



**HOUSTON**  
HOUSING AUTHORITY

**Transforming Lives & Communities**

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## **HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK REQUIREMENT – PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS**

Section 512 of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA), which amends the Housing Act of 1937, established a new requirement for non-exempt residents of public housing to contribute eight (8) hours of community service each month or to participate in a Self- Sufficiency program for eight (8) hours each month.

Community service is a service for which individuals are not paid. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established the community service requirement for residents, not as a punitive or demeaning activity, but rather to be a rewarding activity that will benefit both the resident and the community. Community service offers public housing residents opportunities to contribute to the communities that support them while gaining work experience.

To effectively implement this new requirement, the Houston Housing Authority (HHA) hereby establishes the following procedures.

### **A. NOTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT**

The HHA shall provide written notice to all residents about the community service and self-sufficiency requirement. The notification must alert residents of the requirement, whether or not they are exempt, and what they need to do in order to comply.

### **B. COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The HHA or designee is responsible to identify those residents who are required to participate in community service and assure that all affected residents are performing their community service or self-sufficiency requirement. At each annual recertification, residents must provide evidence to the HHA demonstrating that the Community Service or Self-Sufficiency requirement is satisfied. Documentation, in accordance with the form prescribed by the HHA, must be appropriately signed and completed with a copy in each affected resident file. (See attached Certification Form)

Community service can be satisfied through a variety of voluntary activities to be performed by public housing residents under the supervision of assigned personnel from the agencies and organizations identified as eligible administrators of a Community Service Program for the benefit of HHA program participants. The community service activities which the residents may perform may include, but are not limited to:

- Improving the physical environment of the HHA's developments.
- Selected office related services in the developments or Administrative offices.

- Volunteer services in local schools, daycare centers, hospitals, nursing homes, youth or senior organizations, drug/alcohol treatment centers, recreation centers, church, etc.
- Neighborhood group special projects.
- Self-improvement activities such as household budget credit counseling, English proficiency, GED classes or other education and training activities.
- Tutoring elementary or high school age residents.
- Servicing in onsite computer training centers.
- Voluntary political activities are prohibited.

### **C. APPLICABILITY**

1. The community service and self-sufficiency requirement applies to all adult residents in public housing except for those exempted under Section 12(c) of the Act. This requirement does not apply to Section 8 tenants.
2. The public housing tenants exempt from the community service and self-sufficiency requirement are those:
  - (a) Age 62 years or older.
  - (b) Individuals with disabilities (as defined under 216(i)(1) or 1614 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 416(i)(1); 1382c) and who certify that because of their disability they are unable to comply with the service provisions; or primary caretakers of such individuals.
  - (c) Engaged in work activities as defined in section 407(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 607(d)), specified below:
    - (1) Unsubsidized employment;
    - (2) Subsidized private-sector employment;
    - (3) Subsidized public-sector employment;
    - (4) Work experience (including work associated with the refurbishing of publicly assisted housing) if sufficient private sector employment is not available;
    - (5) On-the-job-training;
    - (6) Job-search and job-readiness assistance;
    - (7) Community service programs;
    - (8) Vocational educational training (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual);
    - (9) Job-skills training directly related to employment;

- (10) Education directly related to employment in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency;
  - (11) Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate; and
  - (12) The provision of childcare services to an individual who is participating in a community service program.
3. The HHA considers 30 hours per week as the minimum number of hours for a work activity exemption as described in Section 407(d) of the Social Security Act, and implementing regulations (45 CFR Section 261.31(a)(1)).
  4. PHAs can use reasonable guidelines in clarifying this statutory list of work activities in coordination with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) agency, as appropriate.
    - (a) Meet the requirements for being exempt from having to engage in a work activity under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) or under any other welfare program of the State in which the PHA is located, including a State-administered welfare-to-work program.
    - (b) If a member of a family receiving TANF assistance, benefits, or service under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) or under any other welfare program of the State in which the PHA is located, including a State administered welfare-to-work program, and has not been found by the State or other administering entity to be in non-compliance with such program.

#### **D. NONCOMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS (24 CFR §960.605 & §960.607)**

1. The HHA must offer a noncompliant resident the opportunity to enter into a written agreement with the HHA to cure the noncompliance with the community service and self-sufficiency requirements either under the current or delinquent lease. This agreement should include:
  - (a) The additional number of hours of community service or self-sufficiency work activities needed to make up the required number of hours under the current lease.
  - (b) Assurance that all members of the family who are subject to these requirements are in compliance with the requirements.
  - (c) Written assurances satisfactory to the HHA that any noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit.
2. The HHA must inform residents that they may request a grievance hearing on the determination of noncompliance in accordance with Part 966, subpart B and that tenant may exercise any available judicial remedy to seek redress from the HHA's non-renewal of the lease because of such determination.

