



housing matters

Spring / Summer 2013



Message from the Program Director

As we enter our third year as Local Administrator of the Westchester Housing Choice Voucher Program, in the spirit of reflection and evaluation, we solicited and received valuable feedback from our Property Owners' meeting in January.

Following the Property Owners' meeting, we decided to move forward with new technological enhancements to improve program operations and provide a superior experience to participants and property owners.

Our program is now transitioning to electronic files for participants. This will enable our Housing Specialists to obtain a participant's entire file with the click of a mouse. I have witnessed first-hand the tremendous success CVR has experienced implementing this system at other housing authorities.

As detailed in this newsletter, CVR New York is also confronted with new challenges this year. Washington has implemented unprecedented cuts, known as "sequestration," in federal funding for affordable housing. In spite of these new challenges, we continue to move forward with improved policies, procedures, and systems to modernize the program.

Kind regards,

Felicia Ramos
HCV PROGRAM DIRECTOR
CVR New York

Sequestration Effects on the Housing Choice Voucher Program

In 2011, Congress enacted, and President Obama signed, the Budget Control Act of 2011. This law stipulated automatic cuts for all federal discretionary spending. Unfortunately, these cuts impact funding of the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

We have been notified by NYSHCR that the Statewide Voucher Program budget authority was cut by \$20 million due to sequestration, and that the amount of funding currently received is insufficient to cover all families currently receiving assistance. Because of the funding cuts, we have been mandated by HCR to take actions to reduce program costs. As its top priority, HCR wants to avoid terminat-

ing or reducing HAP for current participants and property owners. However, CVR New York will not be re-issuing vouchers to new families as current participants leave the program. CVR New York would like to assure you that, at this time, families receiving assistance are not at risk of losing that assistance. We understand that as a participating property owner, you rely on receiving HAP on-time each month. The needed cost reductions will be accomplished through attrition and not through recalling the vouchers of active participants. The unfortunate effect of this will be a longer waiting time for applicants on the waiting list.

The second effect of the funding cuts is that participants who have been issued vouchers to move to

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Inspections Department Updates

The property owners' meeting on January 16, 2013 provided us the opportunity to hear owners' concerns and expectations. One salient message from the owners' meeting was that owners wanted more communication regarding their participants' inspections. We have now implemented a number of new processes to make our Inspections department more accessible to you. ☀

Inspections Results Available Online

Inspections results are available at the CVR Inspections Portal (<https://westchester.cvrinspections.com/>) by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the inspection. In order to view the results, the property owner must enter the series ID of the inspection (available on the appointment letter) or, if known, the tenant's Log Number or the Landlord ID.

If the inspection failed, the property owner is now able to view the fail letter on the Inspections Portal. If a failure letter is misplaced, the property owner can now print out a duplicate to submit upon completion of the repairs.

Because you can now search by Landlord ID in addition to Series ID, you will be able to view inspections results and inspections letters for all of your tenants if you have more than one CVR New York participant living at your property. ☀

Auto Dialer ☎

If you have had an inspection in the past few months, you already know that CVR has now automated the HQS Inspections notice process. Two (2) days before a scheduled inspection, an auto-dialer makes three (3) attempts to notify the participant and the property owner of the date and time frame of the inspection.

If your e-mail address is on file, you will also receive an automatic e-mail notice of the inspection. If you have not been receiving e-mail notices and would like to begin receiving them, please call 914-995-6227, fax 914-920-3061, or e-mail addmyemail@cvrnewyork.com to add it. ☀

HQS Inspections Automated Number

If you call 914-873-1060 within two (2) days of the scheduled inspection, you will be given the estimated 4-hour time frame of when the inspection is scheduled to occur. ☀



Verification of Repairs Notification

As you are aware, for non-emergency repairs, property owners have twenty-eight (28) days to submit a Verification of Repairs form signed by the property owner and tenant. If a Verification of Repairs has not been received by our office five (5) days before the 28-day deadline, the property owner now receives notice of such, via the auto-dialer and automatic e-mail. If you receive this automated notice but can not locate your failure notice, please visit the CVR Inspections Portal to obtain a duplicate. Reminder: The VOR must be faxed ONLY to 914-930-5441. ☀

Inspections e-Fax

Please be advised that CVR New York has established e-faxes for all Housing Specialists. Please ask the Housing Specialist with whom you are working to provide you with his/her e-fax number for all communications not related to inspections. Please keep in mind that all inspections-related faxes (such as Verification of Repairs forms) must continue to be faxed ONLY to 914-930-5441. Inspections-related faxes sent to any other fax number may result in delayed processing of your request. ☀

