
NEW BEDFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

OPERATIONS MANUAL

DATE: December 3, 2015
Revised 08/05/2019
TO: All Employees and Residents of the NBHA
SUBJECT: Community Service Policy

Release No. 22

GENERAL

In order to be eligible for continued occupancy, each adult member *age eighteen to sixty-two (18-62)* must either:

1. Contribute *eight hours per month* of community service (not including political activities) within the community in which the public housing development is located, or
2. Participate in an economic self-sufficiency program, or
3. Spend eight hours participating in a combination of self-sufficiency and community service activities unless he/she is exempt from this requirement.

EXEMPTIONS

The following adult family members of resident families are *exempt* from this requirement:

1. Family members who are sixty-two (62) or older.
2. Family members who are blind or disabled as defined under 216 (I)(1) or 1614 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 416(I)(1) and who certify that because of this disability are unable to comply with the community service requirements.
3. Family members who are the primary care giver for someone who is blind or disabled as defined above.
4. Family members engaged in work activity.
5. Family members who are exempt from work activity under Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act or under any other state welfare program, including the welfare-to-work program.
6. Family members receiving assistance, benefits, or services under a state program funded under Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act or under any other state welfare program, including welfare-to-work, and who are in compliance with that program.

NOTIFICATION OF THE REQUIREMENT

Prior to implementation of the Community Service requirement, the *New Bedford Housing Authority* will notify all residents of the requirement and its proposed implementation.

The notification will advise families that their community service obligation will begin upon the effective date of their first annual re-examination on or after *January 1, 2001*. It will inform residents of the exemptions from the requirements and the methods for establishing an exemption. It will also advise them that failure to comply with the

Community Service requirement will result in ineligibility for continued occupancy at the time of any subsequent annual re-examination.

Community Service includes performing work or duties in the public that serve to improve the quality of life, and/or enhance resident self-sufficiency, and/or increase the self-responsibility of the resident within the community.

An economic self-sufficiency program is one that is designed to encourage, assist, train or facilitate the economic independence of participants and their families or to provide work for participants. These programs may include programs for job training, work placement, basic skills training, education, English proficiency, work fare, financial or household management, apprenticeship, and any program necessary to ready a participant to work (*such as substance abuse or mental health treatment*).

The *New Bedford Housing Authority* will coordinate with social service agencies, local schools, and human service agencies in identifying a list of volunteer community service positions.

Together with the *Resident Advisory Board*, the *New Bedford Housing Authority* may create volunteer positions, such as hall monitoring, litter patrols, and supervising and record keeping for volunteers.

THE PROCESS

At the time of initial implementation, the *New Bedford Housing Authority* shall identify all family members who are apparently subject to the requirement. The Authority shall notify all such family members of the Community Service requirement and of the categories of individuals who are exempt from the requirement. The notification will provide the opportunity for family members to claim and explain an exempt status. The *New Bedford Housing Authority* shall verify such claims. *For families paying the flat rent, the obligation begins on the date their annual re-examination would have been effective had an annual re-examination taken place.*

At the first annual re-examination on or after *January 1, 2001*, and each annual re-examination thereafter, the *New Bedford Housing Authority* will do the following:

1. Provide a list of volunteer opportunities to the family members.
2. Provide information about obtaining suitable volunteer positions.
3. Provide a volunteer time sheet to the family member. Instructions for the time sheet require the individual to complete the form and have a supervisor date and sign for the period of work.
4. Thirty (30) days before the family's next lease anniversary date, the volunteer coordinator will advise the *New Bedford Housing Authority* whether each applicable adult family member is in compliance with the community service requirement.

NOTIFICATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT

The *New Bedford Housing Authority* will notify any family whose eligible member(s) is (are) found to be in non-compliance with the Community Service requirement.

This determination is subject to the Grievance Procedure.

Unless each non-compliant family member enters into an agreement to comply with the Community Service requirement, the lease will not be renewed or will be terminated.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CURE

The *New Bedford Housing Authority* will offer each non-compliant family member the opportunity to enter into an agreement prior to the anniversary of the lease. The agreement shall state that the family member agrees to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program or agrees to perform community service activities for as many hours as needed to comply with the requirement over the past twelve-month period. The cure shall occur over the twelve-month period beginning with the date of the agreement; and the resident shall, at the same time, stay current with that year's community service requirement. The first hours a resident earns are applied to the current commitment until the current year's commitment is complete.

If any non-compliant family member does not accept terms of the agreement, does not fulfill his/her obligation to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program, or falls behind in his/her obligation under the agreement to perform community service, the *New Bedford Housing Authority* shall take action to terminate the lease.

PROHIBITION AGAINST REPLACEMENT OF NBHA STAFF

In implementing the Community Service requirement, The *New Bedford Housing Authority* may not substitute community service or self-sufficiency activities performed by residents for work ordinarily performed by its employees or replace a job at any location where residents perform activities to satisfy the service requirement.

TENANT SELF-CERTIFICATION

NBHA may accept a tenant signed self-certification of compliance with the community service requirement. To better ensure compliance with the community service requirement, NBHA will review a sample of self-certifications and validate their accuracy with the third-party verification procedures currently in place. NBHA will also notify tenants that any self-certification may be subject to such validation.

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