

Chapter 8

LEASING AND INSPECTIONS

[24 CFR 5, Subpart G; 24 CFR 966, Subpart A]

INTRODUCTION

Public housing leases are the contractual basis of the legal relationship between COC and the tenant. All units must be occupied pursuant to a dwelling lease agreement that complies with HUD regulations.

HUD regulations require COC to inspect each dwelling unit prior to move-in, at move-out, and annually during the period of occupancy. In addition, COC may conduct additional inspections in accordance with COC policy.

This chapter is divided into two parts as follows:

Part I: Leasing. This part describes pre-leasing activities and COC's policies pertaining to lease execution, lease modification, and payments under the lease.

Part II: Inspections. This part describes COC's policies for inspecting dwelling units and notifying families of HUD REAC NSPIRE inspections.

PART I: LEASING

8-I.A. OVERVIEW

An eligible family may occupy a public housing dwelling unit under the terms of a lease. The lease must meet all regulatory requirements and must also comply with applicable state and local laws and codes.

The term of the lease must be for a period of 12 months. The lease must be renewed automatically for another 12-month term, except that COC may not renew the lease if the family has violated the community service requirement and if the family is determined to be over income for 24 consecutive months [24 CFR 966.4(a)(2)].

COCs must adopt smoke-free policies, which HUD required to be implemented no later than July 30, 2018. The policy is attached as Exhibit 8-1.

Part I of this chapter contains regulatory information on leasing, where applicable, as well as COC's leasing policies. For policies on lease requirements for families whose incomes have exceeded the over-income limit for 24 consecutive months, see 13-III.C., Over-Income Families.

8-I.B. LEASE ORIENTATION

COC Policy

After unit acceptance but prior to occupancy, a COC representative will conduct a lease orientation with the family. The head of household or spouse is required to attend.

Orientation Agenda

COC Policy

When families attend the lease orientation, they will be provided with:

- A copy of the lease

- A copy of COC's grievance procedure

- A copy of the house rules

- A copy of COC's schedule of maintenance charges

- A copy of "Is Fraud Worth It?" (form HUD-1141-OIG), which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse

- A copy of "What You Should Know about EIV," a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2017-12

- A copy of the form HUD-5380, VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights

- A copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

- A copy of COC's smoke free policy

- A notice that includes the procedures for requesting relief and COC's criteria for granting requests for relief for excess utility surcharges

- COC Resident Handbook

- Resident Service Coordinator Contact Brochure

Topics to be discussed and explained to all families include:

- Applicable deposits and all other charges

- Review and explanation of lease provisions

- Unit maintenance requests and work orders

- COC's interim reporting requirements

- Review and explanation of occupancy forms

- Community service requirements

- Family choice of rent

- VAWA protections

- Smoke-free policies

Parking Policy (applicable developments)

8-I.C. EXECUTION OF LEASE

The lease must be executed by the tenant and COC, except for automatic renewals of a lease [24 CFR 966.4(a)(3)].

A lease is executed at the time of admission for all new residents. A new lease is also executed at the time of transfer from one COC unit to another.

The lease must state the composition of the household as approved by COC (family members and any COC-approved live-in aide) [24 CFR 966.4(a)(1)(v)]. See Section 8-I.D. for policies regarding changes in family composition during the lease term.

COC Policy

The head of household, spouse or cohead, and all other adult members of the household will be required to sign the public housing lease prior to admission. An appointment will be scheduled for the parties to execute the lease. The head of household will be provided a copy of the executed lease and COC will retain a copy in the resident's file.

Files for households that include a live-in aide will contain file documentation signed by the live-in aide stating that the live-in aide is not a party to the lease and is not entitled to COC assistance. The live-in aide is only approved to live in the unit while serving as the care attendant for the family member who requires the care.

8-I.D. MODIFICATIONS TO THE LEASE

The lease may be modified at any time by written agreement of the tenant and COC [24 CFR 966.4(a)(3)].

Modifications to the Lease Form

COC may modify its lease from time to time. However, COC must give residents at least thirty (30) days advance notice of the proposed changes and an opportunity to comment on the changes. COC must also consider any comments before formally adopting a new lease [24 CFR 966.3].

After proposed changes have been incorporated into the lease and approved by the Board, each family must be notified at least 60 days in advance of the effective date of the new lease or lease revision. A resident's refusal to accept permissible and reasonable lease modifications that are made in accordance with HUD requirements, or are required by HUD, is grounds for termination of tenancy [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(iii)(E)].

