

News & Views

PUBLICLY SPEAKING

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) is embarking on a year of revitalization and rehabilitation, with our mission to improve the quality of life for our residents at the forefront of welcomed change and growth. The HACP has exciting news to share and will begin by providing “50 million reasons” for our residents to cheer on the coming changes.

I am very proud to announce we were the recipient of a \$50 million dollar Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Grant from HUD. The grant will play a vital role in the restoration of Bedford Dwellings, facilitating the creation of favorable conditions that attract public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods by

concentrating on the core focal points of: Housing, Neighborhood and People.

Critical to the HACP’s redevelopment plan is our relocation strategy, known as “build first and move once.” City’s Edge, the first phase of development, follows that plan. This fall, we began the redevelopment of Bedford Dwellings with the groundbreaking of City’s Edge. It is a critical component of the HACP’s overall revitalization of Bedford Dwellings and the Middle Hill.

In addition to our commitment to expanding our footprint across the city, we are also committed to keeping families in their homes. In 2023, our eviction prevention measures helped 312 families with mediation efforts and rental assistance of nearly \$590,000, thanks to key partnerships with Just Mediation Pittsburgh, Rent Help Pittsburgh and Ursuline Support Services.

The HACP’s central offices have officially relocated to 412 Blvd. of the Allies. This effort has consolidated our main office, along with City Planning, the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and other partner organizations under one roof, providing the City of Pittsburgh residents with a true “one-stop shop” for municipal services. The One-Stop Shop, located in the first floor lobby of the 412 building, serves as an information hub for Low-Income Public Housing (LIPH) applicants, and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) holders, applicants and landlords.

As we continue to bridge the digital divide, our W.O.W. (WiFi on Wheels) CyberBus program – with support from the Jerome Bettis Bus Stops Here Foundation, STEM Coding Lab, the City of Pittsburgh Mayor’s Office, HUD and generous foundation grants – marked its first year of STEM programming in 2023. This innovative mobile unit visits the HACP communities in our ongoing efforts to teach families digital literacy.

Last, but certainly not least, I am proud to announce the HACP assisted nearly 1,000 families with access to safe, affordable housing in 2023, through a combination of our LIPH, HCV and Homeownership Programs.

We look forward to opening doors to even more Pittsburgh families in the coming months, offering “A Place to Live and Path to Launch” and proving to all that at the HACP we’re not just building houses, but homes.

Caster D. Binion
Executive Director

Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
Winter 2024

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The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh was recently awarded a \$50 million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Grant, which will go toward the revitalization efforts at Bedford Dwellings.

Bedford Dwellings Receives \$50 MILLION Choice Neighborhood Initiative Grant

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh's (HACP) and the City of Pittsburgh are proud to announce they have received a \$50 million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) Grant, provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The historic grant award was formally recognized during a check presentation ceremony that was open to the entire Bedford Dwellings community.

The CNI funding award marks a significant step toward the transformation of Bedford Dwellings. The community holds the distinction of being the oldest occupied public housing community in Pennsylvania and in the City of Pittsburgh, comprising 411 units. The community was one of seven New Deal Era public housing communities built in Pittsburgh between 1939 and 1944.

"We are extremely happy for the residents of Bedford Dwellings. They have been patient and engaged throughout the planning process and we're at this point due to their

persistent efforts. Additionally, there are a host of partner organizations that have dedicated significant resources toward preparing for this moment," said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. "The time is now for Bedford Dwellings and the Greater Hill District community. This effort is going to produce generational change, serving as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization."

HUD's Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) plays a vital role in community transformation by revitalizing distressed public and assisted housing while also igniting essential improvements. Their primary objective is to facilitate the creation of favorable conditions that attract public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods by concentrating on the core focal points of: Housing, Neighborhood and People.

HUD's grant will serve as crucial assistance for the initiation of the redevelopment and enhancement process of Bedford Dwellings. Mayor Ed Gainey and Pittsburgh City Council have pledged \$30 million in city funds over time to ensure the positive outcome of the redevelopment. The entire investment for the transformation will amount to more than \$400 million over the next seven years, with an anticipated completion by 2030. Additionally, the project is expected to generate more than 200 employment opportunities, with the bulk of the jobs hopefully to be filled by residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

"This effort is going to produce generational change, serving as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization."

—HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion



Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey, Former Bedford Dwellings Tenant Council President Gail Felton and HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion, speak during a ceremony announcing a \$50 million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Grant for Bedford Dwellings.

City's Edge Groundbreaking Kicks Off Phase I Bedford Choice Neighborhoods Housing

HACP and our CNI partner organizations have already commenced construction activities related to the Bedford Dwellings revitalization. The groundbreaking for the first phase of the Bedford Choice Neighborhood Initiative, City's Edge, took place on Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023.

“Through partnerships and collaborations, we’re able to offer residents an opportunity to have a safe and affordable place to call home with City’s Edge. This is an example of how development can help strengthen a community,” said Mayor Ed Gainey.

City’s Edge is a seven-story property that will include 173,124 square feet of residential space. Of the 110 apartment/rental units, 92 units will be affordable for households with incomes at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) subsidized with project-based vouchers. Forty-three units will serve as replacement housing for Bedford Dwellings residents as part of the recently announced Choice Neighborhoods redevelopment initiative that will rebuild and revitalize Bedford Dwellings and the surrounding neighborhood.

Amenities will include a parking garage, community room, management office, fitness center, 13 accessible units, additional storage space on the upper levels, and 4,000 square feet of green space.

City’s Edge will also feature 38,641 square feet of commercial space, known as City’s Edge Commercial. Along with office/business space for Minority/Women Business Enterprises



(MBE and WBE), City’s Edge Commercial will feature a healthcare facility/pharmacy, business lounge, ATM banking center, and a parking garage.

“We’re proud to be working with MidPoint, PHFA, and the entire City’s Edge development team to bring this critical housing development to the City of Pittsburgh,” said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. “City’s Edge will be a critical component of the HACP’s overall revitalization of Bedford Dwellings and the Middle Hill, and it also represents yet another innovative, high quality affordable housing initiative to receive support from HACP’s Project-Based Voucher (PBV)/Gap Financing Program.”

HACP One-Stop Shop Gives Applicants the 411 on Housing Needs

Applicants seeking assistance through the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) can visit our One-Stop Shop, located on the first floor of our new building at 412 Boulevard of the Allies. This information hub opened in July 2023, and welcomes visitors from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The site’s friendly staff can assist city residents in applying for Low-Income Public Housing, making changes to existing applications, checking a waiting list status and submitting application packets and documents for occupancy, according to Kim Middleton, front desk assistant with the HACP Occupancy Department.

The help doesn’t end there. Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program clients can meet with a housing specialist, submit moving or recertification papers, add or remove parties from their vouchers, extend their vouchers and submit paperwork for grievance hearings.

“We’re here to answer any questions folks may have,” added Middleton.



Landlords who participate in the HCV program may also submit requests and pick up documents at the site.

Please note: the One-Stop Shop does not offer services for current Low-Income Public Housing residents in need of assistance regarding rent payments, repairs and other issues. Those requests are handled by your property management team and can be resolved with a call to your community’s site manager.

Stop by today and join us in working to build not just houses, but homes.



HACP Welcomes **NEW DEVELOPMENTS** Thanks to **PBV/Gap Financing Program**

In June, HACP added two communities to its growing list of developments that are part of the Project-Based Voucher (PBV)/Gap Financing Program.

On June 1, HACP and partner organizations Beacon Communities, RBC, BNY Mellon, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA), the City of Pittsburgh, and the Department of Housing & Urban Development celebrated the completion of The Carina, the former B'nai Israel Synagogue on North Negley Avenue, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The Carina is a mixed-income housing community in East Liberty, comprising 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units for a total of 45. Certified by Enterprise Green Communities, the building is designed to use minimal energy and features rooftop solar panels to offset energy consumption. "The Rotunda," originally designed by architect Henry Hornbostel, has been transformed into a multi-use space for community gatherings and events with a focus on the performing arts.

