



**CAFHA  
HCV HOMEOWNER MENTOR SPOTLIGHT  
CEOLA COLEMAN**

**What motivated you to become a homeowner?**

*"I grew up in an intergenerational home with lots of family members. It was a subsidized 4-bedroom unit. We all lived together and it worked for us, but I always knew I wanted a backyard and basement. We had friends who moved out and purchased a place with play areas and that always excited me. Over the years, while renting, I got tired of slum landlords, and repairs not being made. I realized that when you own your home, you can control your own environment."*

**What made you want to help others navigate the process of becoming a homeowner?**

*"Based on the fact that I grew up in a poverty-stricken neighborhood, I always had the desire to help other people. In all the jobs I've had, I've helped others, from teenagers who were wards of the state, to homeless people who needed to be connected to resources. I got connected to the mentor program because I was a member of the now-defunct CHA Participant Board. I ran into other former members who told me about this new program and the rest is history!"*

**Do you feel that a mentorship program like this could have benefitted you in the past?**

*"Absolutely - I purchased my home in 2013. At the time, I was working full time, and going to school full time and it was such an overwhelming process. There were many times I wanted to give up, but I told myself I was going to figure it out. My mother never got to see my place or live in my home, but I know she would be proud. This program is highly needed because people need help figuring out how to fully explore their options. I enjoy taking my experiences, good and bad, and sharing them with my mentees.*

**What is something you have learned as a mentor?**

*"I've learned that sometimes we need to figure out where people are at, what they know, and what they are ready to do or not do. I have also realized that you can teach others based on your experience. When I was 12 years old, a teacher once told me, there are two ways to learn: experience and discovery. At the time, I did not fully know what he meant, but I understand now that what I went through is valuable to others."*

**Outside of work, what makes you happy?**

*"I love cooking. I am so happy when my family enjoys my cooking! I feel happy that I can take care of myself, and that my family is thriving and living differently from how I grew up, and I just do the best that I can to live a happy life by helping others."*