

*The Connecticut Housing Coalition
and the
Public Housing Resident Network
wishes everyone a safe holiday and a
happy and prosperous New Year!*

Issue 4

4

Dec. '03

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Check List for Resident Participation Funding

1. When does your housing authority's (PHA) fiscal year begin? _____. This date is important for determining when the PHA receives the resident participation funds. Your PHA can tell you when its fiscal year begins or you can find that out from the HUD website: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/systems/pic/haprofiles>. Your PHA has received resident participation funds for 2003 and should receive the funding for 2004 at the beginning of its fiscal year.
2. For 2003, what dollar amount did HUD approve for resident participation? _____ (This information is available from HUD form 52723 (1/2001), *Operating Fund Calculation of Operating Subsidy*, Part D, line 13 for resident participation. This form is filled out every year and signed/dated by the PHA and HUD.)
3. How much did your PHA have to spend on resident participation funding in fiscal year 2002, the year prior to the current fiscal year? _____. (Check HUD form 52723 for the prior year).

Continued from page 1...

local committees made up of residents, housing authority staff and other interests to adopt redevelopment plans for their state "moderate rental" public housing. The new law:

- sets up the terms and process for the revitalization of state public housing developments in New Britain;
- sets up the terms and process for the demolition and replacement of one development in Stamford;
- authorizes Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to provide resources and assistance to housing authorities undertaking revitalization efforts; and,
- allows a housing authority to transfer a "financially distressed" development to CHFA, with Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) approval and CHFA consent.

The state Legislature goes back into Session on February 4, 2004. There may be consideration of legislation affecting East Hartford, Hartford and New London, or a more general approach. There remain many unanswered questions about the intent of CHFA regarding these public housing developments, as well as disagreement between CHFA and DECD as to which agency has final say over future plans for this housing.

4. How much does your PHA plan to spend on resident services funding for the 2003 fiscal year? _____. (This information is available from HUD Form 52599, Statement of Operating Receipts and Expenditures, lines 250-280 OR HUD Form 52564, Operating Budget, lines 220-250).
5. How much did your PHA spend on resident services funding in the 2002 fiscal year, the one prior to the current fiscal year? _____. (This information is available from the prior year HUD Form 52599 OR HUD Form 52564).

All Hud forms mentioned above are public documents available from your PHA's finance department.

Questions to Ask:

1. For what items and events were the resident participation funds spent in 2003?
2. How will the resident participation funds be spent in 2004?
3. Is the funding for tenant services at the same level for 2003 and 2004?
4. Was there a drop in the tenant services funding from 2002 to 2003 and if so, what is the reason?

Voter Registration Education

For the upcoming year, the Public Housing Resident Network will be working on several voter registration education initiatives to increase the number of registered voters in public housing developments throughout Connecticut. Estimates show that there are significant numbers of potential voters throughout Connecticut's public housing developments who are either unregistered or simply do not come out to vote. In many municipalities, these precious votes could actually have decided elections outcomes.

PHRN is looking for residents who are willing to help volunteer in these initiatives. We will be looking to identify at least two cities to host events aimed at registering residents to vote. We'll also be working to get residents transportation to and from voting polls during election time.

Additionally, throughout the year, PHRN will distribute literature about new voter registration laws that have taken effect. We will also periodically distribute facts about voter registration starting with this newsletter. The center piece of this newsletter is an official mail in registration form. If you are not already a registered voter, please take the time to complete and mail this form in. If you need assistance completing this form, please feel free to contact our offices for help. Within the Hartford area, please call us at 860-563-2943. Outside of Hartford, you may call us toll free at 1-888-415-2564. Please ask to speak to Courtney Anderson.

Issue 4

2

Dec. '03

Fast Facts

- **It is legal to show a person how to vote and use voting machines and give a person a ride to the polls. (You just can't tell them who to vote for).**
- **Even if you are 17-years-old, you can register to vote as long as your 18th birthday comes BEFORE the next election.**
- **In Connecticut, you CAN vote if you are on probation. However, you can ONLY register if you come into your local registrar's office. If you are a convicted felon, you MUST get a certification of release and bring that certification into the registrar's office to register to vote.**
- **If you are a person who does NOT want to be affiliated with a political party, DO NOT write "independent." Leave this section BLANK. "Independent" IS a party itself!**

Who We Are & What We Do

The Public Housing Resident Network provides a variety of assistance to residents of public housing in Connecticut. The Network informs residents of new and important state and federal policy information and is a source of mutual support for residents.

Founded in the fall of 1996, the Network is an informal organization open to participation from any public housing resident - whether elected leadership or interested resident. We welcome requests for services from residents and public housing authorities. The services we provide are free of charge to the residents and we encourage you to attend our Network meetings.

This newsletter is mailed to those who are on our mailing list. Contact us to be added to our mailing list. All we ask in return is your participation and interest!



Newsletter

Moderate Rental Public Housing Still Faces Tough Challenges Going Into 2004

It may be that 2003 is coming to a close, but the future of the state's "moderate rental" family public housing is far from settled. Lawmakers at the state's Capitol have yet to adequately address the growing needs of the state's aging public housing developments. On and off over the past several years, there has been talk at state and local levels about what can be done to guarantee the future quality and availability of this housing. The result is that thousands of low-income families are potentially facing uncertainty about their housing and/or living in deteriorating physical conditions.

There are five cities in which state "moderate rental" public housing developments are facing tough challenges – East Hartford, Hartford, New Britain, New London and Stamford. These challenges are:

- the buildings are aging and the state has not provided ongoing, dependable financial support for local housing authorities to make the needed improvements;
- the rent alone paid by the residents living in these developments has not been enough to pay for the ongoing upkeep of the buildings and surrounding property, especially since the housing authorities do not receive a per unit subsidy for state "moderate rental" apartments as they do for their federal public housing apartments;
- the housing authorities in some cities owe back payments to the state on these public housing developments; the payment of which, until recently, the state has allowed the housing authorities to not make; and
- the overview of these public housing developments was transferred from the state Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) as of July 1, 2003.

For the past few years, lawmakers at the state Capitol have been considering passage of legislation that would allow the state and local housing authorities more "flexibility" in plans to redevelop state "moderate rental" public housing in their communities. Resident leaders and advocates have fought to protect the interests of public housing residents in the process. In particular, they have worked to:

- preserve as many affordable housing units as possible (working for as close to one-for-one replacement of demolished or redeveloped units as possible);
- guarantee meaningful resident participation in any planning process for the redevelopment of state public housing;
- protect the rights of residents in the event of any redevelopment or relocation; and
- provide quality, affordable housing choices for residents affected by changes in their public housing development.

Some legislation was passed in August 2003. Most of the lawmakers' discussion centered around state "moderate rental" public housing in Stamford and New Britain. Both of these cities had worked over the past few years with

Continued on page 3...