

The Executive Director

Congratulations! You have been hired by the Housing Agency (formerly known as Housing Authority) Board of Commissioners for the position of Executive Director.

It is your responsibility to handle and manage or direct all functions of the Housing Agency, to handle the day-to-day problems that arise no matter how unusual or unpredictable, to make appropriate recommendations for programs, to make contact with different agencies, and to carry out policies set.

Commissioners are policy makers and do not or should not get involved in the administration of the program - that's what you are to do.

To better understand your duties and responsibilities you should review and study the following:

1. Operating budgets, financial reports and fiscal audits performed by independent auditors or reviews by fee accountants to determine the status of the operation.
2. Participate and provide documentation for Rural Development (RD) Supervisory Visits (SV) and Compliance Reviews (CR) or HUD Management and Occupancy Reviews (MOR) including the resolution of any findings from the inspections and reviews.
3. Current insurance policies and determination of what coverage is required by RD.
4. The inventory of all capitalized equipment and check for proper location of the items. Add new purchases of appliances and equipment to the inventory list.
5. Any equipment and supply disposition actions (other than budgeted items) by the Board of Commissioners.
6. Keep current the bank(s) signature cards used for general funds and investments.
7. The status of project office and general petty cash fund and reconciliations.
8. The existing operating policies, personnel policy, current minutes, and By-Laws of the Agency.
9. Review RD or RD/HUD Section 8 manuals, State and Federal Laws and local ordinances affecting the Agency.
10. The community services available and provided to the tenants.
11. Public relations functions in place and evaluate the need for further outreach activities?

As Executive Director (ED), you are the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Agency. You must understand your duties which are very broad and varied in order to have an effective operation. Duties may include but are not limited to:

1. Being the primary advisor to the Board of Commissioners, and in this capacity, serve as Secretary at all board meetings. The ED has the primary responsibility for all of the Agency's records of every nature including the preparation, or supervises the preparation, of annual budgets, annual and special reports as well as all business matters requiring board action.

2. Managing and directing all functions of the Housing Agency. The Executive Director is entrusted with authority to carry out policies, direct and supervise the staff, plus propose any changes in the organization or staff procedure to the best interest and development of the Agency's program.
3. Administers directives and policies of the Board of Commissioners that comply with Federal regulations, including admissions and rent collection policies, and procurement and disposition policies.
4. Administers personnel policy and recommends changes and updates as may be required to stay in compliance with Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity requirements; recruits, hires, terminates, directs and coordinates work of employees.
5. Administers sound safety policies.
6. Carries out the public relations.
7. Handles all fiscal functions for the Board and the Agency or in conjunction with a fee accountant if directed by the Board.
8. Ensures compliance with all RD or RD/HUD Section 8 regulations, handbooks, bulletins and notices.
9. Develops and administers operating and management plans.
10. Signs all financial reports, contracts and other official correspondence submitted to the Board, RD, or other agencies.
11. Directs procurement and property control according to board policies based on Federal regulations.
12. Administers all tenant-related affairs in accordance with State law, RD, RD/HUD Section 8 directives, and local policy.
13. Plans and develops maintenance programs.
14. Plans and develops housing construction, including acquisition of real property, design and construction phases, inclusive.
15. Plans and develops a tenant social service program.
16. Handles all emergencies.
17. Maintains program integrity - follows sound business practices, prescribed standards of conduct and RD or RD/HUD Section 8 property requirements.

Program requirements and prohibited activities that you should know are a conflict of interest are as follows:

1. Obtaining personal or financial interest or benefits including money, favors, gratuities, entertainment or anything of value that might be interpreted as conflict of interest.
2. Obtaining a direct or indirect interest in any contract, subcontract or agreement for any public housing activity. This prohibition extends for a period of one year after your tenure.

Public Relations

The definition of public relations is utilizing publicity to gain attention for your Housing Agency, or to establish an image and keep your Agency's activities and accomplishments in the news to build traffic for occupancy and attract services for your residents. Most public agencies do not have the money or personnel to set up a full-time public information office.