"The Carina exemplifies the types of projects we envisioned when we developed the PBV/Gap Financing Program," said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. "Not only does it create additional affordable housing, but we are also restoring a historic asset in an environmentally-friendly way. HACP is very proud to be a part of this development and the opportunity to create an additional 13 units of affordable housing in the East End."

On June 22, a ground-breaking ceremony was held for Cedarwood Homes. Located at the former site of the Fairywood School in the West End, Cedarwood Homes is an affordable housing community for senior citizens aged 62 and above. The community will be the first Low Income Housing Tax Credit-financed senior citizens community in Pittsburgh's West End neighborhood. HACP has committed \$1.6 million in funding towards the development of Cedarwood Homes via the PBV/Gap Financing Program, as well as 24 Project-Based Vouchers to support the affordability of these units.

Established in December 2015 by the HACP and ARMDC, the PBV/Gap Financing Program encourages all levels of affordable developers, including community-based organizations, to invest in their communities by preserving and developing affordable housing. The program offers vital support to qualified organizations by providing both development financing and project-based operating subsidies.

To date, HACP's PBV/Gap Financing Program has invested more than \$17 million in Gap Financing Loans, resulting in the development and preservation of over 600 units of housing.

"Funding from HACP's Project Based Voucher/Gap Financing program is supporting innovative affordable housing developments in neighborhoods throughout the city," said Caster D. Binion. "We continue to use every tool at our discretion in order to meet the growing demand for affordable housing."

The Carina ribbon-cutting (former B'nai Israel Synagogue)



HACP and local officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in June 2023 to celebrate the addition of The Carina, formerly the B'nai Israel Synagogue in East Liberty, to its list of developments.



HACP added The Carina, formerly the B'nai Israel Synagogue in East Liberty, to its growing list of developments in June 2023.

Cedarwood Homes Groundbreaking

Cedarwood Homes began accepting waiting list applications for persons age 62 and older on February 6, 2024. Application information is available on www.hacp.org.



HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion smiles with pride at the June 2023 groundbreaking of Cedarwood Homes in the West End.



Ground was broken in June 2023 for the Cedarwood Homes Project-Based Voucher/Gap Financing project in the West End. The 46-unit community will be for senior citizens.

City's Edge Groundbreaking



HACP, Allies & Ross Management and Development Corporation (ARMDC) and city and local officials celebrate the groundbreaking of City's Edge, the first phase of the revitalization efforts in the Hill District and Bedford Dwellings, in September 2023.



HACP, ARMDC, city and local officials break ground at City's Edge in September 2023.

HACP Receives \$4.6 Million Increase in Funding for HCV Program

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh received an allocation of \$60,508,871 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the HACP Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) in 2023. The \$4.6 million funding increase was formally announced by HUD early last year by HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge. The announcement highlighted how communities across the country can use these resources to attract more landlords to the HCV program and get more people into affordable housing.

The infusion has been allocated toward a number of enhancements to the voucher program, including additional incentives for participating landlords, such as \$1,000 bonuses for new landlords entering the program, and enhanced payments for properties with recent renovations or properties with certain accessibility features. HACP also intends to use the additional funds to add capacity to the department and improve upon customer service features for both HCV clients and landlords.

“We have been ramping up our staff throughout the year and simultaneously working to train new and existing staff on how to provide an exemplary customer service experience,” said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. “We have experienced high levels of staffing turnover within the last year and will be seeking to fill critical positions and to improve lines of communication between staff and landlords and

staff and clients, but we’ll be coming out of 2023 in a much stronger position.”

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program – the nation’s largest rental assistance program – helps low-income families, the elderly and the disabled rent decent, safe and sanitary housing units in the private market. Each year, HCVs help lift more than one million people nation-wide out of poverty and give families the opportunity to move to safer, less poor neighborhoods. The HCV program offers a number of benefits to participating families and communities, including:

- Increasing housing stability
- Reducing poverty
- Helping low-wage workers make ends meet
- Giving families access to safer neighborhoods with better schools and opportunities
- Allowing senior citizens and disabled individuals to live independently

HACP currently provides housing to roughly 5,600 families through the Housing Choice Voucher Program and works with more than 1,000 landlords.

