

COMMUNITY SERVICE / SELF SUFFICIENCY POLICY

A. Background

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

B. Definitions

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

1. Work at a local school, hospital, or child care center
2. Work with youth organizations
3. Work at the Authority to help improve physical conditions
4. Work at the Authority doing other needed items.
5. Working through management to help with special projects and helping other residents with problems.

Note: Political activity is excluded.

Self Sufficiency Activities - activities which include, but are not limited to:

1. Job training programs
2. Substance abuse or mental health counseling
3. English proficiency or literacy (reading) classes
4. Budgeting and credit counseling
5. Any kind of class that helps a person toward economic independence

Exempt Adult - an adult member of the family who

1. Is 62 years of age or older
2. Has a disability that prevents him/her from being gainfully employed
3. Is the caretaker of a disabled person
4. Is working at least 20 hours per week
5. Is participating in a welfare to work program
6. Is receiving assistance from TANF and is in compliance with job training and work activities requirements of the program

C Requirements of the Program:

1. The eight (8) hours per month may be either volunteer work or self sufficiency program activity or a combination of the two.
2. At least eight (8) hours of activity must be performed each month. An individual may not skip a month and then double up the following month,

unless special circumstances warrant special consideration. The Authority will make the determination of whether to allow or disallow a deviation from the schedule.

3. Activities must be performed within the community and not outside the jurisdictional area of the Authority.
4. Family obligations:
 - a. At lease execution or re-examination after October 1, 1999, all adult members (18 or older) of a public housing resident family must
 - 1) provide documentation that they are exempt from Community Service requirement if they qualify for an exemption, and
 - 2) sign a certification 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.
 - b. At each annual re-examination, non-exempt family members must present a completed documentation form (to be provided by the Authority) of 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 contributed.
 - c. If a family member is found to be non-compliant 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.
 - d. Change in exempt status:
 - 1) 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.
 - 2) 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.
5. Authority obligations:
 - a. To the greatest extent possible and practicable, the Authority will

- 1) provide names and contacts at agencies 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*)
 - 2) provide in-house opportunities for volunteer work or self sufficiency programs
- b. The Authority will provide the family with exemption verification forms and Recording/Certification documentation forms and a copy of this policy at initial application and at lease execution.
- c. The 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 Authority's Grievance Procedure if they disagree with the Authority's determination.
- d. Noncompliance of family member
- 1) At least thirty (30) days prior to annual re-examination and/or lease expiration, the Authority will begin reviewing the exempt or non-exempt status and compliance of family members.
 - 2) If the Authority finds a family member to be non-compliant, the Authority will enter into an agreement with the non-compliant member and the Head of Household to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period
 - 3) If, at the next annual re-examination, the family member still is not compliant, the lease will not be renewed and the entire family will have to vacate, unless the non-compliant member agrees to move out of the unit
 - 4) The family may use the Authority's Grievance Procedure to protest the lease termination.