

## **More than 125,000 people apply for CHA spots** June 16, 2010

### **Waiting list will be whittled down to 40,000 through lottery**

By Daarel Burnette II, Tribune reporter

Three days after the Chicago Housing Authority reopened its waiting list for public housing, more than 125,000 people have signed up. The number is expected to keep climbing.

The agency has waiting list spots for 40,000 people but has opened the application process to everyone until July 9, when it will conduct a lottery to determine who can stay on the list.

"I don't think this surprised us," said CHA spokeswoman Kellie O'Connell-Miller. "I think it speaks to the need of affordable housing in the city."

This is the first time the CHA has reopened its waiting list in more than a decade. Anyone who thinks they qualify can apply at [chawaitlist.org](http://chawaitlist.org).

Officials on Wednesday warned of reports they have received of a Web site promising to get applicants bumped to the top of the waiting list for a fee. O'Connell-Miller said the agency's inspector general is looking into the allegations. In the meantime, the agency is emphasizing that registration is free and should be done only on the agency's official Web site.

From the list of people who register online, an outside vendor will conduct a lottery reducing the list to 40,000 people. Then the agency will determine from that list who is eligible.

Before 1999, the agency allowed open enrollment, and applicants could sign up anytime.

"We created a really long list," O'Connell-Miller said. "It was just too long to manage."

They closed that list in 1999, and about 5,000 people remaining on that list will be bumped to the top of the new list.

While public housing has been maligned in the past for concentrating thousands of residents into high-rises that were difficult to police and isolated residents from the rest of the community, the CHA boasts that the new homes are clean, safe and more accessible to jobs.

The policies that determine who qualifies have also changed. Chicago residents must be 18 or older and make less than 80 percent of the area median income, or about \$60,000 for a family of four. Residents who live in public housing must go to school, volunteer or work up to 20 hours a week, according to a new policy instituted last year, O'Connell-Miller said.

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