Landlords wishing to partner with the HCV Program can find more information on our website at: hacp.org/doing-business/landlord-resources



The **HACP W.O.W CyberBus** in partnership with **STEM Coding Lab** and **The Bus Stops Here Foundation** operate an afterschool program Monday through Friday from 2 to 6 P.M. at the following locations:

Arlington Heights	Bedford Dwellings	Homewood North	Northview Heights	Northview Heights
Monday 2-6 P.M.	Tuesday 2-6 P.M.	Wednesday 2-6 P.M.	Thursday 2-6 P.M.	Friday 2-6 P.M.

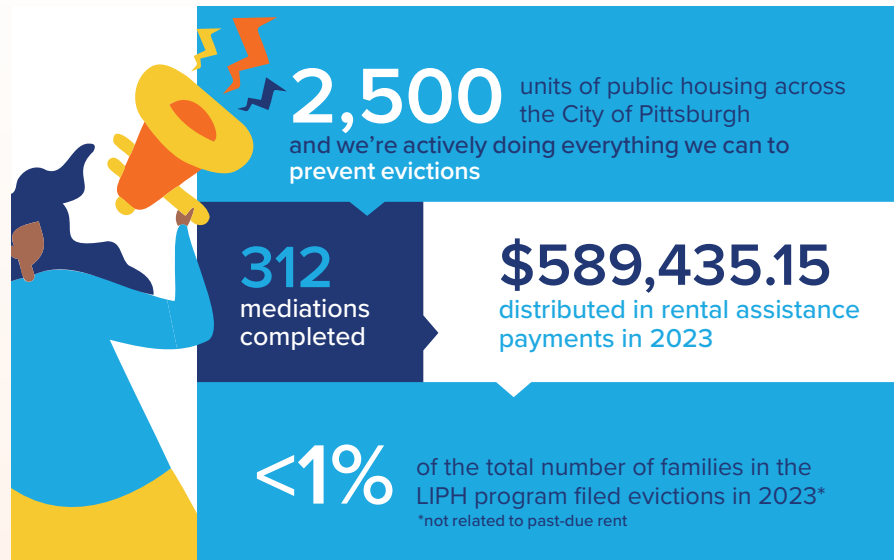
The **CyberBus** will also operate during the day time to provide classes at HACP Senior High Rises and Family Communities* on the following days and times:

Arlington Heights	Carrick Regency	Pressley Street	PA Bidwell	Mazza Pavilion
Monday 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.	Tuesday 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.	Wednesday 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.	Thursday 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.	Friday 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.

**These locations may change based upon the CyberBus’ ability to fit and/or park at these locations. A test run will be completed to ensure these locations will be able to accommodate the CyberBus.*

Behind on Your Rent?

HACP Has a Number of Eviction Prevention Methods in Place For Residents



The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) understands that residents may fall on hard times, which could prevent them from paying their rent on time.

Did you know HACP has a number of eviction prevention programs in place that provide rental assistance to qualifying applicants? Affordable repayment agreements are also available for residents who do not qualify for assistance.

Anthony Geoffe, HACP's Senior Director of Asset Management, said rental assistance is available through partnerships with Just Mediation Pittsburgh and Rent Help Pittsburgh. Another crucial partnership with Ursuline Support Services provides HACP residents with eviction prevention coordinators who connect residents with rental assistance resources, budget counseling and financial literacy education. Ursuline also manages an internal rental assistance program for qualified families.

The HACP filed 17 evictions in 2023, which represents less than 1% of the total number of families in the Low-Income Public Housing program. These evictions were due to social and public safety issues, and were not regarding past-due rent. The HACP also completed 312 mediations and distributed \$589,435.15 in rental assistance payments through the mediation process in 2023.

Any resident in HACP's Low-Income Public Housing units with a past-due balance of at least 30 days can qualify for assistance through a number of programs. Funding through ACTION-Housing is based on your current rent amount. Repayment agreement plans for those who do not qualify for assistance are based on 40% of your gross monthly income.

