

Community Service

Pursuant to the requirements of §12(c) of the Housing Act of 1937 ("Act"), 42 USC 1437j(c), as amended by §512 of the 1998 Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act, the Jonesboro Housing Authority implemented a community service program for all new residents beginning November 1, 2000. All existing residents were phased in at their annual recertifications.

In accordance with §12(c), each non-exempt adult resident will be required, as a condition of their tenancy, to provide eight hours of monthly community service, as defined under 24 CFR §960.601(b) or to engage in economic self-sufficiency programs as defined by 42 USC §1437j(g), for a similar period.

All public housing residents age 18 or older are required to participate in the Community Service Activities with the exception of:

- Individuals age 62 or older
- Individuals who are blind or disabled as defined under section 216 (I) (I) or 1614 of the Social Security Act, and is unable to comply with this section or is the primary caretaker of such individual, as evidenced in the participant file.
- Individuals engaged in a work activity as defined in section 407 (d) of the Social Security Act
- Individuals meeting requirement of 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 Arkansas, including a State-administered welfare-to-work program (as evidenced in the file from department of Human Services)
- Individual is in a family receiving assistance under a State program funded under part A of the title IV or the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the State of Arkansas including a State-administered welfare program of the State of Arkansas 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.

Jonesboro Housing Authority will accord an exemption from the obligation to provide community service to each individual resident meeting the qualifications provided under §12(c)(2) of the Act, 42 USC §1437j(c)(2) as listed above. Exemption status must be verified at least annually except in the case of an individual who is age 62 or over.

Jonesboro Housing Authority notes that residents have frequently given opposition to the requirement that public housing residents provide community service. However, JURHA has no choice but to implement this requirement of federal law. In designing the program, the JURHA has addressed resident concerns. Non-exempt residents will be encouraged to perform community service at the development where they reside or in their immediately surrounding communities. **Activities such as participation in Neighborhood Watch, Bus Stop Patrol, Tenant Patrol, Computer Lab Volunteer, and Youth Event Chaperone are made available to residents for community service credits.** Residents may, however, perform community service at locations not owned or controlled by Jonesboro Urban Renewal and Housing Authority. JURHA has ten approved work sites. Residents are also advised that community activities at verifiable sites, such as volunteerism at local schools or helping in Jonesboro's Project 365, are acceptable 42 USC §1437j(c)(6).

As required by QHWRA §512(b), the JURHA has revised its dwelling lease (page 7, paragraph 8) to recognize the obligation to provide community service is necessary for residency. The public housing lease term is a twelve-month period. Extension of the lease term is conditioned on each non-exempt individual's compliance with the community service requirement.

JURHA will provide each family affected by the community service requirement with a written description of the community service requirement, the process for claiming an exemption and for verification of their qualification for an exempt status. JURHA will provide notice to the family of its determination identifying individual members of the household who are subject to community service and the family members who are exempt. 24 CFR §960.605(c)(2).

Community service is not employment. It is voluntary service that is a public benefit, that serves to improve the quality of life, that enhance resident self-sufficiency or which increase resident self-responsibility in the community. Political activity is not community service. 24 CFR §960.601(b).

Jonesboro Urban Renewal and Housing Authority will not substitute community service for work ordinarily performed by its employees or replace a job at any location where residents perform activities that satisfy the community service requirement. 24 CFR §960.609.

JURHA has adopted procedures to determine whether individuals are subject to the community service obligation or exempt. We track resident's balances using Quick-Books Software. Changes in status are monitored and made as required when interim changes in income or occupancy are reported and with each annual recertification. 24 CFR §960.605(c).

At least 30 days prior to the end of the resident's lease term, JURHA will review the compliance of each non-exempt adult family member. Residents, who have failed to comply, will be offered an opportunity to cure their noncompliance. 42 USC §1437j(c)(3).

Residents may request a grievance hearing on JURHA's determination. Residents may also exercise any available judicial remedy for JURHA's non-renewal of the lease based on its determination of non-compliance. 24 CFR §960.607(b)(2)(iii).

Where a resident has violated the community service requirement, federal law prohibits the Authority from renewing or extending the lease, unless the non-compliant individual no longer resides in the unit or enters into a written agreement with the Authority to cure such non-compliance. 24 CFR §960.607(c).

JURHA will retain reasonable documentation of each non-exempt resident's performance of community service or the basis for any exemption that is accorded. 24 CFR §960.605(c)(4).

JURHA will comply with non-discrimination and equal opportunity requirements provided under 24 CFR §5.105(a).