COC Policy

The family will have 30 days to accept the revised lease. If the family does not accept the offer of the revised lease within that 30 day timeframe, the family's tenancy will be terminated for other good cause in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

Schedules of special charges and rules and regulations are subject to modification or revision. Because these schedules are incorporated into the lease by reference, residents and resident organizations must be provided at least thirty days written notice of the reason(s) for any proposed modifications or revisions and must be given an opportunity to present written

comments. The notice must be delivered directly or mailed to each tenant; or posted in at least three conspicuous places within each structure or building in which the affected dwelling units are located, as well as in a conspicuous place at the project office, if any, or if none, a similar central business location within the project. Comments must be taken into consideration before any proposed modifications or revisions become effective [24 CFR 966.5].

After the proposed revisions become effective they must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the project office and must be furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

COC Policy

When COC proposes to modify or revise schedules of charges or rules and regulations, COC will post a copy of the notice in the central office, in each property management office, and in at least 3 conspicuous places in each structure that contains dwelling units.

Other Modifications

COC Policy

The lease will be amended to reflect all changes in family composition.

If, for any reason, any member of the household ceases to reside in the unit, the lease will be amended by drawing a line through the person's name. The head of household and COC will be required to initial and date the change.

If a new household member is approved by COC to reside in the unit, the person's name and birth date will be added to the lease. The head of household and COC will be required to initial and date the change. If the new member of the household is an adult, s/he will also be required to sign and date the lease.

Policies governing when and how changes in family composition must be reported are contained in Chapter 9, Reexaminations.

8-I.E. SECURITY DEPOSITS [24 CFR 966.4(b)(5)]

At the option of COC, the lease may require security deposits. The amount of the security deposit cannot exceed one month's rent or a reasonable fixed amount as determined by COC. COC may allow for gradual accumulation of the security deposit by the family, or the family may be required to pay the security deposit in full prior to occupancy. Subject to applicable laws, interest earned on security deposits may be refunded to the tenant after vacating the unit, or used for tenant services or activities.

COC Policy

Residents must pay a security deposit to COC at the time of admission. The amount of the security deposit will be equal to the family's total tenant payment at the time of move-in, and must be paid in full prior to occupancy.

COC may use its discretion in LIHTC/mixed finance developments to adjust the security deposit to a reasonable fixed amount. The security deposit must be paid in full prior to occupancy.

COC will hold the security deposit for the period the family occupies the unit. COC will not use the security deposit for rent or other charges while the resident is living in the unit.

COC will provide the resident with a written list of any charges against the security deposit within 10 business days of the move-out inspection. If the resident disagrees with the amount charged, COC will provide a meeting to discuss the charges.

Within 21 days of move-out, COC will refund to the resident the amount of the security deposit (including interest earned on the security deposit), less any amount needed to pay the cost of unpaid rent, damages listed on the move-out inspection report that exceed normal wear and tear, and other charges due under the lease.

If the resident transfers to another unit, COC will transfer the security deposit to the new unit. The tenant will be billed for any maintenance or other charges due for the “old” unit.

8-I.F. PAYMENTS UNDER THE LEASE

Rent Payments [24 CFR 966.4(b)(1)]

Families must pay the amount of the monthly tenant rent determined by COC in accordance with HUD regulations and other requirements. The amount of the tenant rent is subject to change in accordance with HUD requirements.

The lease must specify the initial amount of the tenant rent at the beginning of the initial lease term, and COC must give written notice stating any change in the amount of tenant rent and when the change is effective.

The lease must contain a provision or addendum that tenants will receive notification at least 30 days before an eviction for nonpayment of rent is filed [24 CFR 966.4(q)].

COC Policy

The tenant rent is due and payable by mail or online on the first of every month. If the first falls on a weekend or holiday, the rent is due and payable on the first business day thereafter.

If a family’s tenant rent changes, COC will notify the family of the new amount and the effective date by sending a "Notice of Rent Adjustment" which will become an attachment to the lease.

Late Fees and Nonpayment [24 CFR 966.4(b)(3);24 CFR 966.4(q) and (r)]

At the option of COC, the lease may provide for payment of penalties when the family is late in paying tenant rent [24 CFR 966.4(b)(3)].

