

Buford Housing Authority

"The Interview"


January 2020, Newsletter



# "Interview"

A newsletter for the Residents of the  
Buford Housing Authority  
Calendar of Events for January 2020

**LAST DAY TO PAY RENT IS  
MONDAY, January 9, 2020.**



**Buford Housing Authority**  
office will be closed  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>  
*New Year's Day*

**NOTICE:** This will inform you that Maintenance personnel will be going door to door during the month of **February on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>** to replace furnace filters and to check the vent systems. Maintenance will be going into each room to check every vent. This is your NOTICE that Maintenance personnel will be coming into your apartment.

**Please make sure your maintenance closet is not blocked with furniture or other personal belongings.**

**RENT CHANGES EFFECTIVE APRIL 1:** Please remember new rent amounts will go into effect April 1, 2020 for ALL tenants. Recertification increases are immediate and therefore the standard 30-day delay on increased rent amounts do not apply. Please call the office if you have questions.



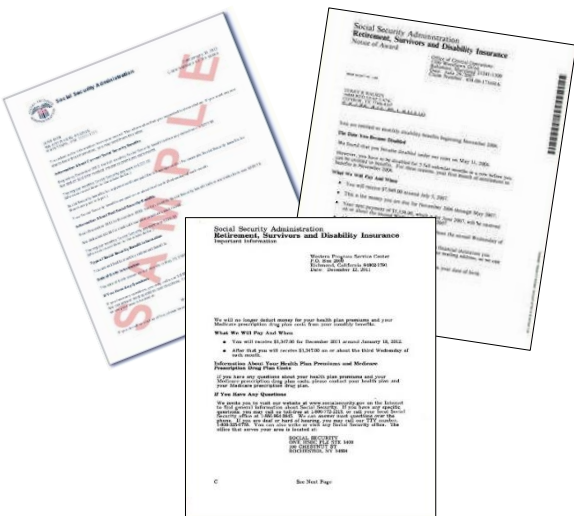
**SATELLITE DISHES:** Beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 satellite dishes will no longer be allowed on Housing Authority property. Satellite Dishes are an eyesore in the neighborhoods, and they are a hazard to our lawn maintenance crew. If you are currently using a satellite, you have until April 1<sup>st</sup> to get your service switched. If you are currently under contract with a satellite provider, please call the office.



**RECERTIFICATION:** BHA is going paperless! For your recertification this year, you will sign all paperwork electronically and leave the appointment with your new 2020 lease. This appointment can take up to an hour. Because of this change it is crucial that you bring in ALL required documentation to your scheduled appointment in January. When you received your letter in December, there was a check list of required items that you must bring to your recertification appointment. All adult tenants will also be expected to attend this appointment. If you fail to bring ALL the required documentation or if ALL adult family members are not in

attendance to sign, you will be turned away and you will have reschedule a time to come back to complete your recertification.

Recertification is a required part of your lease. Failure to comply with recertification requirements will result in immediate lease termination and eviction. Please call the office if you have questions.

