

From the Desk of the Executive Director...

PROGRAM FRAUD

DuPage Housing Authority (DHA) is *serious* about ensuring every program participant is following all program guidelines – especially when it comes to program fraud – defined as, “*any intentional deception, or any misrepresentation of facts, that can result in unauthorized benefit or payment of federal housing subsidy in behalf of the family*”.

Knowingly providing false, inaccurate, or incomplete information is not just fraud, it's a **CRIME**. If you commit fraud, you and your family are subject to any of the following penalties:

1. Eviction;
2. Termination of assistance;
3. Repayment of rent to DuPage Housing Authority that you should have paid had you reported your income correctly;
4. Prohibited from receiving future rental assistance for a period of up to 10 years;
5. Prosecution by the local, state, or Federal prosecutor, which may result in you being fined up to \$10,000 and/or serving time in jail.

DHA reviewed almost ten percent of our 4,000 program participant files. We discovered that some number of those families had committed fraud. This was unacceptable and was corrected immediately by terminating those households and submitting that information for their prosecution to the **US Department of Justice, HUD Office of Inspector General**, or the **Attorney General** for DuPage County or the State of Illinois.

Over the next several months, DHA will take these additional steps to ensure program compliance of all program participants:

1. Review **every** participant household record.
2. Determine what each household reported as their total household income for each year.





3. Compare what was reported to DHA to what had been reported for the household to the several regulatory agencies (SSA, HHS IRS).
4. **Terminate all households who are found to have committed fraud and demand repayment of the full amount improperly paid in their behalf** (or refer the account to a collection agency), *and refer for prosecution to the appropriate county, state or federal policing agency.*

DHA uses income validation tools to obtain information about every program participant, including from the *Social Security Administration* (SSA), *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services* (HHS) and *Internal Revenue Service* (IRS). SSA provides death, Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) information. HHS provides wage and employment information as reported by employers; and unemployment compensation information as reported by the *State Workforce Agency* (SWA). IRS provides a summary of 1040 and 1099 federal and state taxes actually filed, and deductions claimed. DHA also obtains information from the *State of Illinois* for information on several state benefit programs including *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families* (TANF), *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* (SNAP), *Women, Infants and Children* (WIC) and spousal support.

When our record review is completed, we expect that additional households will be identified for committing fraud, terminated immediately, required to repay every dollar paid in error in their behalf, and referred for prosecution. If you have intentionally deceived DHA or misrepresented your household income *for any period* - you are advised to contact your Specialist at DHA **immediately** to reduce any penalty imposed from our investigation, but you must contact DHA **before** we contact you! Once your household has been identified as non-compliant, ***DHA will seek to enforce consequences to the fullest extent possible – no exceptions!***

DHA looks forward to continuing to provide rental assistance only to those eligible to receive the assistance, and at the level of assistance they are qualified to receive it. This ensures that the maximum number of eligible families get served based on the limited federal funds available to us.