



## At 10th Year, Chicago's Plan is Ambitious, Green



CHA's Parkside of Old town replaced the now-demolished Cabrini buildings. The new development won an EPA Smart Growth Award this month for successfully integrating the best practices in housing, transportation, and environmental design.

*Image source: Chicago Housing Authority*

In accordance with its Plan for Transformation, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) is on path to renovate or rebuild its entire housing stock of 25,000 units, including 7,697 units in mixed-income developments, 9,434 units in senior facilities, 2,543 units in scattered sites, and 5,000 units in public housing. The plan, which was initiated a decade ago, is an ambitious one -- not only due to its scale, but due to its increasing incorporation of voluntary efforts aimed at achieving high standards of occupant wellness, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability.

Over the course of the plan, CHA has engaged in innovative partnerships with organizations in its community to expand its capacity to achieve these standards. In 2004, the housing authority teamed up with the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) to create an advisory committee and pilot project for implementing the use of "green" technologies in its housing. Some of the technologies tested include temperature sensors, combined smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and high-efficiency hot water heaters.

In 2009, CHA found extra incentive to invest in high-efficiency roofs and heating and hot water systems through the City of Chicago's Green Permit Program, which streamlines the permit process for green building proj-

ects. Some of its Westhaven Park Homes even achieved an Energy Star rating.

The Authority also participated in the City of Chicago's Clean and Green Initiative, encouraging its residents to take an active role in maintaining their outdoor property and shared spaces. Rounding out its efforts, the CHA conducts regular informational workshops on energy conservation for landlords and property owners.

The pioneering work of the CHA was recognized when its Park Boulevard property received the 2007 Community Vision Award for demonstrating excellence in five key areas: (1) location; (2) density, design, and diversity of uses; (3) transportations/mobility and accessibility; (4) environment; and (5) community assets. This fall, the Authority was also one of a select group of housing authorities to receive funding to improve the energy efficiency of its public housing units under a competitive grant provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Still, the CHA has even bigger plans. In 2010, the Authority will begin a community planning process for the redevelopment of its Lathrop Homes property. This planning initiative will outline energy conservation measures and strategies to develop a Leadership

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**NAHRO Energy Performance Contracting Seminar**  
 ▶ February 8-9, 2010 | Los Angeles, CA  
 ☞ [www.tinyurl.com/luqmso](http://www.tinyurl.com/luqmso)

**Better Buildings: Better Business**  
 ▶ March 3-5, 2010 | Wisconsin Dells, WI  
 ☞ [www.tinyurl.com/cxuprm](http://www.tinyurl.com/cxuprm)

**2010 Energy Efficiency Global Forum**  
 ▶ May 10-12, 2010 | Washington, DC  
 ☞ [www.eeglobalforum.org](http://www.eeglobalforum.org)

**National Green Building Conference**  
 ▶ May 16-18, 2010 | Raleigh, NC  
 ☞ [www.tinyurl.com/ngc10](http://www.tinyurl.com/ngc10)

**Five Day Intensive EPC Course**  
 ▶ June 14-18, 2010 | Chicago, IL  
 Call 312-554-0900 to register or contact Eugene Goldfarb, at [egoldf1@uic.edu](mailto:egoldf1@uic.edu)

in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) certified community.

LEED-ND, developed by the [U.S. Green Building Council \(USGBC\)](http://www.usgbc.org), the [Congress for New Urbanism](http://www.congressfornewurbanism.org), and the [Natural Resources Defense Council](http://www.naturalresourcesdefensecouncil.org), "integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism and green building into the first national system for neighborhood design. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a development's location and design meet accepted high levels of environmentally responsible, sustainable development."

Keep up with the CHA as it ramps up its efforts to achieve high standards of occupant wellness, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability by checking out their [website](http://www.thecha.org) regularly. [Click here](http://www.thecha.org) to view current and past Annual Plans and Reports. For questions about the Plan for Transformation, please contact [commentontheplan@thecha.org](mailto:commentontheplan@thecha.org).

Information for this article was obtained from the CHA website and publications and from HUD.

# HUD Notice on Greening Public Housing

On October 16, 2009, HUD released a notice, PIH-2009-43 (HA), encouraging the use of renewable energy and green construction practices in public housing. Through the notice, HUD “strongly encourages Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to use solar, wind, geothermal/ground coupled with heat pumps and other renewable energy sources, and other ‘green’ construction and rehabilitation techniques whenever they procure for maintenance, construction, or modernization.”

It explains that “properly incorporating green building techniques supports the goals of the President’s National Energy Policy by reducing the burden of public housing energy costs while increasing comfort and reducing health risks to public housing residents, and [minimizing] life-cycle costs.”

Green building incorporates low impact development, energy efficient system integration, recycling and waste management, water conservation and efficiency, and good indoor air quality throughout the entire lifetime of a building, including its planning, design, construction, renovation, and demolition. The advantages of green building include, but are not limited to: lower utility bills, better indoor environmental quality, higher resale values, preservation of natural resources, less reliance on fossil fuels and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and durability of building materials and structures.

PHAs can begin by reading the entire notice [here](#) and by becoming familiar with the [PIH Environmental Conservation Clearinghouse](#), [Energy Star](#), and the

[USGBC](#). For additional information regarding this notice, contact Leroy Ferguson at [Leroy.L.Ferguson@hud.gov](mailto:Leroy.L.Ferguson@hud.gov).

## A Few Resources for Greening New & Existing Homes

Following is a selection of programs offering information on sustainable construction and rehabilitation:

- The [ENERGY STAR](#) website contains a host of information on home energy efficiency. Check out their [New Homes](#) or [Home Improvement](#) sections for information for owners, occupants, and developers on why and how to meet high energy-efficiency standards. Check out the [Energy Star in Affordable Housing](#) site for information specific to PHAs and the [Energy Star @ Home](#) tool for simple energy-conservation tips for occupants.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) [WaterSense®](#) labeling program can direct you to products and providers that meet high water-efficiency standards.
- For information on how to achieve and maintain good indoor air quality, try the American Lung Association’s [Health House®](#) website.
- [StopPests.org](#) provides references, tools, and training to keep homes healthy and pest-free.

• For comprehensive information on green building and renovation practices, refer to the [USGBC’s LEED for Homes](#) program or the [National Association of Home Builders’ \(NAHB’s\) Green Home Building Program](#).

• Information on greening affordable housing, specifically, can be obtained from the USGBC’s [Affordable Housing Initiative](#), the Enterprise Green Communities [Criteria](#), or Global Green USA’s [Blueprint for Greening Affordable Housing](#).



## Just For Kids

The EPA is engaging kids to reduce, reuse and recycle with a program call Planet Protector. As a Planet Protector, kids learn to improve their surroundings through activities and games that can be downloaded by adults from the EPA’s website at: [www.tinyurl.com/planetprotect](http://www.tinyurl.com/planetprotect)

We want to hear from you! Please send us nominations for projects to be highlighted in EcoWise.

Contact us at [ecowise@deval.us](mailto:ecowise@deval.us)

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