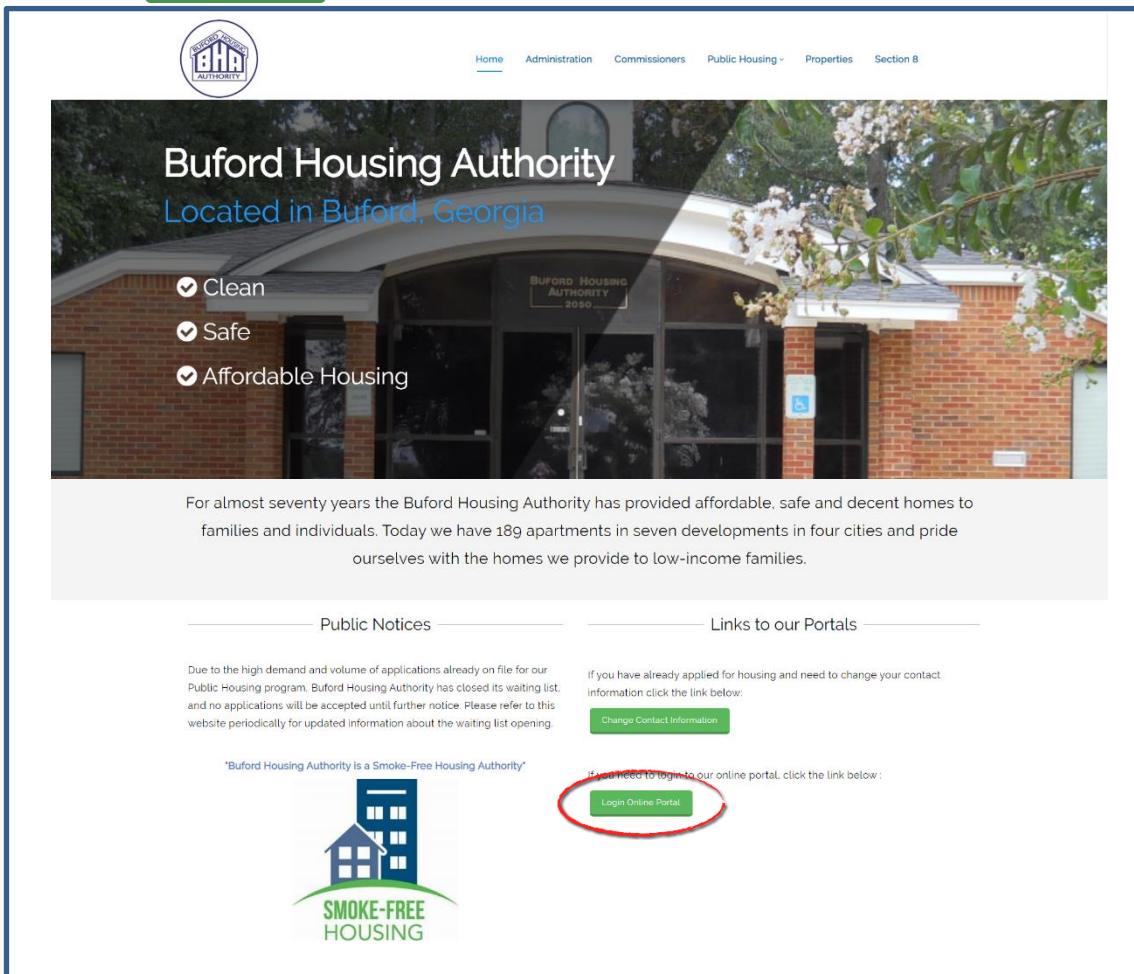


**SOCIAL SECURITY STATEMENTS:** All tenants who receive Social Security and/or SSI will need to bring in their 2020 award letter(s) to their recertification appointment in January. This statement should have been mailed to you by the end of December 2019. If you have not received your statement by the end of the year, you can get one by visiting a local Social Security office or you can go online and print one off yourself. The website is [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). On this website you can check your statement(s), change your address, and manage your benefits all online.