3. The HHA must retain reasonable documentation of service requirement performance or exemption in participant files. HHA must comply with nondiscrimination listed in 24 CFR 5.105(a).

## **E. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

HHA may administer its own community service program in conjunction with the formation of cooperative relationships with other community based entities such as TANF, Social Services Agencies or other organizations which have as their goal, the improvement and advancement of disadvantaged families. The HHA may contract its community service program out to a third party.

The HHA may directly supervise community service activities or may develop and provide a directory of opportunities from which residents may select. However, the Residents are wholly responsible to fully comply with the Community Service requirements with or without HHA assistance. When community service work opportunities are provided through partnering agencies, the partner agency will confirm the resident's participation.

## **F. SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

Residents that participate in self-sufficiency activities for eight (8) hours each month can satisfy the community service requirement. Non-exempt residents are encouraged to select such activities to satisfy the requirement. Such activities can include, but are not limited to:

- Apprenticeships and job readiness training;
- Substance abuse and mental health counseling/treatment;
- English proficiency, GED, adult education, junior college or other formal education, household budgeting, and credit counseling;
- Small business training;
- HHA sponsored economic self-sufficiency program; and
- HHA contracted economic self-sufficiency program.

## **G. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION**

The HHA recognizes that the intent of this requirement is to have residents provide service to their own communities, either in the HHA's developments or in the broader communities in which the HHA operates.

## **H. PROCEDURES**

1. At each regularly scheduled reexamination, or at the time of initial selection/approval of an applicant for housing assistance, or each time a new leasehold member is added to the lease, the HHA or designee will identify each household member who is eligible for the Community Service requirement.

2. The lease will identify which members of the household are eligible for the Community Service Requirement and a Community Service Requirement/Certification Form will be prepared in duplicate for each eligible household member.
  - (a) The top portion of this form will be completed and placed in the resident file with the eligible household member's signature. One form will be prepared for each household member who is eligible for community service.
  - (b) A second copy of the form will be presented to the eligible household member to obtain certification from a participating agency(s) or organization(s) where the household member performed community service.
  - (c) Upon request by the HHA or 30 days before the end of the lease period, the eligible household will present a completed certification form(s) for each eligible household member indicating the number of community service hours completed during the lease period. The certification form must be signed by a person in a supervisory position with the certifying organization.
3. The HHA or designee will determine whether the eligible household members have fully complied with the community service requirement. The HHA shall not renew / extend the lease agreement unless the community service requirement has been met by every non-exempt household member. The HHA may grant an exception if the HHA enters into an agreement with the resident (before the end of the lease period) to permit the non-compliant household member(s) to come into compliance. The agreement will permit the non-compliant household member(s) to make up the deficit number of hours during the subsequent lease period. The make-up hours will be completed in addition to the required eight (8) hours for the new lease period.
4. If any member of the household is not willing to sign the agreement to make up the deficit community service hours, or fails to meet the terms of the agreement made to allow the household member(s) to come into compliance, the lease agreement may not be renewed and must be terminated.
5. If the lease agreement is terminated or not renewed, the HHA will notify the leaseholder of the noncompliance and that the termination is subject to the HHA's administrative grievance procedures.

## **I. RELIEF FROM COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT**

Household members may be relieved from the community service requirement at any time during the lease period by the HHA. Relief from this requirement can be granted immediately when the eligible household member presents verification to the manager of one of the following changes:

- Going from unemployment to employment;
- Entering a job training program;
- Entering an education program that exceeds eight (8) hours monthly;

- Enrollment in a training program or welfare to work program or other economic self-sufficiency activity;
- Verification of disability limitations;
- Reaching 62 years of age; or
- Doctor's notice of disability limitation that will prevent the member from performing community service.

**J. RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEETING COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT**

1. The HHA or designee may provide information and referrals to non-exempt residents who are responsible to perform community service.
2. The HHA or designee may also provide information to assist the residents in obtaining an exemption from the community service requirement, if applicable.
3. Each non-exempt resident and household member is responsible for complying with the community service requirement. The non-compliance of this requirement by any household member shall be considered a violation of the lease provision and therefore, affects the ability of the entire household to remain eligible for low rent housing assistance.