The lease must provide that late payment fees are not due and collectible until two weeks after COC gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action, and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The lease must also contain a provision or addendum that tenants will receive notification at least 30 days before an eviction for nonpayment of rent is filed [24 CFR 966.4(q)]. The PHA must not

provide tenants with a termination notice prior to the day after the rent is due according to the lease. The PHA must not proceed with filing an eviction if the tenant pays the alleged amount of rent owed within the 30-day notification period [24 CFR 966.4(r)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right for a hearing under COC grievance procedures. COC must not take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired, or (if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe,) the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)]. See Chapter 13 for additional requirements for notices of lease termination.

COC Policy

If the family fails to pay their rent by the tenth day of the month, and COC has not agreed to accept payment at a later date, a 14 day Notice to Vacate will be issued to the resident for failure to pay rent, demanding payment in full or the surrender of the premises. COC will not proceed with filing an eviction if the tenant pays the alleged amount of rent owed within the 30-day notification period.

In addition, if the resident fails to make payment by the end of office hours on the tenth day of the month, a late fee will be imposed at 5% of the overdue rent or tenant share not to exceed \$50.

Notices of late fees will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse action. Charges are due and payable 14 calendar days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, COC may not take action for nonpayment of the fee until the conclusion of the grievance process. If the resident can document financial hardship, the late fee may be waived on a case-by-case basis.

When a check, online payment, or ACH is returned for insufficient funds or is written on a closed account, the rent will be considered unpaid and a returned payment fee of \$50.00 will be charged to the family. The fee will be due and payable 14 days after billing.

Excess Utility Charges

If COC charges the tenant for consumption of excess utilities, the lease must state the basis for the determination of such charges. The imposition of charges for consumption of excess utilities is permissible only if the charges are determined by an individual check meter servicing the leased unit or result from the use of major tenant-supplied appliances [24 CFR 966.4(b)(2)].

Schedules of special charges for utilities that are required to be incorporated in the lease by reference must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the development office and must be furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

The lease must provide that charges for excess utility consumption are not due and collectible until two weeks after COC gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action, and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right to a hearing under COC grievance procedures. COC must not

take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired, or (if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe,) the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)].

COC Policy

When applicable, families will be charged for excess utility usage according to COC's current posted schedule. Notices of excess utility charges will be mailed monthly and will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse actions.

Charges are due and payable 14 calendar days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, COC may not take action for nonpayment of the charges until the conclusion of the grievance process.

Nonpayment of excess utility charges is a violation of the lease and is grounds for eviction.

COC may grant requests for relief from surcharges from excess utility consumption of COC-furnished utilities as a reasonable accommodation where COC deems an exception is appropriate to meet the needs of elderly, ill, or disabled residents. In determining whether to grant this request, COC will consider special factors affecting utility usage that are not within the control of the resident, such as the need for medical equipment. Residents may request relief in accordance with Section 2-II.C. of this ACOP. COC will process such requests in accordance with Section 2-II.E. of this ACOP.

Notice of the availability of procedures for requesting relief (including COC representative with whom initial contact may be made by the resident) and COC's criteria for granting requests, will be included in each notice to residents of changes in utility allowances or surcharges as well as to new residents as part of the lease orientation.

Maintenance and Damage Charges

If COC charges the tenant for maintenance and repair beyond normal wear and tear, the lease must state the basis for the determination of such charges [24 CFR 966.4(b)(2)].

Schedules of special charges for services and repairs which are required to be incorporated in the lease by reference must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the development office and must be furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

The lease must provide that charges for maintenance and repair beyond normal wear and tear are not due and collectible until two weeks after COC gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action, and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right for a hearing under COC grievance procedures. COC must not take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired, or (if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe,) the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)].

COC Policy

When applicable, families will be charged for maintenance and/or damages according to COC's current schedule. Work that is not covered in the schedule will be charged based on the actual cost of labor and materials to make needed repairs (including overtime, if applicable).

Notices of maintenance and damage charges will be mailed monthly and will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse actions. Charges are due and payable 14 calendar days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, COC may not take action for nonpayment of the charges until the conclusion of the grievance process.

Nonpayment of maintenance and damage charges is a violation of the lease and is grounds for eviction.

PART II: INSPECTIONS

8-II.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA is obligated to maintain safe and habitable dwelling units and to make necessary repairs to dwelling units [24 CFR 966.4(e)]. The National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) are the standard under which HUD housing units, including those under the public housing program, are inspected. NSPIRE ensures that residents of public housing live in safe, habitable dwellings, and the items and components located inside, outside, and within the units are functionally adequate, operable, and free of health and safety hazards [24 CFR 5.703(a)]. Further, units must comply with state and local code requirements (such as fire, mechanical, plumbing, carbon monoxide, property maintenance, and residential code) [24 CFR 5.703(f)] as well as with all requirements related to the evaluation and control of lead-based paint hazards [24 CFR 5.703(e)(2)].