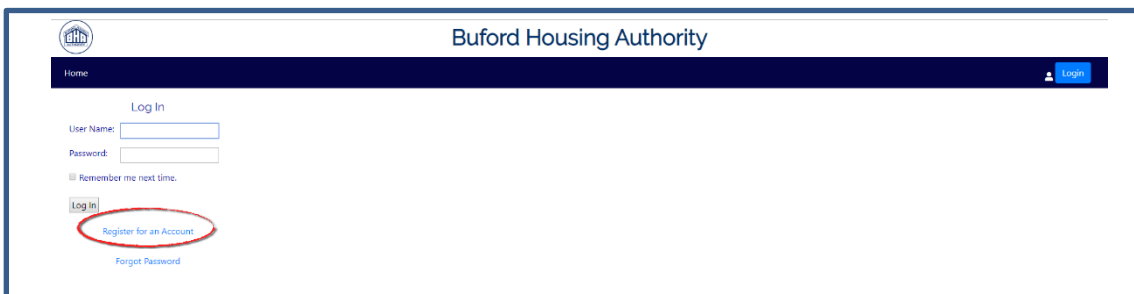
**MEDICAL DEDUCTIONS:** Recertification will begin in January. Those tenants who have medical deductions need to contact their physicians, pharmacies, health care providers etc. and get PRINTOUTS of their 2019 out-of-pocket amounts paid. Please DO NOT BRING IN STACKS OF RECEIPTS or copies of checks written to physician groups as proof of medical expenses. Your medical providers can easily produce a printout of your 2019 history which is easier to decipher and is typically more accurate than a stack of receipts. Please call the office if you have questions.



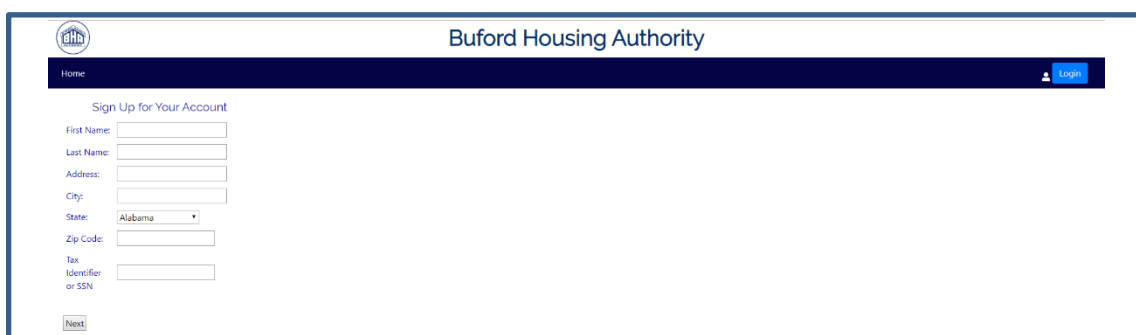
ONLINE PORTAL ACCOUNT AND PAYMENTS: To set up your online portal payments, go to our website [www.bufordhousing.com](http://www.bufordhousing.com). On the home page scroll down to the “Links to our Portals” Click on [Login Online Portal](#) to set up an account.



Then click on [Register for an Account](#)



Next, continue the setup process by filling in the required information and continue clicking through to complete and finalize your account.





# GET YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY VACCINATED!

A yearly flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.

Everyone 6 months or older should get an annual flu vaccine. Protect Yourself. Protect Your Family. Get Vaccinated. #FightFlu

**FREEZE**

## WARNING

Inclement weather is coming. You **MUST** follow community guidelines to ensure the safety of our property as well as your own.

- Let faucets drip
- Keep thermostat above 65°
- Open cabinet doors below sinks

DRIPPING FAUCETS: During periods of very cold weather when the temperature is expected to be below freezing, you are required to let the water in your kitchen sink, bathroom sink and bathtub drip or run a tiny stream of water. The Housing Authority pays for your water and this action should prevent your pipes from freezing. We also require that you leave kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors open. This will allow the warm air from the room to circulate and help prevent the pipes from freezing. If your water pipes freeze, you will have no water until they thaw

and there is nothing that Maintenance can do speed up the thawing of frozen water pipes in the walls.

From your lease:

#### 4. UTILITIES

B. I agree to maintain heat to the apartment sufficient to prevent freezing of piped water. If for any reason, I am unable to maintain sufficient heat, I will immediately notify the Authority. During periods of very cold weather, I shall allow faucets in my kitchen and bathroom to drip or run slowly and I will open the cabinet doors under my sinks to allow heated air from my apartment to enter the cabinets as these actions may prevent the freezing of water in the pipes associated with my apartment. I will be charged for any damages resulting from my failure to maintain sufficient heat or to notify the Authority. I will take action to conserve energy including keeping lights off during the day and keeping windows closed during the winter. I will not permit anyone to use electricity, gas and/or water except for my family or housing authority staff. I agree not to utilize water for recreation purposes. I agree to report all minor water leaks to the Authority office within three (3) working days and will immediately report any major leaks.

