

CHAPTER 14

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SELF SUFFICIENCY REQUIREMENT

PHA's goal is to design a service program that gives residents viable opportunities to become involved in the community and to gain competencies and skills. PHA will work with resident organizations and community organizations to design, implement, assess and recalibrate its community service program.

14.1 Requirements

Each resident of public housing that is age eighteen (18) or over, who is not exempt must:

- A.** Contribute eight (8) hours per month of community service; or
- B.** Participate in an economic self-sufficiency program (as defined in this policy) for eight (8) hours per month; or
- C.** Perform eight (8) hours per month of combined activities (community service and economic self-sufficiency programs).

This requirement applies whether the residents are paying income-based or flat rents.

The eight 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 it. Special circumstances are defined as:

- 1. Maternity leave up to 8 weeks unless the need for a longer period is verified by a medical professional.
- 2. Medical leave from work
- 3. Verified medical condition of immediate family member. Immediate family member is defined as parent, child spouse, or any other household member as listed on public housing lease.

14.2 Definitions

Exempt Individual

An exempt individual is an adult who:

- A.** Is age sixty-two (62) years or older
- B.** Is blind or disabled (as defined under Section 216[i][1] or 1614 of the Social Security Act), and who certifies that because of this disability s/he is unable to comply with the service provisions
 - 1. If a blind or disabled individual has been able to engage in substantial gainful activity, according to the Social Security Administration definition, within the last twelve (12) months, PHA will not grant exemption to the resident.
 - 2. If the resident that is claiming disability exemption does not receive SSD or SSI benefits, the disability status must be verifiable by a medical professional that is familiar with the resident's medical history.
 - 3. If the resident that is claiming disability exemption receives veteran's disability benefits, the benefits received must be the amounts granted for 100% disability according to the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs.

- C. Is a primary caretaker of such an individual. Such individual:
 - a. Must be a spouse, son daughter, parent or other household member
 - b. Must not be a full time student.
- D. Is engaged in work activities
 - 1. PHA will consider thirty (30) hours per week as the minimum number of hours needed to qualify for a work activity exemption.
 - 2. In the case of a single parent household with one or more dependent children under age six (6), PHA will consider twenty (20) hours per week as the minimum number of hours needed to qualify for a work activity exemption.
 - 3. In the case of self employed residents, the following formula will be used to determine the number of hours engaged in work activities:

Gross annual income divided by fifty-two (52) weeks per year divided by the current federal or state minimum wage
- E. Meets the requirements for being exempted from having to engage in a work activity under the state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state of Nebraska, including a state-administered welfare to work program; or
- F. Is in a family receiving assistance under a state program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of Nebraska, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program, and has not been found by the state or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with such program.

Community Service

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

- A. Work at a local institution including but not limited to: school, child care center, hospital, hospice, recreation center, senior center, adult day care center, homeless shelter, indigent feeding program, cooperative food bank, etc.
- B. Work with a nonprofit organization that serves PHA resident or their children such as: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys or Girls Clubs, 4-H programs, PAL, Garden Center, community clean-up programs, beautification programs, other youth or senior organizations
- C. Working at any program funded under the Older Americans Act, including but not limited to: Green Thumb, Service Corps of Retired Executives, senior meals programs, Senior Center, Meals on Wheels, etc.
- D. Working with any other public or non-profit youth or senior organizations
- E. Working as an officer of a development or city wide resident organization
- F. Working as a member of the Resident Advisory Committee
- G. Helping neighborhood groups with special projects
- H. Working through a resident organization to help other residents with problems, serving as an officer in a resident organization, serving on the resident advisory board
- I. Caring for the children of other residents so they may volunteer, as long as this activity serves to lead to employment in the child care field.

Note: All community service activities must serve to improve the employability of the resident, increase employment skills, help meet career goals and promote self-sufficiency.

Note: All community service activities must be performed within the community and not outside of the PHA jurisdiction.

Note: Political activity is excluded for purposes of eligible community service activities

Note: Community service may not be performed for the same person, business or agency by which the resident is employed.

Note: Community service activities may not be supervised by a family member or friend.

Note: Community service activities may not be performed at or for profit-motivated entities.

Note: Community service activities may not be performed at homes or offices of general private citizens, except in the case of caring for children of other residents while they perform CSSR activities.

Note: Community service activities may be court ordered or probation based work.

Economic Self-Sufficiency Program

For purposes of satisfying the community service requirement, an economic self-sufficiency program is defined by HUD as: Any program designed to encourage, assist, train or facilitate economic independence of assisted families or to provide work for such families.

These economic self-sufficiency programs can include job training, employment counseling, work placement, basic skills training, education, English proficiency, workforce, financial or household management, apprenticeships (formal or informal), or any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as substance abuse or mental health treatment. Such treatment or therapy must be determined to be necessary and certified by a qualified medical or mental health professional).