Residents in need of eviction prevention and mediation assistance can seek help from their site manager, who can point them to the Ursuline Eviction Prevention Coordinator assigned to their area.

A similar program, the Senior Living Enhancement Program, has been in place for many years to assist senior citizen residents and persons with disabilities in our high-rise communities.

Geoffe stressed if an eviction notice is filed, that does not necessarily mean a resident will be evicted – but it does mean that action is required on the part of the resident.

"A lease termination notice for unpaid rent does not guarantee that an eviction will occur or that a complaint will be filed in court," he said. "The notice gives residents the opportunity to connect with the HACP and work collaboratively to identify opportunities to address the past due balance."

"We have created a really robust partnership with Ursuline Support Services, Just Mediation Pittsburgh and Rent Help Pittsburgh, which has resulted in over \$2 million in rental support for our residents and kept hundreds of families in their homes with the financial assistance provided," Geoffe said.

Residents are also encouraged to take advantage of HACP's Family Self-Sufficiency and Resident Self-Sufficiency programs, which include employment services, driver's license assistance and education. Once plans are in place, the coordinators work with residents to make sure they stay on target with payments.

The HACP continues to expand its footprint in an effort to increase its public housing offerings. In 2023, the organization acquired 23 new units, and is investing in ongoing redevelopment endeavors across its communities.

Our executive staff also participates in a county-wide eviction prevention cohort made up of partners with The Pittsburgh Foundation, the Department of Human Services, the Allegheny County Housing Authority and court system representatives, among others, to continue to create opportunities for residents to avoid eviction.

Requests for assistance may also be submitted by emailing: lowincomepublichousing@hacp.org.

For more information, visit: hacp.org/rent-resources.



HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion speaks to the graduates of the November 2023 Virtual Parenting Program cohort.



Edward Wilson poses with his Virtual Parenting Program certificate during the November 2023 cohort's graduation ceremony.



Virtual Parenting Program graduate Emma Conn (far right) poses with HACP staff, from left: Mungereza Mayende, Caster D. Binion, Michelle Sandidge, and Karen Garrett, during the November 2023 cohort's graduation ceremony.

Virtual Parenting Program Celebrates November 2023 Graduates, Looks Toward Future Growth

HACP's Virtual Parenting Program has given another group of parents, guardians and caregivers the tools to tackle the challenges associated with raising children.

Twenty-three graduates were recognized during a graduation ceremony in November 2023 after completing the six-week virtual course that teaches participants everything from positive parenting, trauma and healing, financial literacy and eating healthy on a budget.

International parenting coach, educator and psychotherapist Dr. Carol Chakua was a new speaker added to the lineup, and her program was very well received.

"Everyone really enjoyed what she taught them," Mungereza Mayende, clinical coordinator and referral manager in HACP's Residential Self-Sufficiency department, said. "She brought a whole new element to the program in helping parents to believe in themselves, and to parent differently from the way they were parented, especially where there was trauma involved."

Mayende developed the program for HACP's Low-Income Public Housing residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. With financial support from Highmark Wholecare, classes began in August 2022.

"The success of this program means a lot to me," she said. "I have seen our graduates grow into a resource for their children and become someone they can depend on, and parent them without the trauma. It's helping to heal the world, one child at a time."

Participating LIPH residents are also given a stipend, books on parenting and other goodies for completing the course, such as Giant Eagle gift cards for purchasing healthy foods.

Participants are also encouraged to share feedback to let HACP know which topics they are most interested in learning more about. They have expressed interest in learning ways to respond to their children without yelling and budgeting as a single parent, among other topics.

Mayende is excited to see what the future will bring to the program, and hopes to see it continue to grow. She added it's encouraging to see more single fathers enrolling in the class, noting the first cohort welcomed one single father and the November class enrolled seven.

"I'm hoping to introduce new subjects, including one portion that focuses on single parenting and parenting in a blended family," she said. "I would also like one class to focus specifically on trauma, whether it's to help parents who have lost another child be present for their other children or helping children who have experienced trauma in their lives."