**K. LEASE REQUIREMENTS AND DOCUMENTATION**

1. The HHA lease may not be renewed or extended if there is noncompliance with the community service requirement. The lease provides for termination and eviction of the entire household for such noncompliance.
2. Documentation of compliance or noncompliance will be placed in each resident's file.
3. Documentation (evidence) of an exemption to the community service requirement must be placed in the tenant file.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE POLICY  
STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received the Houston Housing Authority's Community Service Policy and I agree to comply with the provisions. Furthermore, I am eligible/not eligible (circle one) for an exemption to community service requirement. I understand that any violation of the Community Service Policy and HHA procedures shall be considered a violation of my Residential Lease Agreement and may be cause for lease termination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Tenant's Signature**

**Unit #**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Property Manager's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**ATTACHMENT A**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE EXEMPTION**

I certify that I am eligible for an exemption from the Community Service Requirement for the following reason:

- I am 62 or older
- I have a disability which prevents me from working  
(Certification of Disability Form will serve as documentation and/or Physician's written statement)
- I am working  
(Employment Verification form will serve as documentation)
- I am participating in a Welfare to Work Program  
(Must provide verification letter from agency)
- I am receiving TANF and am participating in a required economic self sufficiency program or work activity  
(Must provide verification from the funding agency that you are complying with job training or work requirements)
- I am a full time student  
(Must provide verification letter from school attended)
- I serve as an officer of a Resident Council  
(Must provide verification of Resident Council Board Election)

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Resident

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Date

**ATTACHMENT B**

**HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY  
COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT  
CERTIFICATION FORM**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ RESIDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

S/S#: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ CLIENT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

DEVELOPMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

As a condition for receiving housing assistance from the Houston Housing Authority, I am required to contribute 8 hours per month of community service within the community I currently reside in or participate in an economic self-sufficiency program for 8 hours per month. The community service can not be provided for a for-profit organization or business, or a political activity.

My signature gives full authorization to the signatory and organization named in the certification below to disclose to the Houston Housing Authority the number of hours, place of work, and type of work that I have contributed in "Community Service" as indicated below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Resident

**COMMUNITY SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ contributed community service time to this organization during the dates and times indicated below:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>NO. OF HOURS</b>	<b>TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED</b>

I certify that the Resident named above contributed the hours shown above as Community Service to this organization. If there are any questions, I may be contacted at \_\_\_\_\_ (telephone number).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name & Title (Supervisor/Manager)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



## ATTACHMENT D

### COMMUNITY SERVICE RESOURCE GUIDE (Volunteer opportunities which residents may select)

AGENCY	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
1. Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)	5202 Griggs Street, 77021	713-748-5405
2. Big Brothers Big Sisters	6437 High Star, 77074	713-271-5683
3. Boy Scouts of America	2225 N. Loop West, 77008	713-860-8236
4. Children's Museum of Houston	1500 Binz Street, 77004	713-535-7209
5. Chinese Community Center	9800 Town Park Drive, 77036	713-271-6100 Ext. 0 (Receptionist)
6. Covenant House Texas ( <i>must be 21 to volunteer</i> )	1111 Lovett Blvd., 77006	713-523-2231
7. Crossroads (Community Partnership for Youth)	6300 Chimney Rock, 77081	713-295-2789
8. Associated Catholic Charities	2900 Louisiana Street, 77006	713-526-4611
9. Volunteer Houston	3033 Chimney Rock, 77056	713-965-0031
10. Easter Seals	4500 Bissonnet Street, Ste. 340, 77401	713-838-9050
11. Change Happens (formerly Families Under Urban & Social Attack)	3353 Elgin Street, 77004	713-374-1265
12. Fifth Ward Enrichment Program	4014 Market Street, Ste. 145, 77020	713-229-8353
13. Houston READ Commission	2401 Portsmouth Street, Ste. 230, 77098	713-640-8200
14. Neighborhood Centers	4500 Bissonnet Street, Ste. 200, 77401	713-667-9400
15. Houston Area Women's Center	1010 Waugh Drive, 77019	713-528-6798 Ext. 2298
16. Volunteer Interfaith Caregivers	5001 Bellaire Blvd, 77401	713-772-8181
17. Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)	6309 Martin Luther King Blvd., 77021	713-868-9922 Ext. 348 (A. Booker)
18. LIFE Houston-Infant Emergencies	2002 S. Wayside, 77023	713-528-6044 (Nicole Browning)
19. Target Hunger	2814 Quitman, 77026	713-226-4953
20. Houston Independent School District (VIPS Program)	4400 West 18 <sup>th</sup> Street, Level I SE, 77092	713-556-7200 (T. Thomas)
21. Houston Habitat for Humanity	3750 N. McCarty, 77029	713-671-9993
22. Houston Food Bank	535 Portwall, Street, 77029	713-547-8604
23. City of Houston Public Library	Multiple Sites/Locations	832-393-1481
24. American Red Cross-Greater Houston Chapter	2700 Southwest Freeway, 77098	713-526-8300
25. Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston-Meals on Wheels Program	3303 Main Street, 77002	713-533-4936