Under NSPIRE, public housing units are subject to three types of inspections: annual self-inspections, NSPIRE Inspections (which are used to assess and score the PHA under the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS), and NSPIRE Plus Inspections (which are triggered by poor property conditions). HUD regulations also require the PHA to inspect each public housing unit prior to move-in and at move-out. The PHA may require additional inspections, in accordance with PHA policy. This part contains the PHA's policies governing inspections by the PHA and HUD, notification of unit entry, and inspection repair timelines. This section discusses inspections conducted by the PHA (including annual self-inspections) and inspections conducted by HUD REAC.

8-II.B. COC-CONDUCTED INSPECTIONS

COC is obligated to maintain dwelling units and the project in safe and habitable condition and to make necessary repairs to dwelling units [24 CFR 966.4(e)].

Types of COC-Conducted Inspections

Move-In Inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]

The lease must require COC and the family to inspect the dwelling unit prior to occupancy in order to determine the condition of the unit and equipment in the unit. A copy of the initial inspection, signed by COC and the tenant, must be provided to the tenant and retained in the resident file.

COC Policy

Head of household must attend the initial inspection and sign the inspection form.

Move-Out Inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]

COC must inspect the unit at the time the resident vacates the unit and must allow the resident to participate in the inspection if he or she wishes, unless the tenant vacates without notice to COC. COC must provide to the tenant a statement of any charges to be made for maintenance and damage beyond normal wear and tear.

The difference between the condition of the unit at move-in and move-out establishes the basis for any charges against the security deposit so long as the work needed exceeds that for normal wear and tear.

COC Policy

When applicable, COC will provide the tenant with a statement of charges to be made for maintenance and damage beyond normal wear and tear, within 15 business days of conducting the move-out inspection.

Self-Inspections [24 CFR 5.707]

Annually COC is required to self-inspect their properties, including all units, to ensure units are maintained in accordance with NSPIRE standards in 24 CFR 5.703. As part of the self-inspection process, COC must ensure that deficiencies previously cited and repaired as a result of an NSPIRE inspection have not subsequently failed.

COC must maintain the results of self-inspections for three years and must provide the results to HUD upon request.

Quality Control Inspections

The purpose of quality control inspections is to assure that all defects were identified in the original inspection, and that repairs were completed and within an acceptable time frame

COC Policy

Supervisory quality control inspections will be conducted in accordance with COC's maintenance plan.

Special Inspections

COC Policy

COC staff may conduct a special inspection for any of the following reasons:

Housekeeping

Unit condition

Suspected lease violation

Preventive maintenance

Routine maintenance

There is reasonable cause to believe an emergency exists

Other Inspections

COC Policy

Building exteriors, grounds, common areas and systems will be inspected according to COC's maintenance plan.

8-II.C. NOTICE OF ENTRY

Non-emergency Entries [24 CFR 966.4(j)(1)]

COC may enter the unit, with reasonable advance notification to perform routine inspections and maintenance, make improvements and repairs, or to show the unit for re-leasing. A written statement specifying the purpose of COC entry delivered to the dwelling unit at least two days before such entry is considered reasonable advance notification.

COC Policy

COC will notify the resident in writing at least 48 hours prior to any non-emergency inspection.

For regular self inspections, the family will receive at least one week written notice of the inspection to allow the family to prepare the unit for the inspection.

Entry for repairs requested by the family will not require prior notice. Resident-requested repairs presume permission for COC to enter the unit.

Emergency Entries [24 CFR 966.4(j)(2)]

COC may enter the dwelling unit at any time without advance notice when there is reasonable cause to believe that an emergency exists. If no adult household member is present at the time of an emergency entry, COC must leave a written statement showing the date, time and purpose of the entry prior to leaving the dwelling unit.

Scheduling of PHA-Conducted Inspections

COC Policy

Inspections will be conducted during business hours. If a family needs to reschedule an inspection (except for inspections conducted by government entities, compliance monitors, or investors), they must notify COC at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled inspection. COC will reschedule the inspection no more than once unless the resident has a verifiable good cause to delay the inspection. COC may request verification of such cause.

The refusal of unit inspections is a violation of the lease and grounds for eviction.

Attendance at Inspections

Residents are required to be present for move-in inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]. There is no such requirement for other types of inspections.

COC Policy

While the resident is required to be present for move-in inspections, the resident is not required to be present for other types of inspections. The resident may attend the inspection if he or she wishes.

