

# Ex-HUD staffer comes to aid of area's public housing tenants

By Karen Snelling  
Journal writer

A former federal housing official has been hired to increase tenant clout with the Kankakee County Housing Authority.

Charles Betterton, 38, resigned from his post with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to begin work Monday as the Kankakee County Public Housing Tenants Union's first community organizer.

"With all of his HUD experience, he will really be able to help us address issues affecting low-income tenants," said tenants union President Yvonne Franklin.

The tenant's union has complained that KCHA maintenance and repair work is "slow and shoddy," and that tenants were being overcharged for poor quality work.

At HUD's Chicago office, Betterton supervised a staff responsible for monitoring over half of the public housing authorities in Illinois, and giving technical assistance to troubled housing agencies.

He recently completed a six-month assignment on a special HUD task force which took over the operations of the East St. Louis Public Housing Authority.

The housing authority there had failed to fulfill its responsibility to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to low-income tenants, he said.



**CHARLES BETTERTON**  
... to aid public housing tenants

"His experience with the East St. Louis Housing Authority will be very beneficial in helping the tenants participate in solving the problems facing the Kankakee County Housing Authority," said Ms. Franklin.

Betterton will be paid through a \$35,000 grant the tenant's union received in January from the Campaign for Human Development.

The agency, affiliated with U.S. Catholic Conference, provides funds

to support self-help projects for the poor.

Betterton also served as director of HUD's disaster relief field offices in Mississippi, Virginia, Missouri, and Ohio. His experience with managing large scale disaster relief operation led to his appointment in 1975 on a task force created to address serious problems in HUD's Detroit office.

While stationed in Detroit, he received the highest cash award ever paid to a HUD employee for a suggestion which saved over \$300 million.

In 1978, Betterton left Detroit to become chief of HUD's property management and sales division in Chicago. He resigned that post in 1980 to manage two Stelle-based not-for-profit organizations involved in personal and community development.

He remained with those agencies until he was asked to return to HUD last year, for the East St. Louis project.

Betterton serves on the board of directors for the Community Educational Services Council, Inc., Community Services, Inc., and the Stelle Foundation for Personal and Community Development.

He is also managing editor for *Communities, Journal of Cooperation*, and serves as a reservist with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.