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTY: The Housing Authority Resident Association had a wonderful holiday celebration with gifts and lots of yummy food. Everyone had a fantastic time as you can see from all the smiling faces in these pictures. We would like to thank the Resident Association president, Shaun Rogers, for all her hard work in getting the food, decorations, and gifts all donated by local businesses and churches. Grace Lanier Church provided goodies and had a drawing for several gift cards for families who attended the party. You do not want to miss this event next year!



We would also like to thank Keller Williams Realty Atlanta Partners and their Kares for Kid's project for their contributions to our teens. Local KW real estate agents volunteer their time and monies throughout the year to give back to our local communities and their children. The KW Kares for Kid's team feels strongly that during the Holiday season teenagers are an overlooked age group. We want to thank Keller Williams North Gwinnett for contributing gift cards to all our resident teens living in BHA. Thank you, Keller Williams!



# The 2020 Census and Confidentiality

Your responses to the 2020 Census are safe, secure, and protected by federal law. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics—they **cannot be used against you in any way**. By law, all responses to U.S. Census Bureau household and business surveys are kept completely confidential.

## Respond to the 2020 Census to shape the future.

Responding to the census helps communities get the funding they need and helps businesses make data-driven decisions that grow the economy. Census data impact our daily lives, informing important decisions about funding for services and infrastructure in your community, including health care, senior centers, jobs, political representation, roads, schools, and businesses. More than \$675 billion in federal funding flows back to states and local communities each year based on census data.



## Your census responses are safe and secure.

The Census Bureau is required by law to protect any personal information we collect and keep it strictly confidential. The Census Bureau can only use your answers to produce statistics. In fact, every Census Bureau employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life. Your answers cannot be used for law enforcement purposes or to determine your personal eligibility for government benefits.

## By law, your responses cannot be used against you.

By law, your census responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way—not by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), not by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), not by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and not by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The law requires the Census Bureau to keep your information confidential and use your responses only to produce statistics.

United States  
**Census**  
**2020**



## The law is clear—no personal information can be shared.

Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about individuals, households, or businesses, even to law enforcement agencies.

The law states that the information collected may only be used for statistical purposes and no other purpose.

To support historical research, Title 44 of the U.S. Code allows the National Archives and Records Administration to release census records only after 72 years.

All Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information, and any violation comes with a penalty of up to \$250,000 and/or up to 5 years in prison.



### **There are no exceptions.**

The law requires the Census Bureau to keep everyone's information confidential. By Law, your responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way. The Census Bureau will not share an individual's responses with immigration enforcement agencies, law enforcement agencies, or allow that information to be used to determine eligibility for government benefits. Title 13 makes it very clear that the data we collect can only be used for statistical purposes—we cannot allow it to be used for anything else, including law enforcement.

### **It's your choice: you can respond securely online, by mail, or by phone.**

You will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone. Households that don't respond in one of these ways will be visited by a census taker to collect the information in person. Regardless of how you respond, your personal information is protected by law.

### **Your online responses are safe from hacking and other cyberthreats.**

The Census Bureau takes strong precautions to keep online responses secure. All data submitted online are encrypted to protect personal privacy, and our cybersecurity program meets the highest and most recent standards for protecting personal information. From the moment the Census Bureau collects responses, our focus and legal obligation is to keep them safe.

### **We are committed to confidentiality.**

At the U.S. Census Bureau, we are absolutely committed to keeping your responses confidential. This commitment means it is safe to provide your answers and know that they will only be used to paint a statistical portrait of our nation and communities.

