Addendum E

COMMUNITY SERVICE
&
SELF SUFFICIENCY POLICY

I. 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 toward self sufficiency and economic independence. This is a requirement of the Public Housing Lease.

II. Definitions

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

   1. 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.;

   2. Work with a non-profit organization that serves public housing residents or their children such as: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys or Girls clubs, 4-H program, Garden Center, Community cleanup programs, beautification programs, other youth or senior organizations;

   3. Work at the Housing Authority to help improve physical conditions;

   4. Work at the Housing Authority to help with children's programs;

   5. Work at the Housing Authority to help with senior programs;

   6. Helping neighborhood groups with special projects;

   7. 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;

   8. Caring for the children of other residents so they may volunteer; and

   9. Providing primary caring for family’s minor children so that an adult family member may be employed or attend school or job training programs.

For the purpose of this policy, political activity is excluded.
B. Self Sufficiency Activities - activities that include, but are not limited to:
   1. Job readiness programs;
   2. Job training programs;
   3. GED classes;
   4. Substance abuse or mental health counseling;
   5. English proficiency or literacy (reading) classes;
   6. Apprenticeships;
   7. Budgeting and credit counseling;
   8. Any kind of class that helps a person toward economic independence; and
   9. Full time student status at any school, college or vocational school.

III. Requirements of the Program

   In order to be eligible for continued occupancy, each adult family member 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 unless they are exempt from this requirement

   The eight (8) hours per month may be either volunteer work or self-sufficiency program activity, or a combination of the two.

   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 Housing Authority will make the determination of whether to allow or disallow a deviation from the schedule.

   Activities must be performed within the community and not outside the jurisdictional area of the Housing Authority.

IV. Family obligations

   A. At lease execution or re-examination after July 31, 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 their lease not being renewed.

   B. At each annual re-examination, non-exempt family members must present a completed documentation form (to be provided by the Housing 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.
C. 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 Housing Authority to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period.

D. If, during the twelve (12) month period, a non-exempt person becomes exempt, it is his/her responsibility to report this to the Housing Authority and provide documentation of such.

E. If, during the twelve (12) month period, an exempt person becomes non-exempt, it is his/her responsibility to report this to the Housing Authority. The Housing 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.

V. Housing Authority Obligations

A. To the greatest extent possible and practicable, the Housing Authority will provide:

1. 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); and

2. In-house opportunities for volunteer work or self-sufficiency programs.

B. The Housing Authority will provide the family with exemption verification forms and Recording/Certification documentation forms and a copy of this policy at initial application and at lease execution.

C. The Housing 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 Housing Authority's Grievance Procedure if they disagree with the determination.

VI. Noncompliance of family member

A. At least sixty (60) days before the family’s next lease anniversary date, a review will be done to see whether each applicable adult family member is in compliance with the community service requirement.

B. If the Housing Authority finds a family member to be noncompliant, the Housing 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.

C. 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.

D. The family may use the Housing Authority's Grievance Procedure to protest the lease termination.
E. In order to be eligible for continued occupancy, each adult family member 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 unless they are exempt from this requirement

VII. Exemptions

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

A. Family members who are 62 or older;

B. Family members who are blind or disabled;

C. Family members who are the primary care giver for someone who is blind or disabled;

D. Primary caretaker of a child or children 13 years of age and under in a single parent household;

E. Family members engaged in work activity;

F. Family members who are exempt from work activity under Part A of title IV of the Social Security Act or under any other State welfare program, including the welfare-to-work program; and

G. Family members receiving assistance 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.

VIII. Notification of the Requirement

A. The Housing Authority of the City of Cumberland shall identify all adult family members who are apparently not exempt from the community service requirement.

B. The Housing 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 Housing Authority shall verify such claims.

C. The notification will advise families that their community service obligation will begin upon the effective date of their first annual reexamination. For family’s paying a flat rent, the obligation begins on the date their annual reexamination would have been effective had an annual reexamination taken place. 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 reexamination.
IX. Volunteer Opportunities

A. Community service includes performing work or duties in the public benefit 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.

B. 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, workfare, financial or household management, apprenticeship, and any program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as substance abuse or mental health treatment).

C. The Housing Authority will coordinate with social service agencies, local schools, and the Human Resources Office in identifying a list of volunteer community service positions.

D. Together with the Resident Advisory Councils, the Housing Authority of the City of Cumberland may create volunteer positions such as hall monitoring, litter patrols, and supervising and record keeping for volunteers.

X. The Process

At the first annual reexamination and each annual re-examination thereafter, the Housing Authority will do the following:

A. Provide information about obtaining suitable volunteer positions;

B. 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 each period of work;

C. The Property Manager or designee will assist the family members in identifying appropriate volunteer positions and in meeting their responsibilities. The Property Manager or designee, will track the family member's progress monthly and will meet with the family member as needed to best encourage compliance; and

D. Sixty (60) days before the family's next lease anniversary date, a review will be done to see whether each applicable adult family member is in compliance with the community service requirement.

XI. Notification of Non-Compliance with Community Service Requirement

The Housing Authority will notify any family found to be in noncompliance of the following:

A. The family member(s) has been determined to be in noncompliance;

B. That the determination is subject to the grievance procedure; and

C. That, unless the family member(s) enter into an agreement to comply, the lease will not be renewed or will be terminated;
XII.  Opportunity for Cure

A.  The Housing Authority will offer the family member(s) the opportunity to enter into an agreement prior to the anniversary of the lease. The agreement shall state that the family member(s) agrees to enter into an economic self-sufficiency program or agrees to contribute to community service for as many hours as needed to comply with the requirement over the past 12-month period. The cure shall occur over the 12-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 go toward the current commitment until the current year's commitment is made.

B.  The Property Manager or designee will assist the family member in identifying volunteer opportunities and will track compliance on a monthly basis.

C.  If any applicable family member does not accept the terms of the agreement, does not fulfill their obligation to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program, or falls behind in their obligation under the agreement to perform community service by more than three (3) hours after three (3) months, the Housing Authority shall take action to terminate the lease.