The next Virtual Parenting Program cohort is planned for mid-March 2024, and 16 residents are already signed up. The class can now accommodate 30 participants, which has doubled since its inception.

Karen Rollins-Fitch, Highmark's Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, said Highmark Wholecare is proud to support HACP's Virtual Parenting Program.



The November 2023 Virtual Parenting Program participants are joined by HACP staff, including Mungereza Mayende, Michelle Sandidge and Caster D. Binion during their graduation ceremony.

"Highmark Wholecare is happy to support initiatives like the parenting classes that are provided at HACP. When looking at whole person care, well informed parents make a difference in the lives of well cared for children, which results in an improved community. Highmark Wholecare focuses on physical health, but the wellbeing of the needs in mental, and financial health, are just as important," she said.

The program is open to all parents, grandparents, guardians and caregivers of children under age 18. At least one parent, guardian or caregiver must be listed on an HACP lease in order to enroll. For more information on joining a future cohort, contact Mayende at: mungereza.mayende@hacp.org.

BULLY HOTLINE



412-471-2275

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) has added a Bully Hotline to the Safety Tip Line. Bullying can be defined as, but is not limited to, any action seeking to harm, intimidate, or coerce another person.

HACP encourages residents to reach out and report incidents of bullying by using the anonymous Bully Hotline. Together, we can make our communities a safer environment.



PUBLIC SAFETY HAS ADDED SPEED BUMPS TO THE NORTHVIEW HEIGHTS COMMUNITY.

Speed bumps and humps are intended to slow vehicles on the road, neighborhoods, and parking lots. When you hit a speed bump at a high rate of speed, it's the same as striking every part in the car with a hammer.



While cars are built to withstand some abuse on the road, the more frequent and harder the strikes are, the sooner those parts begin to wear.



Don't make a habit of flying over speed bumps, no matter the size of your vehicle. Constant hits also cause unpleasant rattles and squeaks, loosening and even dropping parts along the way. Going over a speed bump very slowly is very easy on your car.



Clean Slate E3 Scholarship Program

Proudly Celebrates 25 Years

Clean Slate E3, the nonprofit affiliate of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), and its partner organization NEED are once again empowering HACP students with scholarships for post-secondary education for the 2023-24 academic year. Scholarship funds have been awarded to seven new recipients and 24 returning students, totaling 31 awards.

Applications for the next round of scholarships will become available on **March 1, 2024**.

Clean Slate E3 scholarships have supported students that have attended higher education institutions across the nation, from local schools like the University of Pittsburgh and Carlow University, to out-of-state colleges like Howard University and North Carolina A&T University.

Since its inception, 158 HACP students have been granted more than \$600,000 in scholarship awards.

CLEAN SLATE E³

The scholarship is available to all residents of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, including students who reside in Low-Income Public Housing or those who participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Scholarships are awarded to high school seniors who are in good academic standing with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5, and will be attending school on a full-time basis.

Michelle Sandidge, HACP's Chief Community Affairs Officer, reflected on the growth of the nonprofit and the HACP's history of supporting resident empowerment efforts. "We launched Clean Slate 25 years ago in order to lift up the young minds that live in our communities and connect them with a path to launch. Today, we can look back and reflect upon the success the program has achieved while continuing to invest in young HACP residents through Clean Slate E3."

For additional information about Clean Slate E3, visit: <https://hacp.org/programs-services/scholarship-fund>.

Resident Employment/Section 3 Program

Section 3 Opportunities

OSA Global Security Guard

- Armed/Unarmed Security Guard

Construction Jobs

- Laborer
- Landscaper
- Stone Mason
- Carpenter
- Drywall
- Flooring
- Journeyman
- Availability: Monday - Friday
- Applicant must be able to pass background and drug test.
- Typical salary rate: \$14.82 - \$25.50

Community Empowerment Association

The Community Empowerment Association provides 6 weeks of FREE soft skills training that is incorporated into workshop/classroom instruction. Training will include role-plays, mock interviews, resume writing, filling applications, financial literacy, and other simulations at appropriate opportunities.

Individual coaching, mentoring, and case management will be provided on a case-by-case basis through the duration of the program.