Also included as an economic self-sufficiency program is satisfactory attendance in post secondary educational program for a resident who has not previously completed a post secondary educational program. Satisfactory attendance is defined as maintaining a C grade in all classes and a 2.0 overall GPA in order to meet this criteria:

1. The participant must be enrolled in and complete at least twelve (12) credit hours of vocational and/or educational program for undergraduates or at least nine (9) hours for graduates which will result in full-time employment.
2. The participant must be enrolled in and complete at least six (6) credit hours of a vocational and/or educational program combined with twenty (20) hours of other qualifying work activities.

It is the resident's responsibility to provide documentation of enrollment in and attendance of such programs to PHA.

Work Activities

As it relates to an exemption from the community service requirement, work activities means:

- B. Unsubsidized employment**

- C. Subsidized private sector employment
- D. Subsidized public sector employment
- E. Work experience (including work associated with the refurbishing of publicly assisted housing) if sufficient private sector employment is not available
- F. On the job training
- G. Job search and job readiness assistance. PHA will accept no more than two (2) qualifying months of these activities per resident, and these months may not be consecutive
- H. Vocational educational training (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual). Unsupervised homework time will not be accepted as a work activity
- I. Job skills training directly related to employment
- J. 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
- K. 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

Note: It is the resident's responsibility to provide documentation to PHA of participation in qualifying work activities.

14.3 Notification Requirements

The housing agency 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 in writing. The housing agency shall verify such claims. If a resident does not agree with the housing agency's determination, he or she can appeal by following the Grievance Policy. Changes in exempt or non-exempt status of a resident shall be reported by the resident to the housing agency within ten (10) calendar days of the change.

- A. PHA will explain the community service requirement at the initial interview.
- B. PHA will provide the family with a copy of the Community Service Policy at lease up, lease renewal, when a family member is determined to be subject to the community service requirement during the lease term, and at any time upon the family's request.
- C. On an annual basis, at the time of recertification appointment, PHA will notify the family in writing of the family members who are subject to the community service requirement and the family members who are exempt. If the family includes non-exempt individuals the notice will include a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities, as well as a documentation form on which they may record the activities they perform and the number of hours contributed. The form will also have a place for a signature by an appropriate official, who will certify to the activities and hours completed.

14.4 Determination of Exemption Status and Compliance

Determination of Exemption Status

PHA will review and verify family compliance with the service requirements monthly and at least thirty (30) days before the end of the twelve (12) month lease term. It is the resident's responsibility to provide documentation of qualifying activities by the tenth (10th) of the month following the month in which the community service or economic self-sufficiency activities were

required. PHA will not accept hours performed in advance of the month in which the activities are required.

At least sixty (60) days prior to lease renewal, PHA will review and verify the exemption status of all adult family members. For individuals who are exempt because they are sixty-two (62) years of age and older, verification of exemption status will be done at the initial examination. For all other household members, determination of exemptions status will be made using the CSSR Exemption Status Checklist. This checklist will be used by KHA and is provided to applicants and residents.

Upon completion of the verification process, PHA will notify the family of its determination in accordance with section 14.3 of this policy.

Determination of Compliance

PHA will review resident family compliance with service requirement at least thirty (30) days before the end of the twelve (12) month lease term. As part of this review, PHA will verify that any family member that is not exempt from the community service requirement has met his or her service obligation.

It is the resident's responsibility to provide documentation of qualifying activities at the annual reexam appointment. PHA will not accept hours performed in advance of the month in which the activities are required. If the family fails to submit the required documentation, the subject family members will be considered noncompliant with the community service requirement, and a notice of noncompliance will be issued.

Change in Status between Annual Determinations

Exempt to Non-Exempt Status

If an exempt individual becomes non-exempt during the twelve (12) month lease term, it is the family's responsibility to report this change to PHA within ten (10) calendar days.

After the reporting of such a change, or PHA determining such a change is necessary, PHA will provide written notice of the effective date of the requirement, a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities, as well as a documentation form on which the family member may record the activities performed and number of hours contributed.

The effective date of the community service requirement will be as follows:

- A.** If the exemption activities end before the fifteenth (15) of the month, the requirement is effective that month.
- B.** If the exemption activities end after the fifteenth (15) of the month, the requirement is effective the following month.

Non-Exempt to Exempt Status

If a non-exempt person becomes exempt during the twelve month lease term, it is the family's responsibility to report this change to PHA within ten (10) calendar days. Any claim of exemption will be verified by PHA.

After the reporting of such a change, or PHA determining that such a change is necessary, PHA will provide the family written notice that the family member is no longer subject to the community service requirement, if PHA is able to verify the exemption. The exemption will be effective immediately.

