



housing matters

Winter 2014



Message from the
Program Director

For many of you, this is the first time you are receiving Housing Matters. We would like to take the opportunity

to welcome new owners to the program. We look forward to working with you and we are honored to have you as a participating property owner.

During the uncertainty of the government shutdown, many property owners called with questions as to how the Housing Choice Voucher program was affected. On October 16, 2013, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, a Continuing Resolution that will fund the government through January 15, 2014. Although the government has reopened, we are still faced with funding cuts as a result of the constraints placed upon us by what is known as “sequestration.” Because of the ongoing funding cuts, no new vouchers are being issued to families on the waiting list at this time. To this end, CVR New York will continue to be prudent in how we allocate our resources, ensuring that all of our property owners are provided with a high level of customer service.

Have a safe and joyous holiday, and best wishes in the new year.

Kind regards,
Felicia Ramos
HCV PROGRAM DIRECTOR
CVR New York 



CVR Partners to Form Westchester Patriot Housing

This fall, CVR partnered with local government and community agencies to form “Patriot Housing” in order to pool existing resources and better serve the homeless veteran population. These agencies include: WestHab, WestCOP, the Montrose and Bronx VA, Common Ground, The Sharing Community, Program Design and Development LLC, Westchester County

DSS, the Grace Church Community Center, Family Services of Westchester, and the Westchester County Veterans Service Agency, among others. We have participated in weekly meetings with our community partners to accomplish this important task.

The immediate goal is to house 75 homeless veterans (including 45 chronically homeless veterans) within 100 days through a combination of subsidies, grants, and HUD-VASH vouchers.

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2013 has brought with it big changes that will affect the way you do business. First, there are revised requirements for property owners under the *Violence Against Women Act*. Second, there is the much-discussed *Source of Income Legislation* in Westchester County. We feel it is important to let you know how these changes affect you.

***Violence Against Women Act**

Congress recently renewed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). This law makes it illegal for housing providers and Section 8 landlords to refuse admittance to a program or rent to a victim of domestic violence because (s)he is a victim of abuse if s(he) is otherwise eligible. This means that if your organization is using damage to a prior unit, an applicant's criminal record, a spotty payment history, or any other action as a reason for denying an applicant, and the applicant's action/history is related to a domestic violence incident, your organization's decision may be in violation of VAWA.

In addition to the protections given to victims of domestic violence applying for an apartment, VAWA also extends certain protections after an applicant is residing in subsidized housing. A property owner cannot evict a victim of domestic violence for reasons that stem from the actions of a domestic violence perpetrator. Nothing in VAWA prevents an owner from taking steps to evict or terminate benefits of a domestic violence victim for any violation of a lease not premised on the act or acts of violence in question, though the property owner cannot subject the victim to a more demanding standard than other tenants. The owner may also take steps to evict if the victim is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants.

With the renewal of the law, there are requirements that CVR New York and participating property owners must abide by. Under the law's terms, you as a participating property owner must provide notice of VAWA housing rights at the time an individual applies for a unit, at the time an individual is admitted to a unit, and with any notification of eviction or termination of assistance. 🏠

***Source of Income Legislation**

The second major change is the new Source of Income legislation in Westchester County. This legislation was

passed by the County Legislature and signed by the County Executive in June. The law will be fully in effect as of December 23, 2013.

The source of income legislation makes certain sources of income, such as Housing Choice Vouchers, protected classes in the county. With some exceptions (e.g. condos, co-ops, etc.), owners cannot discriminate against the use of a Housing Choice Voucher as a source of income. This means that an owner should not turn away an applicant who meets all of that owner's requirements just because that applicant will be paying rent with the assistance of a voucher. 🏠

Inspections Reminders ...

Receive inspections reminders in your e-mail box.

Provide us with your e-mail address at admyemail@cvrnewyork.com. Inspections related faxes such as Verification of Repairs Forms and Rent Increase Requests should be faxed ONLY to the inspections department e-Fax (914) 930-5441. 🏠

HQS Inspections Related to Electrical Outlets

HQS Inspectors ensure that electrical outlets are in proper operating condition. To minimize HQS failures, you as the owner can take pre-caution to ensure that the outlets are in proper condition prior to an HQS inspection. Electrical outlets should not have:

- Broken wiring
- Non-insulated wiring
- Frayed wiring
- Improper Types of wiring, connections or insulation
- Wires lying in or located near standing water or other unsafe places
- Light fixture hanging from electric wiring without other firm support or fixture
- Missing cover plates on switches or outlets
- Badly cracked outlets
- Exposed fuse box connections
- Overloaded circuits evidenced by frequently "blown" fuses

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Program Success Story

Outlets (continued from page 2)

Both two-pronged and three-pronged outlets are acceptable under HQS as long as they operate properly.

