

Newsletter Date:

January 23, 2009

Special Points of Interest:

AHA's Housing Choice Voucher Program is proud to announce its designation as "High Performer" by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). Annually, HUD rates Public Housing Authorities on how well the agency administers its program in accordance with HUD regulations. There are three designations: High Performer, Standard Performer & Troubled Performer. The highest designation is High Performer.

Landlords: Rent increases should be submitted to AHA 60-90 days prior to your tenants recertification date. If you are unaware of these dates, contact Ebony Bond @ 325-676-6385 ext. 6389 or email her at: ebony.bond@abileneha.org.

Landlords & Tenants: Visit AHA's website to see the Payment Standards & Utility Allowance schedules that went into effect on January 1, 2009.

Landlords: Future "Super Leasing Event Dates: Every Wednesday and Friday beginning February 13, 2009. If interested, please contact Ebony Bond @ 325-676-6385 ext. 6389 or email her at: ebony.bond@abileneha.org.

Congratulations! Public Housing Christmas Decoration Contest Winners for 2008: Mary Cortinaz, Sharon Zachry, Chris Matthews, Stanley Booker, Steven Claspell, Rita Camacho, Latonya Lee, Clemence Lwanwa, Juanita Saucedo and Virginia Young.

Public Housing Residents: You will be glad to know that AHA is taking steps to assist you in becoming self-sufficient by changing our process of making income increases effective 30-days after notification. We are working to make increases in income effective at recertification time only (unless fraud is detected). Tenants are still required to notify AHA within 10 days, of any family income increase/decrease or family composition change. HCV tenants are presently covered under this new process.

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COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

January 20, 2009: HUD DESIGNATED THE ABILENE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM AS A "HIGH PERFORMER" PROGRAM!

New Customer Database: Go-Live Update

In December, 2008, AHA started its transition to a new customer software system. To assist in the transition to the new system, AHA will do a "ghost" check-run in March, 2009. A "ghost" check-run means that we will pay landlords using our present method for payment and run a concurrent check-run in our new system. AHA will then compare the results and if the system handled the check-run process correctly, we will start paying landlords and tenants through our system in April, 2009.

During this time we ask that you review your payments closely and report any abnormalities to AHA immediately. If you have access to the internet, you can report your concern to AHA by emailing us at helpdesk@abileneha.org. If you do not have internet access, please contact Wendy Guidry (Executive Assistant) at (325) 676-6385 ext. 6379.

AHA - Supporting Community Initiatives

AHA participated in the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration on January 19, 2009.


AHA also participated in the KJTZ Child Abuse Awareness Campaign in December, 2008, which is Abused Kids Awareness Month. AHA was awarded a Certificate of Civic Spirit Participation for co-operation and support of the campaign.

AHA and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) are working together to house

refugee families from Africa. Many of these families have lived in refugee camps for the past five or six years. The IRC assists these families in finding homes and in adapting to the cultural changes that they face here in the U.S. Annually, the IRC assists approximately 160 families from around the world to relocate to the Abilene area. They also work with other cities around the U.S. in efforts to relocate families as well.



Leticia Reyes passed the Nan McKay & Assoc., Inc. Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Certification Exam! Congratulations Letty!



New Staff
Stephanie Durham,
HCV Housing Specialist

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."

Dale Carnegie



DHAP Program
Assisting families that lost everything during Hurricane Ike. September, 2008

Inspections: Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

Last month, **54.2%** of the initial inspections failed. With this in mind, AHA is starting a new program to assist landlords to pass inspections on the first try.

Assist the HCV program, become more efficient by passing inspections on the first attempt.

Benefits of passing inspections on the first attempt:

- Landlords receive funds from AHA quicker!
- Tenants are able to move in quicker!
- AHA is able to complete other inspections instead of revisiting properties a second time!

Advisory Committee Update

Patsy Ivey, Angie Marsalis, David Webb (three landlords) and one tenant, Jhamora Williams, currently make up the Advisory Committee.

We are still in need of two additional tenants. If interested, please contact Wendy Guidry at 325-676-6385 ext. 6379. The first meeting is planned for February 12, 2009.

Thank you to all committee members for volunteering to participate!

HCV Landlords & Tenants: Things To Remember

Landlords:
Following is a list of common HQS violations. Remember to check for these prior to your inspections.

- Missing electrical safety clamps on garbage disposals and water heaters.
- Broken windows.
- Broken or missing switch plate and outlet covers.
- Inoperable smoke detectors.
- Missing roof shingles.
- Peeling/chipped paint.

Here are some additional suggestions on how the AHA and landlords can work more efficiently together:

- Formal HQS Certification Training for landlord's maintenance staff.
- AHA can host meetings, over the next several months, inviting landlord's maintenance staff to go through training on how to prepare and how to pass HQS inspections on the first attempt.

If you have additional ideas please email our helpdesk@abileneha.org email address.

Tenants:
Following is a list of things to remember in order to remain in compliance.

- Report any changes in income or family composition to AHA in writing within 10 business days of the change.
- Ensure that all tenant-paid utilities are in service at all times.
- Ensure that working batteries remain in all smoke detectors at all times. Check batteries at least twice a year.

Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP): Update

As of January, 2009, AHA is currently assisting one family who is participating in the DHAP program.

Landlords interested in participating can contact Tanya Johnson (AHA DHAP Coordinator) at 325-676-6359 or email her at: tanya.johnson@abileneha.org



AHA – Providing Homes for Families

**ABILENE
HOUSING
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Mission Statement:

The Housing Authority's mission is to service the needs of low-income, very low-income and extremely low-income families in the Public Housing Authority's jurisdiction and to:

- increase availability of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing in its communities;
- ensure equal opportunity in housing;
- promote self-sufficiency and asset development of families and individuals; and,
- improve community quality of life and economic viability.

In addition, the Housing Authority will strive to upgrade sub-standard housing through construction and modernization and to provide quality home ownership which will build stronger and healthier communities while promoting economic independence.

We're on the web: <http://www.abileneha.org>

AHA Board of Commissioners - Contact Email Addresses:

Dr. Tanya Smith-Brice - **Chair** - tsb06a@acu.edu

Kiddy Boswell - **Secretary** - ksbabor@swbell.net

Larry Holmes - **Board Member** - laryholmes@aol.com

Pat Hippely - **Board Member** - ani.maamin@xanadoo.com