



HAP Express

Charleston Housing & Landlord Newsletter



Volume 7 Issue 1

May 1, 2004

CH to offer Methamphetamine Awareness Training

Recent incidents in Charleston and surrounding communities have shown the illegal production of methamphetamine is a serious problem facing our area.

To help landlords better understand the

severity of this problem Charleston Housing is sponsoring an awareness program in May. Law enforcement officials will be on hand to explain how this drug is manufactured and the dangers surrounding its

production.

All landlords should plan to attend because of the hazard this poses to the health of your tenants and the destruction it can cause to your property.

Methamphetamine Awareness Training

**Monday, May 17th
5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
Family Enrichment Center**

Survey Shows Majority of Landlords Want Direct Deposit

Charleston Housing mailed over 800 surveys to landlords with their March 1st HAP checks. Eighteen percent (18%) of owners and managers responded to questions regarding their interest in direct deposit of monthly payments and their access to computers.

Two-thirds (62%) of the respondents stated they would like the di-

rect deposit option because it would be ,safer,, more convenient, it would save them time by not having go to the bank and the money would hit their account on the same day each month.

The primary concern of those against direct deposit was for bookkeeping purposes. Many stated it is easier for them to have a check in hand for their records.

CH intends to make direct deposit available for interested landlords. In the coming months owners and managers will be receiving more information.

Please note, landlords will be given the choice of having their payments electronically sent to their bank account or continuing to have a check mailed to their home.

The survey also asked

a number of questions about landlord access to computers and their use of the internet.

Seventy percent (70%) of respondents stated they have a computer and an equal number had internet access. Only twenty-five percent (25%) had visited Charleston Housing's web site.

The staff of CH would like to thank all landlords who took the time to participate.

“Celebrating Community Investments and Partnerships”

On May 20th from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Charleston Housing and the Orchard Manor Resident Management Council will be celebrating the opening of several new townhouses. As part of this day we plan to recognize and promote our community partnerships. Landlords are important partners in providing decent, safe and sanitary housing in Charleston and the Kanawha Valley. The management and staff of Charleston Housing would like to invite you to attend the festivities so we may express our appreciation for your efforts to provide housing to low-income families in our community.



For more information about Charleston Housing and the Section 8 Program visit us at www.charlestonhousing.com

Proposed changes in Voucher Program would reduce funding

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has proposed for Federal Fiscal Year 2005 (beginning 10/1/04) changing the current Housing Choice Voucher program to what HUD calls the Flexible Voucher program.

This initiative would provide local housing agencies more administrative discretion in the operation of the Section 8 program. The current voucher program is highly regulated through federal regulations and HUD notices. However, under the Flexible Voucher, Charleston Housing would be permitted to run the program under broad guidelines so as best to meet the housing needs in our community.

Among the changes proposed would be the elimination of com-

plicated rent calculation formulas, a reduction in the number of required forms participants would have to complete and the setting of rents in line with the local housing market rather than HUD prescribed amounts.

The one major concern housing agencies and interest groups have with the plan is HUD's proposed changes to the way funding for vouchers will be allocated.

Presently, funding is provided on a per unit cost or the average cost needed to house a family. Under the new program HUD would simply provide CH with a certain dollar amount and the agency would then have to determine how many families it could assist.

It is estimated that CH could lose between \$800,000 and \$1 million dollars in subsidy under this

plan. To make up for this shortfall fewer families would have to be served and a greater portion of the rent burden would have to be provided by participating families.

CH believes these cuts would be very damaging to low income families in the Kanawha Valley and the landlords who provide housing. Management staff, along with other WV housing officials, traveled to Washington D.C. in March to meet with our members of Congress to express our concerns with the plan.

If you wish to express your concerns about this proposal please write or e-mail Senators Byrd and Rockefeller or Congresswoman Capito and let them know what affect this change would have in Charleston.

Plan to Attend the Fair Housing Summit

Tuesday, May 25th from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
At WV State's Wilson Student Union
Sponsored by the WV Human Rights Commission

Topics will include:

Fair Housing Laws
An overview of the Section 8 program
Methods to resolve Landlord/Tenant Complaints
The Americans with Disability Act
Dealing with Diversity in Housing
Regulations and Responsibilities for Tenants
Avenues to Homeownership

Are you interested in attending Lead Paint or Mold Awareness Training?

CH has offered lead paint training in past years and the issue of hazardous mold is becoming a hot topic. Staff is trying to determine if there is an interest in having training on these topics. There would be a fee for each class. If you have an interest please call Mary O'Connor at 348-6451 ext. 385 or e-mail her at:

moconnor@charlestonhousing.com

Mark Taylor named CH Executive Director

At the March 2004 meeting of CH's Board of Commissioners, Mark E. Taylor was named Executive Director of Charleston Housing. Mr. Taylor had been the acting director since May 2001. Congratulations Mark.

Charleston Housing Offices will be closed on the following dates:

- *May 11÷ ÷ ÷ .Primary Election
- *May 31÷ ÷ ÷ .Memorial Day
- *June 21÷ ÷ ÷ .West Virginia Day
- *July 5÷ ÷ ÷ ÷ .Independence Day