14.5 Documentation and Verification

PHA will retain reasonable documentation of service requirement performance or exemption in participant files.

Documentation and Verification of Exemption Status

All family members who claim they are exempt from the community service requirement will be required to sign the community service exemption certification form, and a copy will be kept in the tenant file.

PHA will verify that an individual is exempt from the community service requirement by following the verification hierarchy and documentation requirements in Chapter 12.

PHA makes the final determination whether or not to grant an exemption from the community service requirement. If a resident does not agree with PHA's determination s/he can dispute the decision through PHA's grievance procedures.

Documentation and Verification of Compliance

If qualifying community service activities are administered by an organization other than PHA, a family member who is required to fulfill a service requirement must provide certification to PHA, signed by the organization, that the family member has performed the qualifying activities.

If anyone in the family is subject to the community service requirement, PHA will provide the family with community service documentation forms at admission, at lease renewal, when a family member becomes subject to the community service requirement during the lease term, or upon request by the family.

Each individual who is subject to the requirement will be required to record their community service or self-sufficiency activities and the number of hours contributed on the required form. The certification form will also include places for signatures and phone numbers of supervisors, instructors, and counselors certifying to the number of hours contributed. In the case of job search activities, the resident will self certify the activities and number of hours completed.

Families will be required to submit the documentation to PHA no later than the tenth (10th) of the month following the month in which the hours were required.

If PHA has reasonable cause to believe that the certification provided by the family is false or fraudulent, PHA has the right to require third-party verification.

14.6 Noncompliance

Initial Noncompliance

The lease specifies that it is renewed automatically for all purposes, unless the family fails to comply with the community service requirement. Violation of the service requirement is grounds for nonrenewal of the lease at the end of the twelve (12) month lease term, but not for termination of tenancy during the course of the twelve (12) month lease term.

If the tenant or another family member has violated the community service requirement, PHA will not renew the lease upon expiration of the twelve (12) month term of the lease, unless the tenant and any other noncompliant family member enter into a written agreement with PHA. Under this agreement the tenant or noncompliant family member must agree to cure the noncompliance by completing the additional hours of community service or economic self-sufficiency needed to make up the total number of hours required, in addition to any hours accrued, over the twelve (12) month term of the new lease. In addition, all other members of the family who are subject to the service requirement must be currently complying with the service requirement or must no longer be residing in the unit.

Notice of Initial Noncompliance

If PHA determines that there is a family member who is required to fulfill a service requirement, but who has failed to comply with this obligation (noncompliant resident), PHA will notify the tenant of this determination.

This notice to the tenant will briefly describe the noncompliance. The notice will state that PHA will not renew the lease at the end of the twelve (12) month lease term unless the tenant, and any other noncompliant resident, enter into a written agreement with PHA to cure the noncompliance, or the family provides written assurance satisfactory to PHA that the tenant or other noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit.

The notice will also state that the tenant may request a grievance hearing on PHA's determination, in accordance with PHA's grievance procedures, and that the tenant may exercise any available judicial remedy to seek timely redress for PHA's nonrenewal of the lease because of PHA's determination.

The notice of initial noncompliance will be sent at least forty-five (45) days prior to the end of the lease term and the family will have ten (10) calendar days to request a grievance hearing.

At the annual reexamination appointment the family will be offered the opportunity to enter into a written agreement to cure the noncompliance, along with any hours accrued, over the twelve (12) month term of the new lease, or provide documentation that the noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit.

If the family does not request a grievance hearing, or does not take either corrective action required by the notice of noncompliance within the time frame required by PHA, PHA will terminate tenancy in accordance with the policies in Chapter 19, Termination.

Continued Noncompliance

If, after the twelve (12) month cure period, the family member is still not compliant, PHA will terminate the tenancy of the entire family, according to the lease, unless the family provides documentation that the noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit.

Notice of continued noncompliance will be sent at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the lease term and will also serve as the family's termination notice. The notice will meet the requirements for termination notices described in Chapter 19, Termination. The notice will state that the determination is subject to the grievance procedure, a right to be represented by counsel, and the opportunity to any available judicial remedy.

The family will have ten (10) calendar days from the date of the notice of non-compliance to provide documentation that the noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit, or to request a grievance hearing.

If the family reports that a noncompliant family member is no longer residing in the unit, the family must provide documentation that the family member has actually vacated the unit before PHA will agree to continued occupancy of the family. Documentation must consist of a certification signed by the head of household as well as evidence of the current address of the noncompliant family member that previously resided with them.

If the family does not request a grievance hearing, or provide such documentation within the required ten (10) calendar day timeframe, the family's lease and tenancy will automatically terminate at the end of the current lease term without further notice.

