycha).

We’re also on:



## NYCHA POLICY ON 24-HOUR HQS VIOLATIONS

24-hour HQS violations are considered life threatening and require immediate attention by Section 8 owners. We now require our inspectors to take pictures (see examples below) of all 24-hour violations, which are stored in our database.

The most common 24-hour violations are due to electrical hazards such as:

- Exposed wires
- Missing fuses
- Missing knock-outs
- Missing panels

NYCHA must conduct a re-inspection to confirm that all 24-hour HQS violations have been corrected. NYCHA **will not** accept an NE-2 certification of completed repairs for any 24-hour violation. Owners must call NYCHA’s Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771 to schedule a re-inspection.



Examples of 24-hour violations: exposed electrical contacts in a circuit breaker box.

## OWNERS: WHAT IF YOUR TENANT DOESN'T ALLOW ACCESS FOR REPAIRS?

Any Section 8 property owner who is unable to gain access to a tenant’s unit to make repairs must notify the tenant of attempts to gain access via certified mail. In addition, the owner must send a copy of the certified letter to NYCHA within 30 days of the failed HQS inspection. This serves as proof that the owner made an attempt to access the unit to complete repairs. The Section 8 subsidy will remain suspended until repairs are made and confirmed by NYCHA. If NYCHA receives a copy of the certified letter sent to the tenant within 30 days of the failed HQS inspection, the Authority will make full retro payment from the date of the suspension. Tenants who do not allow access for repairs will receive a termination notice in the mail and are at risk of losing their Section 8 subsidy.

## ATTENTION SECTION 8 VOUCHER HOLDERS...

Did you know that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development prohibits landlords from automatically rejecting housing applicants based on criminal history? If you believe you have been a victim of discrimination in your housing search, contact NYCHA’s Department of Equal Opportunity at 212-306-4468 to file a complaint.

### VOUCHER PAYMENT STANDARDS INCREASE

The following payment standards are in effect January 1 for rentals and annual recertifications:

Bedroom Size	Payment Standard
0	\$1,460
1	\$1,533
2	\$1,768
3	\$2,270
4	\$2,448
5	\$2,816
6	\$3,183
7	\$3,550
8	\$3,917

For more information on updated voucher payment standards and utility allowances, visit the [NYCHA Section 8 Voucher Payment and Utility Standards](http://nyc.gov/nycha) web page.

## MAYOR ANNOUNCES NEW ENERGY-EFFICIENCY PROGRAM FOR APARTMENT BUILDINGS

The NYC Building Operator Training Program **will help residential buildings cut energy costs up to 20 percent**. The new program offers a no-cost, 30-hour training program for small, multifamily building maintenance staff on ways to reduce energy consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Participants will learn about energy and resource conservation techniques related to a building's heating, electrical, and water systems. This training model is designed to reduce energy costs between 5 percent and 20 percent without any major capital expenditures.

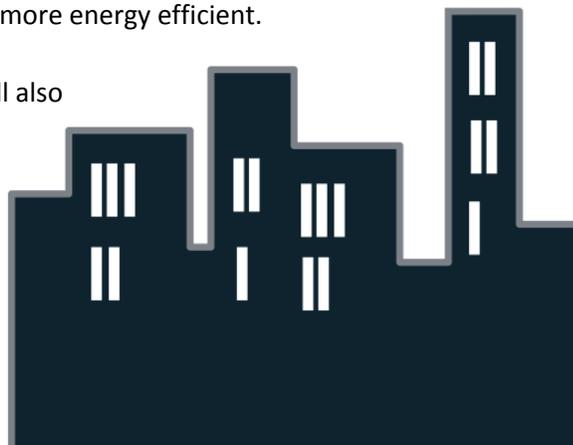
The program is available to multifamily buildings with 5 to 50 apartment units or that have between 5,000 to 50,000 gross square feet. Building owners and management companies can apply to have their maintenance personnel trained through this program. Training curriculum includes:

- Recognizing and correcting common flaws in a building's structure that can result in wasted energy consumption;
- Identifying and correcting ventilation problems;
- Instruction on understanding the various components of a boiler, their functions, and proper maintenance techniques;
- Understanding heat distribution and control throughout a building;
- Techniques for conserving water; and
- Learning how electric system and fixture maintenance can result in greater energy efficiency.

All applicants for the program will be considered, but employers that agree to provide a wage gain for their operators and maintenance staff will be prioritized. Along with no-cost training, employers and their staff will also receive other incentives to support the operational efficiency of their building when the program fully launches in 2017.

Residential buildings are responsible for roughly three-quarters of New York City's greenhouse gas emissions. As part of Mayor de Blasio's [One NYC](#) plan to create a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable city, the City has set the bold goal of achieving an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 2050. The Mayor also recently signed a [package of legislation](#) spurring retrofits to help buildings become more energy efficient.