Learn more about the Census Bureau's data protection and privacy program at [www.census.gov/privacy](http://www.census.gov/privacy).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE 2020 CENSUS WEBSITE [www.2020Census.gov](http://www.2020Census.gov)**

United States  
**Census  
2020**



### **Laws protecting personal census information have withstood challenges.**

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed that even addresses are confidential and cannot be disclosed through legal discovery or the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In 2010, the U.S. Justice Department determined that the Patriot Act does not override the law that protects the confidentiality of individual census responses. No court of law can subpoena census responses.

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# IS FRAUD WORTH IT?

What is fraud?

BHA Fraud policy states:

**Fraud is defined as “a single act or pattern of actions made with the intent to deceive or mislead, including false statements, omissions of information or the concealment of a substantive fact made with the intention of deceiving or misleading the housing authority when the act or acts lead to the person or person(s) involved receiving benefits to which they are not entitled.”**

**These are some examples of fraud activity committed recently by tenants. (your neighbors)**

- Not reporting income (wages from **ANY SOURCE** paid by cash, check, or direct deposit, child support, SS or SSI benefits, Pensions, TANF, unemployment, or any other regular financial assistance)
- Not correctly reporting deductions (childcare or medical expenses)
- **Having persons living in your apartment (more than 14 days a year) who are not on your lease.**
- Counting a minor as living in your apartment who actually lives elsewhere.



Did you know if you commit fraud against the Housing Authority, not only could you lose your apartment, but you will be required to repay all over paid rental assistance? In some cases, if the amount of retro rent owed to the Housing Authority exceeds \$5,000.00, the tenant will not be eligible for re-admission to the Housing Authority, regardless of repayment. All amounts owed are reported to HUD and shared with other inquiring Housing Authorities.

Fraud is one of the most common reasons for eviction. **IS FRAUD WORTH IT?**



# January Programs

## Start the year in a book club!

- **Reading Rockstars (Tweens, ages 9-12)**  
Third Thursday of the month at 5:30 pm  
*January discussion: introductions and activities*
- **#ReadWoke (Teens)**  
Last Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm  
*Come prepared to discuss diverse books.*
- **Mystery Book Club (Adults)**  
Third Tuesday of the month at 1:30 pm  
*January book discussion: The Late Show by Michael Connelly*

## Highlighted Service:

Libby, powered by  
Overdrive



**Borrow  
ebooks  
& audiobooks**

Free from your library  
with Libby, the one  
tap reading app.

### **Branch hours**

Monday - Thursday: 10 am - 8 pm  
Friday - Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm  
Sunday: 12 pm - 5 pm

### **Passport hours**

Monday - Thursday: 12 pm - 7 pm  
Friday - Sunday: 12 pm - 3 pm  
*First come, first served.*

## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

I trust everyone has had a wonderful holiday season! The New Year is often a good time to reflect on this past year as well as set goals for the New Year both personally and professionally! Our staff here have been working very diligently over this past year updating our website, providing new ways to make paying rent more convenient with online payments and we are working hard towards making many improvements to our apartments. We just finished doing a makeover to the exterior of our apartments in Flowery Branch (see picture below) and we are set to start work soon on a makeover to our community in Sugar Hill!



In the New Year, we are also very excited and looking forward to converting our units out of the HUD Public Housing program and onto the HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. While the change in this program will not affect tenant rents (which will still remain at 30% of adjusted income) it will provide additional potential funding sources for the Housing Authority and a much stronger financial platform so we can make even more improvements to our housing and serve the needs of our communities! In addition, the Buford Housing Authority is also looking into the possibility of building brand new units here in Buford and while we are still in the preliminary stages of planning, we are very excited about the prospect of providing newly constructed low-income housing.

I want to wish all of you and your families a very Happy New Year from the staff here at the Buford Housing Authority and we look forward to serving you in our communities in 2020!

Kevin Jones  
Executive Director