14.7 Implementation of Community Service

PHA will not substitute any community service of self-sufficiency activities performed by residents for work ordinarily performed by PHA employees, or replace a job at any location where residents perform activities to satisfy the service requirement.

PHA will notify its insurance company if residents will be performing community service at PHA. In addition, PHA will ensure that the conditions under which the work is to be performed are not hazardous.

If a disabled resident certifies that s/he is able to perform community service, PHA will ensure that requests for reasonable accommodation are handled in accordance with the policies in Chapter 2.

Program Design

PHA will attempt to provide the broadest choice possible to residents as they choose community service activities.

PHA's goal is to design a service program that gives residents viable opportunities to become involved in the community and to gain competencies and skills. PHA will work with resident organizations and community organizations to design, implement, assess and recalibrate its community service program.

PHA will make every effort to identify volunteer opportunities throughout the community, especially those in proximity to public housing developments. To the greatest extent possible, PHA will provide names and contacts at agencies that can provide opportunities for residents, including persons with disabilities, to fulfill their community service obligations.

Any written agreements or partnerships with contractors and/or qualified organizations, including resident organizations, are described in the PHA Plan.

PHA will provide in-house opportunities for volunteer work or self-sufficiency programs when possible.



Kearney Housing Agency
2715 Avenue I
P.O. Box 1236
Kearney, NE 68848

Telephone: (308) 234-3000 V/TDD Fax: (308) 237-3113
 Web Site: www.khaweb.com E-mail: director@khaweb.com

CSSR STATUS CHECKLIST

1. Are you age 62 or older? Yes. No. Continue to #2
STOP. YOU ARE EXEMPT.

2. Are you blind or disabled? Yes. No.
 Continue to #2a. Continue to #3.

2a. Do you receive SSI, SSDI or VA Disability Benefits? Yes. No.
 Continue to #2b. Continue to #3.

2b. Have you engaged in substantial gainful activity in the last 12 months?
 (Blind = \$1,640 per month Non-blind = \$980 per month) Yes. No.
 Continue to #3. Continue to #2c

2c. Will you certify that because of your disability you are unable to comply with the community service requirement? Yes. No.
STOP. YOU ARE EXEMPT. Continue to #3.

3. Are you a primary caretaker of a blind or disabled individual? Yes. No.
 Continue to #3a. Continue to #4.

3a. Is the blind or disabled individual a full time student? Yes. No.
 Continue to #4. **STOP. YOU ARE EXEMPT.**

4. Are you engaged in work activities? (see page **Work Activities on page 2**) Yes. No.
 Continue to #4a. Continue to #5.

4a. Are you working 30 or more hours per week? (\$10,218 annually for self-employed) Yes. No.
STOP. YOU ARE EXEMPT. Continue to #4b.

4b. Are you a single parent of a child under the age of 6 and working 20 or more hours per week? (\$6812 for self-employed) Yes. No.
STOP. YOU ARE EXEMPT. Continue to #5.

Employment start date _____ Employment end date _____

KHA uses the 15th of the month for determining exemption status.

5. Do you meet the requirements for being exempted from having to engage in a work activity under the state program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state of Nebraska, including a state-administered welfare to work program? (Are you exempt from employment activities through Employment First?)

Yes. No.

STOP. YOU ARE EXEMPT. Continue to #6.

6. Are you receiving assistance under a state program funded under par A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of Nebraska, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program, and have not been found by the state or other administering entity to be in non-compliance with such program? (Do you have an active Employment First plan and are you complying with your plan?)

Yes. No.

**STOP. YOU
ARE EXEMPT.**

**STOP. YOU ARE
NOT EXEMPT.
CONTACT
LAURIE JAMESON AT
234-3000.**

If you are determined to be exempt from the community service requirement, you will need to provide the documentation to show your exemption (pay stubs, class schedules, disability verifications etc.) Please contact Laurie Jameson at 234-3000 for more information.

Work Activities

As it relates to an exemption from the community service requirement, work activities means:

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. KHA will accept no more than two qualifying months of these activities per resident, and these months may not be consecutive.
7. Vocational educational training (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual). Unsupervised homework time will not be accepted as a work activity
8. Job skills training directly related to employment
9. 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
10. 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.

Note: It is the resident's responsibility to provide documentation to KHA of participation in qualifying work activities.

WARNING: Section 1001 of Title 18 of the U.S. Code makes it a criminal offense to make willful false statements or misrepresentations to any Department or Agency of the United States as to any matter within its jurisdiction.

_____ EQUAL OPPORTUNITY HOUSING _____

Kearney Housing Agency does not discriminate on the basis of handicap, race, color, religion, sex, familial status or national origin in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its federally assisted programs and activities.