If no one is at home, the inspector will enter the unit, conduct the inspection.

Repairs

Emergency Repairs [24 CFR 966.4(h)]

If the unit is damaged to the extent that conditions are created which are hazardous to the life, health, or safety of the occupants, the tenant must immediately notify COC of the damage, and COC must make repairs within a reasonable time frame. Under NSPIRE, the PHA must correct all Life-Threatening and Severe deficiencies within 24 hours.

If the damage was caused by a household member or guest, COC must charge the family for the reasonable cost of repairs. COC may also take lease enforcement action against the family.

If COC cannot make repairs quickly, COC must offer the family standard alternative accommodations. If COC can neither repair the defect within a reasonable time frame nor offer alternative housing, rent shall be abated in proportion to the seriousness of the damage and loss in value as a dwelling. Rent shall not be abated if the damage was caused by a household member or guest, or if the resident rejects the alternative accommodations.

Non-emergency Repairs

COC Policy

COC will correct deficiencies resulting in a non-emergency work order identified during a COC conducted inspection 30 business days of the inspection date. If COC is unable to make repairs within that period due to circumstances beyond COC's control (e.g. required parts or services are not available, weather conditions, etc.) COC will notify the family of an estimated date of completion.

The family must allow COC access to the unit to make repairs.

Resident-Caused Damages

COC Policy

Damages to the unit beyond wear and tear will be billed to the tenant in accordance with the policies in 8-I.F., Maintenance and Damage Charges.

Repeated or excessive damages to the unit beyond normal wear and tear will be considered a serious or repeated violation of the lease.

Housekeeping

COC Policy

Residents whose housekeeping habits pose a non-emergency health or safety risk, encourage insect or rodent infestation, or cause damage to the unit are in violation of the lease. In these instances, COC will provide proper notice of a lease violation.

A reinspection will be conducted within 30 days to confirm that the resident has complied with the requirement to abate the problem. Failure to abate the problem or allow for a reinspection is considered a violation of the lease and may result in termination of tenancy in accordance with Chapter 13.

Notices of lease violation will also be issued to residents who purposely disengage the unit's smoke detector and/or carbon monoxide alarm. Only one warning will be given. A second incidence will result in lease termination.

8-II.D. NSPIRE INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 5.705(c); Notice PIH 2023-16]

During an NSPIRE inspection, REAC inspectors will inspect areas and associated items or components that are listed in the regulations as affirmative requirements and those included within the NSPIRE standards. For most properties, the frequency of NSPIRE inspections is determined by the date of the prior inspection and the score received.

Notice to Residents [Notice PIH 2023-16]

The PHA must provide notice to all residents as described in 24 CFR 5.711(h) and the lease.

COC Policy

COC will provide all residents with at least seven days' notice of an NSPIRE inspection. Notice will be provided through multiple communication methods, including by posted notice on each resident's door and through email where applicable. All materials, notices,

and communications to families regarding the inspection will be clearly communicated and provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other communication-related disabilities consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and HUD's Section 504 regulation, and Titles II or III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and implementing regulations.

24-Hour Corrections [24 CFR 5.711(c); Notice PIH 2023-16]

At the conclusion of the NSPIRE inspection, or at the end of the day on multi-day inspections, HUD provides the PHA with a list of Life-Threatening and Severe deficiencies. The PHA must correct all Life-Threatening and Severe deficiencies within 24 hours, with certification of correction submitted to HUD within two business days of receipt of notification of the deficiency.

If permanent repairs take longer than the allowable time in the relevant standard for the deficiency, the PHA must provide HUD with a timeframe for completing permanent repairs and submit evidence that the repair is in progress. Any extension to the allowable time for rectifying the deficiency is allowed only upon HUD approval for good cause.

COC Policy

COC will correct all Life-Threatening and Severe deficiencies within 24 hours. Correcting the deficiency means the PHA will resolve or sufficiently address the deficiency in a manner that it no longer poses a severe health or safety risk to residents or the hazard is blocked until permanent repairs can be completed. A correction could include controlling or blocking access to the hazard by performing a temporary relocation of the resident while repairs are made.

COC will complete all repairs expeditiously, if a permanent repair is not possible within 24-hours, COC will correct the deficiency by performing an interim repair to remove the health and safety hazard. If the correction is temporary or professional services or materials are unavailable within 24 hours, COC will provide a target date for permanent correction. Such interim repairs will be fully completed within a reasonable timeframe approved by HUD.

