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PHAs Join Federal Better Buildings Challenge

President Obama pledged to expand the Better Buildings Challenge as part of his June 2013 [Climate Action Plan](#), which laid out a series of steps to reduce carbon pollution, prepare the U.S. for the impacts of climate change and lead international efforts to address this global challenge. In December 2013, the Energy Department and the Department of Housing and Urban Development welcomed more than 50 multifamily housing partners to the Better Buildings Challenge, representing both for-profit and not-for-profit building owners as well as many public housing agencies, to cut energy waste. To date, these partners have committed to cutting energy waste across 255 million square feet, impacting more than 270,000 households.

As part of the Better Buildings Challenge, the new multifamily housing partners will showcase innovative strategies to boost energy efficiency, including lighting improvements, heating and cooling system upgrades, installing rooftop solar systems and supporting new financing for energy retrofits and green construction. These partners will also share best practices and lessons learned with other Challenge participants – serving as a model for the broader U.S. multifamily housing industry. Partners commit to reducing the energy consumption across their entire portfolio by 20% within 10 years, sharing portfolio-wide energy consumption data, and showcasing their work as models for others to follow. DOE and HUD are committed to finding every available opportunity to highlight and support the energy efficiency work of Better Buildings Challenge Partners.

You can learn more about the challenge, including how to join, at <http://www4.eere.energy.gov/challenge/>. There's also an introductory video about the challenge, featuring interviews with several new multifamily partners at <http://youtu.be/yhZH3e0LLT0>.

Q&A: Smoke-Free Policies at Chicago Housing Authority

Recently, the Office of Public and Indian Housing along with the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Housing conducted an interview with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) regarding implementation of smoke-free housing policies. The following excerpts were taken from the interview with CHA.

HUD: How did the residents feel about a smoke-free policy?

CHA: The residents were very excited about smoke-free housing. Residents clearly understand the benefits of smoke-free housing: healthier clean air, less risk of fires, and overall an improved housing environment.

HUD: Does CHA provide smoking cessation assistance to those residents that smoke?

CHA: Yes. CHA understands that smoking is an addictive behavior. In order to help more smokers quit and continue the healthy trend of a smoke-free housing environment, CHA with assistance from a Department of Health and Human Services Respiratory Health Association (RHA) grant was able to provide smoking cessation assistance.

HUD: Are all CHA properties smoke-free?

CHA: Not currently. Two low income properties as well some of our mixed-income properties are smoke-free. CHA's mixed-finance properties are trending towards smoke-free.

HUD: Are there plans for additional CHA properties to go smoke-free?

CHA: CHA is very receptive to smoke-free policies. Additionally, developers are being asked to build smoke-free properties.

HUD: How is CHA enforcing their smoke-free policies?

CHA: Enforcement of smoke-free becomes a lease violation once smoke-free language is included in the lease. Three violations of smoke-free can lead to legal actions against the residents.

HUD: Has CHA given consideration to e-cigarettes?

CHA: Not currently. However, the City of Chicago passed a city ordinance that smoking to include e-cigarettes are not allowed within public buildings.

HUD: Does CHA have additional thoughts on smoke-free?

CHA: Yes. Owners should realize the benefits of smoke-free housing to include asthma reduction.

426 housing agencies and low-income providers have already made the decision to go smoke-free. If this seems like the right choice for your housing agency start here: with the [Healthy Homes Smoke-Free Toolkit](#).

Resident's Corner | Battery Recycling

As our everyday tools become smaller, the world increasingly runs on batteries. But what do you do with these batteries after your gadget has drained all their power? Don't reach for your trash can, batteries need recycling or proper disposal.

Why Batteries Need Special Disposal

Batteries are powered by the reaction between heavy metals and chemical electrolytes. When thrown away, improperly, heavy metals, such as mercury, lead, and nickel can leach into their surroundings and contaminate the environment.

Battery Recycling Methods

- Single use batteries, like those used in television remotes and children's toys, contain alkaline or carbon zinc. These should be thrown away through your local hazardous waste disposal.
- Round, "button-cell" batteries, like those in watches, often contain valuable materials like lithium and are best recycled.
- Rechargeable batteries also often contain the valuable metals nickel and cadmium. The latter metal used in making electronics—especially televisions. Thanks to a law from congress, it's easy to tell if these batteries should be recycled: just look for the recycling symbol with the three arrows. If it's there, find a battery recycling program near you; if it's not, treat them like alkaline batteries and throw them out with the hazardous waste.



How to Find Recycling Centers

The EPA recommends using the website, [Earth911](#), as a resource. Their [Recycling Center Search](#) can help to find out where to dispose of batteries at stores, kiosks, or organizations in your area.



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