

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SELF SUFFICIENCY POLICY

A. Background

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 requires that all public housing adult residents (18 or older), unless they are exempt, contribute eight (8) hours per month of community service or participate in eight (8) hours of self-sufficiency activities such as training, counseling, classes and other activities that help an individual toward economic independence. This is a requirement of the Public Housing lease.

B. Definitions

Community Service – means volunteer work which includes, but is not limited to:

- Work at a local institution including but not limited to a school, child care center, hospital, hospice, recreation center, senior center, adult day care center, homeless shelter, indigent feeding program, cooperative food bank, etc.
- Work with a non-profit organization that serves PHA residents or their children such as: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys or Girls Clubs, 4-H program, PAL, Garden Center, Community clean-up programs, beautification programs, or other youth or senior organizations
- Work at the Authority to help improve physical conditions
- Work at the Authority to help with children's programs
- Work at the Authority to help with senior programs
- Helping neighborhood groups with special projects
- Working through resident organizations to help other residents with problems, serving as an officer in a Resident organization, serving on the Resident Advisory Board
- Caring for the children of other residents so they can perform community service

NOTE: Political activity is excluded from the definition of Community Service.

Self-Sufficiency Activities – means activities that include, but are not limited to:

- Job readiness programs
- Job training programs
- GED classes
- Substance abuse or mental health counseling
- English proficiency or literacy (reading) classes
- Apprenticeships
- Budgeting and credit counseling
- Any kind of class that helps a person towards economic independence
- Full time student status at any school, college or vocational school

Exempt Adult – means an adult member of the family who:

- Is 62 years of age or older
- Has a disability that prevents him/her from being gainfully employed
- Is the caretaker of a disabled person
- Is engaged in work activities (as defined by the Social Security Act) at least 20 hours per week
- Is participating in a welfare to work program

C. Requirements of the Program

1. The eight (8) hours per month may be either community service or self-sufficiency activity, or a combination of the two:
2. At least eight (8) hours of community service must be performed each and every month. An individual may not skip a month and then double up the following month, unless special circumstances warrant special consideration. The Housing Authority will make the determination of whether to allow or disallow a deviation from the schedule.
3. Community Service activities must be performed within the community and not outside the jurisdiction area of the Housing Authority.

D. Obligations of the Family

1. At least execution and each re-examination after October 1, 2003, all adult members (18 or older) of a Public Housing resident family must a) sign an acknowledgement that they have received and read this policy and understand that, if they are not exempt, failure to comply with the Community Service requirement will result in non-renewal of their lease and b) if they are an exempt adult, provide documentation that they are exempt from the Community Service requirement.
2. At each annual re-examination, non-exempt family members must present a completed Community Service Certification form (to be provided by the Housing Authority) that documents community service activities performed over the previous twelve (12) months. This form will include places for signatures of supervisors, instructors, or counselors certifying to the number of hours of Community Service performed.
3. If a family member is found to be noncompliant at re-examination, he/she and the Head of Household will sign an agreement with the Authority to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period.
4. Change in exempt status:

- If, during the twelve (12) month period, a non-exempt person becomes exempt, it is his/her responsibility to report this to the Authority and provide documentation of such.
- If, during the twelve (12) month period, an exempt person becomes non-exempt, it is his/her responsibility to report this to the Authority. The Authority will provide the person with the Recording/Certification documentation form and a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities.

E. Obligations of the Housing Authority

1. To the greatest extent possible and practicable, the Housing Authority will:
 - Provide names and contacts of organizations that can provide opportunities for residents, including disabled, to fulfill their Community Service obligations. (According to the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act, a disabled person who is otherwise able to be gainfully employed is not necessarily exempt from the Community Service requirement); and
 - Provide in-house opportunities for volunteer work or self-sufficiency programs.
2. The Housing Authority will provide the family with a copy of this policy at initial application and a lease execution. The Housing Authority will also provide adult family members with a Community Service Acknowledgement that document that they have been advised of this requirement at lease execution. In addition, the Housing Authority will provide residents who claim an exemption from the requirement with a Community Service Exemption Certification form. Also, each non-exempt adult resident will be provided with a Monthly Community Service Activity form that document the Community Service activities performed each month.
3. The Housing Authority will make the final determination as to whether or not a family member is exempt from the Community Service requirement. Residents may use the Housing Authority's Grievance Procedure if they disagree with the Authority's determination.
4. Policy regarding noncompliance of family member:
 - At least thirty (30) days prior to annual re-examination and/or lease expiration, the Housing Authority will begin reviewing the exempt or non-exempt status and compliance of family members.
 - If the Housing Authority finds a family member to be noncompliant, the Authority will enter into an agreement with the noncompliant member and the Head of Household to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period.
 - If, at the next annual re-examination, the noncompliant family member still is not compliant, the lease will not be renewed and the entire family will be required to vacate, unless the noncompliant member agrees to move out of the unit.
 - The family may use the Authority's Grievance Procedure to protest the lease termination.