The family must allow COC access to the unit to make repairs.

Non-emergency Repairs

Under NSPIRE, the PHA must correct Moderate deficiencies within 30 days and Low deficiencies within 60 days, or as otherwise provided in the NSPIRE standards. Repairs should be permanent fixes, unless otherwise approved by HUD in writing. HUD may also prescribe timelines in Corrective Action Plans as defined in 24 CFR 902.3 or Corrective Action Agreements as described in 24 CFR 902.105.

COC Policy

If COC is unable to make repairs within the periods identified in the NSPIRE standards due to circumstances beyond the PHA's control (e.g., required parts or services are not available, weather conditions, etc.), COC will provide HUD with a timeframe for

completing permanent repairs and obtain HUD approval. COC will also notify the family of an estimated date of completion.

The family must allow COC access to the unit to make repairs.

Except for emergencies, management will not enter the dwelling unit to perform repairs where a pet resides unless accompanied for the entire duration of the repair by the pet owner or responsible person designated by the pet owner in accordance with the pet policies in Section 10-II.D.

EXHIBIT 8-1: SMOKE-FREE POLICY

In accordance with HUD regulations, the Housing Authority has adopted these smoke-free policies. The policies are effective as of Board approval date. COC's smoke-free policy is applicable to all residents, household members, employees, guests, and service persons. Due to the increased risk of fire, increased maintenance costs, and the known health effects of secondhand smoke, smoking is prohibited in all living units and interior areas, including but not limited to hallways, rental and administrative offices, community centers, day care centers, laundry centers, and similar structures. Smoking is also prohibited in outdoor areas within 25 feet from public housing and administrative office buildings.

This policy applies to all employees, residents, household members, guests, and service persons. Residents are responsible for ensuring that household members and guests comply with this rule.

The term "smoking" means any inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, or other prohibited tobacco product in any manner or any form. Prohibited tobacco products include water pipes or hookahs.

Violation of the smoke-free policy constitutes a violation of the terms of the public housing lease. Consequences of lease violations include termination of tenancy.

COC POLICIES

Designated Smoking Areas (DSA)

COC Policy:

COC has not designated any smoking areas on COC's property. Residents may not discard smoking products on the property.

Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)

Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) include e-cigarettes, nicotine inhalers, and vaping devices.

COC Policy

Use of ENDS is not permitted in units, common areas, or in outdoor areas within 25 feet from housing and administrative buildings.

Enforcement

COC must enforce smoke-free policies when a resident violates this policy. When enforcing the lease, COC will provide due process and allow residents to exercise their right to an informal settlement and formal hearing. COC will not evict a resident for a single incident of smoking in violation of this policy. As such, COC will implement a graduated enforcement framework that includes escalating warnings. Prior to pursuing eviction for violation of smoke-free policies, COC will take specific, progressive monitoring and enforcement actions, while at the same time educating tenants and providing smoking cessation information. The lease will identify the actions that constitute a policy violation, quantify the number of documented, verified violations that warrant enforcement action; state any disciplinary actions that will be taken for persistent non-responsiveness or repeated noncompliance, and state how many instances of noncompliance will constitute a violation. Tenancy termination and eviction will be pursued only as a last resort.

COC may terminate tenancy at any time for violations of the lease and failure to otherwise fulfill household obligations if resident behavior disturbs other residents' peaceful enjoyment and is not conducive to maintaining the property in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition.

COC Policy

If a smoking violation is validated by COC, a written warning will be sent to the resident. Validated violations include, but are not limited to observation of smoking by a COC staff member or contracted vendor, photograph, and/or video surveillance. The warning letter will include the smoke-free policy lease language and notice of the infraction. The same notice is sent for first and second observed violations. COC will provide information on resources on smoking cessations including the contact information for the American Lung Association of the Northeast.

If COC receives any written complaint that is not validated, an appointment will be scheduled to discuss the complaint so the tenant has an opportunity to contest it. If the resident is unable to satisfactorily contest the complaint, the occurrence will be documented as a documented complaint. If more than two written complaints are received the third written complaint will be considered a documented complaint.

Upon issuance of a written warning from the property manager and/or a documented complaint COC will increase the unit inspections for a suspected policy violator. The frequency of inspections may include weekly inspections with a 24 hour notice.

If COC receives more than three validated infractions, eviction proceedings may begin.

Reasonable Accommodation

While addiction to nicotine or smoking is not a disability, COC will provide reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities who smoke that are in compliance with the requirements of this smoke-free policy.