Units that have been upgraded from a two-pronged outlet to a three-pronged outlet should ensure that a ground is connected to the outlet or a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protects the outlet. A licensed electrician is required to install a new wire to the circuit breaker box, which can prove costly; a more cost-effective method is to protect the outlet with a GFCI.

A three-pronged outlet must be properly grounded, protected by a GFCI if ungrounded, and/or comply with applicable state and local building codes. In order to test if an outlet is properly grounded, a property owner may purchase an inexpensive three-pronged outlet tester prior to the HQS inspection.

To test the outlet with the three-pronged tester, the owner should plug the device in and note the pattern of the lights. The legend printed on the device will let you know if the outlet is operating properly. Reversed polarity and open grounds are examples of incorrect wiring that result in a failed HQS inspection.

If the outlet contains a GFCI, it must work as designed in order to be in proper operating condition. In order to determine if the GFCI protects an outlet, the owner should “trip” all of the GFCIs in the unit, both at the outlet and in the circuit breaker box, and determine if there is power to ungrounded outlet. If the power to the outlet is off, then one of the GFCIs protects the outlet. 🏠

Patriot Housing (continued from page 1)

At the time of publication of this newsletter, “Patriot Housing,” is on track to meet this goal by December 1st. After the 100 days are over, the goal of ending

veteran homelessness in Westchester County is not. We will continue these new relationships with our community partners, with a target date of ending veteran homelessness by 2015. As always, we cannot do this without enthusiastic participating property owners who offer nice places to live for veterans in need. If you have an available unit that you are willing to rent to a homeless veteran with or without a voucher, please contact our office. 🏠

Family Self-Sufficiency Program Update

CVR New York would like to take the opportunity to inform you of a program you may not be aware of: the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. White Plains Housing Company administers the FSS program, providing case management to help qualifying CVR New York participants set and reach goals to become more self-sufficient (e.g. obtaining a degree or vocational certificate). After 5 years, families who have successfully increased their income and met their goals graduate from the FSS program and receive an escrow as their reward.

Currently, there are over 400 families receiving rental assistance from CVR New York who are enrolled in the FSS program. One individual who shared his story with us, “John G.,” entered the FSS program on October 2012 after meeting with White Plains Housing Company FSS staff who were at CVR New York’s office to screen families for eligibility. He began working two jobs to increase his income, before finally securing a full-time job as a bus driver. He frequently works overtime, and has more than doubled his income since joining the FSS program. This means that “John G.” has to pay a higher portion of his rent, but the long-term benefit is that paying higher rent builds a higher FSS escrow. He hopes to use the FSS escrow he is building to make a down payment on a home for his family.

CVR New York is committed to promoting self-sufficiency, and offers congratulations to all participants of the FSS program who are working hard to improve their futures. 🏠



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

Get Your Money Faster with HAP Direct Deposit

Resolve to be more efficient in 2013 and join the more than 2,100 other property owners who have already signed up for direct deposit. Nearly 90% of our participating owners enjoy the benefits associated with direct deposit, including:

- **Faster Access to Funds:** Payments are credited to your account on the first of the month as opposed to being mailed that day
- **Convenience:** Eliminates monthly trip to the bank
- **Security:** No potential for mail fraud.
- **Online Access to Remittance Advice:** View payment details through our secure payment web portal. Web address and login information needed is outlined below.

<https://www1.dhcr.state.ny.us/Section8Payments/default.aspx>
- county ID for Westchester: 60
- county ID for Nursing Home Transition & Diversion (NHTD) program: 67
- county ID for New York North: 69
- last 4 digits of your Tax ID
- your Landlord ID

Reminder: Heating Season Begins

Please be mindful that heat must be supplied from October 1 through May 31 to tenants in multiple dwellings.

- If the outdoor temperature falls below 55 degrees Fahrenheit between 6:00 A.M. and 10:00 P.M., each apartment must be heated to a temperature of at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If the outdoor temperature falls below 40 degrees Fahrenheit between 10:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M., each apartment must be heated to a temperature of at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

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. 🏠