Coming Soon: Property Owner Portal

CVR New York is pleased to announce that the Owner Portal will be coming soon. This interactive website will make it easier to do business with us. The first phase of the Portal implementation will consolidate various existing on-line tools into a single location (e.g. inspections schedule and results, HCR's HAP payments, direct deposit applications, and our owner guidebook.) Future enhancements will permit the online submission of Verifications of Repairs, rent increase requests, and other documents. ☀



Sequestration (continued from page 1)

a different unit will now only be allowed a single 60-day term. This means that participants will now have less time to search for a unit. We request that you be mindful of this truncated search time when notifying families that a lease is not being renewed, and when preparing a unit to pass an initial inspection.

Finally, HCR is asking all participating landlords to voluntarily defer rent increases at this time to avoid having to terminate assistance to currently assisted families.

We will let you know if any further changes to the program occur due to the funding cuts, but we assure you that every effort is being made to keep the funding cuts from affecting current participants and property owners. ☀



Important Numbers to Know:

| | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|
| Main Line | (914) 995-2415 |
| Inspections Department Fax | (914) 930-5441 |
| Inspections Department Automated Sys. | (914) 873-1060 |
| Inspections Clerk | (914) 995-3279 |
| Inspections Clerk | (914) 995-2223 |
| Lorna McFarlane, Program Manager | (914) 995-6594 |
| Lynne Deese Harvey, Supervisor | (914) 995-6489 |
| Senarine Ramchand, Supervisor | (914) 995-5111 |
| Yadira Torres, Supervisor | (914) 995-8371 |
| Cynthia Manan, Fraud/Hearing Presenter | (914) 995-2410 |
| Nicholas Cassaro, Community Relations | (914) 995-6227 |

CONGRATULATIONS!

Temetra Todd

CVR New York would like to congratulate our latest homeowner, Temetra Todd. Temetra Todd closed on November 26, 2012 as part of the Section 8 Homeownership Voucher Program.

After graduating from the Family Self-Sufficiency Program last year, Ms. Todd was admirable in her determination to become a first time Homeowner, and took the initiative in doing much of the legwork to reach her goal. To qualify for the Program, she had to take home-buyer education classes and get pre-approved for her mortgage, as well as schedule an inspection by an independent private contractor.

Ms. Todd had to work hard in the FSS Program to increase her income, then, after graduating FSS, had to navigate the frustrating, but rewarding, homeownership process.

"It has been a blessing," says Ms. Todd. "FSS is a good way for people to save and have money for closing. It is a great program. I am grateful and blessed. It's has been a wonderful experience."

CVR New York wishes Temetra Todd continued success in pursuing her future goals.

CVR New York is the local administrator for New York State Homes and Community Renewal's Section 8 Home Ownership Voucher Program. The Program assists working families realize the dream of obtaining and retaining a home of their own. ☀



our partnership with you is key to our success



Housing Matters is a semi-annual publication for CVR New York's participating Landlords.
Help us **Go Green** and request future issues electronically at addmyemail@cvrnewyork.com

cvrnewyork.com

Rent Your Unit Faster with New Listing Service

The Westchester Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) is pleased to offer Landlords yet another benefit — an innovative new way to list your rental unit. With NYHousingSearch.gov you can improve your unit's marketability and decrease the number of "days on market".

Register Today — It's Easy, Fast and Free

Choose the method that works best for you:

 *Online:* NYHousingSearch.gov click "List a Place to Rent" under heading "Add Property"

 *Call toll-free:* 1-877-428-8844

 *Fax toll-free:* 1-866-265-7811

Pick up a property listing form at the CVR New York office or download it from the CVR New York website *Form and Document Library*.

http://cvrnewyork.com/forms-documents_owners/

Questions ? Their Customer Support Call Center has the answers. They are available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 1-877-428-8844.

Features & Benefits

of NYHousingSearch.gov

- greater exposure to prospective Tenants — CVR New York refers all voucher holders to this site
- the ability to upload photos and include desirable features about your unit
- your listing goes 'live' immediately when created online
- customized search engine matches Tenants interested in your unit's features
- the service is FREE to all users (those listing their property *and* the Tenants seeking a new home)

Find Out More at cvrnewyork.com

As always, more information is available on our website. Click on the "Market Your Rental Property" under the Property Owners menu. 