Participants will be introduced to union trades and after the program, participants will possess an introductory knowledge of the following:

- Carpentry Fundamentals
- Landscaping
- Concrete
- Painting
- Drywall
- Weatherization



"We believe in you, in us, in our community, and in our people."

For more information, contact: Lloyd C. Wilson, Jr. 412-643-2761

Protect Yourself From Scam Artists

More than 12,000 Allegheny County residents lost nearly \$8 million last year to various scams.



According to the Senior Justice Advocacy Division with the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office, thieves can target you via mail, telephone, the internet and even at your door.

Anyone can become the victim of a scam, and scam artists have many ways of tricking you into believing their ploys – which can range from charity scams, Medicare card scams and gift card scams to Social Security scams and tax preparation scams. Thieves will stop at nothing to steal from you, and will even impersonate law enforcement officials.

How to Avoid a Scam

The DA's office Fraud Squad has a number of tips on avoiding scams, including:

- **DON'T ANSWER YOUR PHONE** unless the number is programmed into it. It's best to let it go to voicemail, then listen and THINK
- **RETURNING A CALL?** If you want to return a call, be sure the number is correct and you're not calling the scammer without knowing it. (Look the number up or ask someone to help you look it up.)
- **REMEMBER:** The number you see on your caller ID may be FAKE. Scammers can make that number look like any number they want, including Medicare and Social Security. It's called "spoofing."
- **NEVER** give personal information of any kind to anyone who calls you.
- **DO NOT SEND GIFT CARDS OR MONEY ORDERS AS PAYMENT.** Anyone calling you and asking to send gift cards or money orders for payment is a scam artist.

Avoiding Scams Workshops

The District Attorney's Office Senior Justice Advocates Cyndie Carioli, Joe Giuffre and Dick Skrinjar will meet with HACP highrise residents in February and March 2024 to further educate HACP residents on spotting and avoiding scams.

Visit your site management team or watch for flyers posted in your building for information on upcoming workshops.

"This is the year of prevention," Carioli said. "We really want to prevent people from becoming victims."

Important Numbers to Call

Police or Medical Emergency: 9-1-1

Area Agency on Aging Protective Services:
412-350-6905

Area Agency on Aging SENIOR LINE:
412-350-5460

PA Attorney General Complaint Line:
1-888-777-3406 or <https://attorneygeneral.gov>

Federal Trade Commission-Report a Scam:
1-877-382-4357 or <https://ftc.gov>

AARP Fraud Helpline:
1-877-908-3360, or
<https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/>



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Executive Director

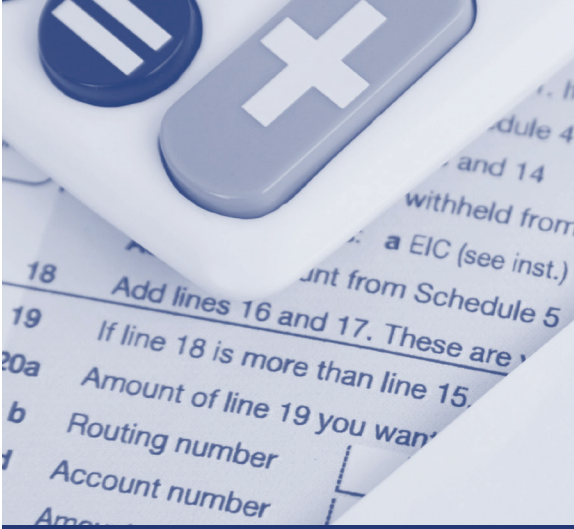
Caster D. Binion

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Follow HACP on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/HACP1>





Bedford EnVision Center
2305 Bedford Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

It's Tax Time Again At the Bedford EnVision Center!

If you made **\$40,000 or less** filing as a single person, or if your family made **\$65,000 or less** filing together in 2023, you may qualify to have your taxes done for free.

Starting January 22, 2024, appointments at the Bedford EnVision Center will be:

Monday & Wednesday	Saturday
5:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.	9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

To schedule an appointment, please call **2-1-1** from your phone, or visit pa211.org/vita.