The training course will be offered at locations throughout the City and will also provide flexible options for scheduling on-site training. Building owners and management companies that are interested in participating should click [here](#). New participants will be accepted on a rolling basis.



## HELPING OUR VETERANS

NYCHA received additional funding for Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers at the end of the summer, enabling our agency to provide housing to over 100 veterans in time for Veterans Day. Director Robert Tesoriero spoke briefly to *News 12 Bronx* about administering VASH vouchers through the Section 8 program. Watch the interview [here](#), and hear a VASH voucher holder discuss how the Section 8 program has improved his quality of life.



## DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION TACKLES FRAUD

The Department of Investigation (DOI) serves as the City's municipal watchdog and includes the Office of the Inspector



General for NYCHA. DOI attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls, and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs. To inform readers about Section 8 housing fraud, we feature case studies of DOI investigations that have exposed wrongdoing. Since 2015, DOI investigations have led to more than \$400,000 in restitution collected for the City and prevented the theft of more than \$600,000 in public funds. DOI's Office of the Inspector General for NYCHA works with its law enforcement partners to ensure that those who receive benefits are entitled to them. Recent cases include:

- A Section 8 participant in the Bronx pleaded guilty to failing to report the presence of two children and the income they earned, defrauding NYCHA of \$57,286 from July 2010 through November 2015. The participant was sentenced to three years' probation and ordered to perform 150 hours of community service and to pay restitution to NYCHA in the amount of the fraud. A termination request has been initiated in this case.
- A Section 8 participant in the Bronx pleaded guilty to failing to report the presence of a spouse and the spouse's income as an employee of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, defrauding NYCHA of \$47,614 from February 2012 through April 2015. The participant was sentenced to three years' probation and ordered to pay restitution to NYCHA in the amount of the fraud. A termination request has been initiated in this case.
- A former Section 8 participant in Brooklyn pleaded guilty to failing to report employment income earned, defrauding NYCHA of \$27,463 from March 2004 through August 2007. As part of the sentencing, the former tenant was required to pay full restitution to NYCHA in the amount of the fraud.
- A Section 8 participant in the Bronx pleaded guilty to failing to report the presence of a spouse and the spouse's employment income, defrauding NYCHA of \$20,520 from August 2011 through May 2013. As part of the sentencing, the participant was required to pay \$13,000 in restitution to NYCHA. A termination request has been initiated in this case.

**You can anonymously report fraud/wrongdoing by calling DOI's NYCHA Inspector General Hotline at (212) 306-3356.**



We're also on:



<http://nyc.gov/nycha>



## TENANTS SAVE WITH NYCHA’S FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

NYCHA can help Section 8 voucher holders establish and increase their savings – through the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, eligible tenants can save money when their rent goes up as a result of increased income. NYCHA will save the difference between an FSS participant’s old rent amount and the new rent amount in a [savings account](#). FSS participants save an average of \$2,000, though some graduate from the program with savings of \$10,000 or more!



As part of the FSS program, the head and members of the household who are 18 and older are connected to financial empowerment opportunities, such as adult education classes, career counseling, vocational training, or help with accessing income supports (e.g., SNAP/food stamps or free tax prep assistance), as needed. Tenants receive the money NYCHA saved for them once they complete the program’s goals and graduate from the five-year program.

Learn more about this exciting program, including how to enroll, call (718) 289-8100.

*If you need digital access close to home, check to see when a NYCHA Digital Van will be in your neighborhood:*

[on.nyc.gov/adult-programs](http://on.nyc.gov/adult-programs)

## RESIDENT ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (REES)

The REES program helps residents increase their income and assets through various programs. View upcoming events and learn more at <http://opportunitynycha.org>, and take advantage of:

- ✓ Employment and Career Advancement
- ✓ Financial Empowerment
- ✓ Adult Education and Vocational Training
- ✓ Resident Business Development

### Upcoming Events

<http://opportunitynycha.org/events/>

#### REES Information Sessions

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

NYCHA REES

787 Atlantic Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Brooklyn, NY

These sessions inform NYCHA residents and voucher holders about adult education and training offered via REES’ partners, including employment assistance, financial counseling, and resident business development. Attendees can express their interest in Section 3 employment! Bring photo ID and resume.

RSVP online at: <http://opportunitynycha.org/events/>

#### Information Session for HSE Prep Classes

Thursday, January 19, 2017, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Henry Street Settlement Workforce Development Center  
99 Essex St. 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10002

Learn about high school equivalency (HSE) exam prep classes for all skill levels in math, reading, writing, and social studies.

RSVP by calling (718) 289-8100.