

OWNER UPDATE



Vol. 6 March 2011

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Includes Housing Cuts**

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"The mission of the Cambridge Housing Authority is to develop and manage safe, good quality, affordable housing for low-income individuals and families in a manner which promotes citizenship, community & self reliance."

CONGRESS CONSIDERING MASSIVE CUTS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS

Five months into the 2011 fiscal year, the federal government has yet to pass a budget. Instead of passing a budget for the year, Congress has been passing short term budgets, called "continuing resolutions" to keep the government running. On February 19th the House of Representatives passed a continuing resolution that proposes \$100 million in cuts to discretionary spending, including a 12% cut to affordable housing and community development programs.

Among the programs proposed for cuts are several CHA administrators:

Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Fees

The House bill cuts the fees Housing Authorities receive to administer the voucher program by 23%. Here in Cambridge a 23% cut would impact the Leased Housing department's ability to provide fast, high quality service to owners and voucher holders since the department relies on administrative fees to fund its day-to-day operations.

Veterans Supportive Housing Vouchers (VASH)

The VASH program allows CHA to partner with the VA medical center to provide affordable housing to homeless Cambridge vets. These vouchers enable veterans to rent private housing, while receiving supportive services from the VA. CHA has 60 of these vouchers. The House bill completely defunds the program.

Public Housing Capital Fund

The House bill would cut the Capital Fund by 45.6%. CHA relies on the Capital Fund to complete major replacement and modernization projects in its public housing developments like replacing old windows and roofs. These funds are a critical component of CHA's efforts to modernize its aging housing stock.

Public Housing Operating Fund

The House bill cuts the Public Housing Operating Fund to \$4.626 billion, a \$149 million cut or a 3% reduction from the current \$4.775 billion funding level. It is the Operating Fund that keeps the grass cut, lights on, trash cleaned-up and snow removed. It is the Operating Fund that helps keep CHA's public housing developments places that people are proud to call home. Cuts to the Operating Fund directly impact the

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(Budget cuts, continued from page 1)

quality of life for the thousands of families, seniors and disabled individuals who rely upon CHA for safe, high-quality affordable housing.

As this edition of the *Owner Update* goes to print it appears that a two-week stopgap budget may be passed while the Senate debates the deep cuts contained in the House bill. It seems that the two-week budget bill is unlikely to include the level of cuts proposed in the House bill.

Further, the Senate is unlikely to support cuts as deep and indiscriminate as those proposed in the House bill. It is hoped that whatever continuing resolution finally passes, it will be far less destructive to affordable housing programs than those currently proposed.

Over the longer-term the deep cuts proposed in the House bill raise fears that the budget for the coming fiscal year, 2012 will also contain troubling cuts to affordable housing programs. CHA will keep owners up to speed on the progress of the 2012 budget once debate on that bill begins.

For its part CHA will continue advocating for the programs we administer, the families we serve and the owners who participate in these critical programs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: THE DIRECT DEPOSIT PROGRAM & 2010 W-9's

Q: Can I still receive my Housing Assistance Payment check by mail?

A: No. In response to requests from owners, CHA instituted the Direct Deposit Program well over a year ago. The Direct Deposit Program makes it easier and faster for owners to receive housing assistance payments (HAPs) from CHA for units rented through one of our affordable housing programs.

At this point **all owners must have signed up for direct deposit in order to receive their HAP payments.** Owners that have not yet signed-up for direct deposits must come into CHA's Central Office at 675 Massachusetts Avenue to pick up their checks at the beginning of the month. Direct Deposit Program application forms are available from the For Owners sections of CHA's website: www.cambridge-housing.org or by request at CHA's Central Office.

Q: Where is my W-9 IRS for my 2010 tax filing?

A: 2010 W-9s were already mailed out to owners of units rented through any one of CHA's affordable housing programs. If you have not received yours, please contact Kenneth Tran by phone at (617) 499-7024 or by email at ktran@Cambridge-housing.org.