

# Community Service and 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 or other activities that help an individual move toward self-sufficiency and economic independence. This is a requirement of the Public Housing Lease.

## B. Definitions

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

- 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.
- Work with a non-profit organization that serves PHA residents or their children such as: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys or Girls clubs, 4-H program, PAL, Garden Center, Community clean-up programs, beautification programs, other youth or senior organizations
- Work at the Authority to help improve physical conditions
- Work at the Authority to help with children's programs
- Work at the Authority to help with senior programs
- Helping neighborhood groups with special projects
- Working through resident organization to help other residents with problems, serving as an officer in a Resident organization, serving on the Resident Advisory Board
- Caring for the children of other residents so they may volunteer

**NOTE: Political activity is excluded.**

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

- Job readiness programs
- Job training programs
- GED classes
- Substance abuse or mental health counseling
- English proficiency or literacy (reading) classes
- Apprenticeships
- Budgeting and credit counseling
- Any kind of class that helps a person toward economic independence
- Full time student status at any school, college or vocational school

**Exempt Adult** - an adult member of the family who

- Is 62 years of age or older
- Has a disability that prevents him/her from being gainfully employed and who certifies that because of this disability they are unable to comply with the service provisions
- Is the caretaker of a disabled person
- Is working at least 20 hours per week
- Is participating in a welfare to work program
- Is receiving assistance from TANF and is in compliance with job training and work activities requirements of the program.
- Is a full time student

### **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. The San Marcos Housing Authority must approve all community service and self-sufficiency activities not included in this policy before being allowed to count towards the required (8) hours per month.
4. Family obligations
  - At lease execution or re-examination after November 1, 2003, 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 nonrenewal of their lease.
  - 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.
  - If a family member is found to be noncompliant 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.
5. Change in exempt status:
  - 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.

- 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.
- If, during the twelve (12) month period, a non-exempt person becomes exempt, that person will still be responsible for completing the required (8) hours for every month that they were non-exempt.

#### **D. Authority obligations**

1. To the greatest extent possible and practicable, the Authority will
  - 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*)
  - provide in-house opportunities for volunteer work or self-sufficiency programs.
2. The Authority will provide the family with exemption verification forms and Recording/Certification documentation forms and a copy of this policy at lease execution
3. 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 by requesting a grievance hearing within 10 days of determination.
4. Noncompliance of family member
  - 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.
  - If the Authority finds a family member to be noncompliant, the Authority will enter into an agreement with the noncompliant member and the Head of Household to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period.
  - 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 noncompliant member agrees to move out of the unit.
  - The family may use the Authority's Grievance Procedure to protest the lease termination.

**Appendix 1**  
**Community Service Exemption Certification**

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 that prevents me from complying with the community service requirement.  
*(Certification of Disability Form will serve as documentation)*
  
- ( ) 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)*

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Resident

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Date

## **Community Service Compliance Certification**

I/We have received a copy of, have read and understand the contents of the Authority's Community Service/Self Sufficiency Policy.

I/We understand that this is a requirement of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 and that if we do not comply with this requirement, our lease will not be renewed.

Resident \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Resident \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Resident \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_