Some suggestions:

1. Set goals for your Housing Agency. What do you want or need to achieve? Do you need to increase awareness, acceptance, understanding, support, or volunteers from within the community?
2. Develop communication with your local news media. Get to know your community and community leaders.
3. Publish a local newsletter at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly, etc.).
4. Be willing to speak about your Agency and your programs as well as issues and problems in your community.
5. Keep employees, tenants and other program beneficiaries advised on issues and decisions that affect them and the operation of the Agency.
6. Work to stimulate well-informed public opinion within the community on matters involving the Agency and its program.

You are the primary contact person between the Housing Agency and the public at all levels of government, including RD or HUD, the press, radio, television, and any other media. Success of the program depends on your ability to come up with positive stories and photos that will be published in the local newspapers and may be picked up by local radio and television.

Board of Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners is the governing-body and the policy-making body of the Housing Agency. The Housing Agency is an autonomous entity of the State organized under authority of the Nebraska Housing Agency Act §71-1572 to 71-15, 168. A Housing Commissioner by definition is a political officer. Commissioners are not paid for their work, but serve as a person committed to public service. The number of Board members can range from five to seven Commissioners and the term of office from one to five years, with staggered expiration dates. Initially the Commissioners are appointed by local officials such as mayors and members of the city or county councils, but once appointed, Commissioners are independent. They do not work for the local officials who appointed them, and except for cases of established incompetency or impropriety, they cannot be removed from office until their terms expire. In the event of death, incapacitation, resignation or removal from office, the appropriate appointing body (mayor/Housing Agency board) must reappoint for the unexpired term of the Commissioner so affected. If a Commissioner wishes to resign, a written resignation must be submitted to the local governing body. It is emphasized that Commissioners may be removed from office only for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or misconduct in office. Once a Commissioner is appointed, the next course of action is for him/her to be confirmed by the local governing body. They must be sworn into office by taking the "Oath of Office of Commissioner" before the chairman or other authorized official.

From community to community, the legal powers of the Commissioners and the job they are to perform may differ. Each Commissioner should read and understand the laws that established the Housing Agency. Commissioners should acquaint him/herself with (1 the functions and obligations of the Agency under the Nebraska Housing Agency Act; (2 the basic obligations and responsibilities of the Agency under Rural Development (RD) or Rural Development/Department of Housing and Urban Development (RD/HUD) Section 8 properties; (3 the By-Laws and all adopted policies of the Agency including the admission and rent policies, the personnel policy, and the procurement policy; and (4 the general operating condition of the Agency, including the nature of any development and operating budgets under which the Housing Agency operates and the most recent audit and other review reports of the Housing Agency 's operation received from RD or HUD.

Commissioners are responsible for the establishment of policy in the areas of budgeting, personnel, maintenance and social services. They normally look to the Executive Director (ED) to identify needed policy changes and to set the stage and timing for their deliberations. The Board of Commissioners hires the ED who serves at board meetings in the official, but non-voting, capacity as its secretary or secretary-treasurer. The Board must rely on the talents, insights and background information provided by the ED and staff in their decision making.

Some specific functions and policies that the board is responsible for are:

1. By-laws of the Agency ;
2. The annual contribution to the Replacement Reserve account;
3. Method of Administration;
4. Tenant admission policies, maximum income limits for admission, and continued occupancy;
5. Lease and Grievance Procedures;
6. Personnel policy of the Agency ;
7. Affirmative Action Plan;
8. Procurement, capitalization and disposition policy of the Agency ;
9. Authorizing, with the approval of the Local Governing Body, new applications for financial assistance to develop, buy or rent additional low-income housing;
10. Authorizing all major contracts, development, and operating budgets and revisions thereto;
11. Approval of minutes of meetings of the Board of Commissioners.

In general any expenditure of funds or change of policy must be approved by Board resolution. Policies serve to delegate certain functions to the Executive Director.

Code of Professional Ethics of the Public Housing Commissioner

Preamble

The objective of this Code of Ethics is to encourage professional performance by the Housing Commissioners. The Code describes objectives which when accepted and followed will help provide a beneficial relationship between the Commissioners, staff, and those they serve.

Code

A Public Housing Commissioner shall be bound by the following pledge:

1. I Pledge myself to the professionalism of the Housing Commissioners through my own efforts and through the mutual efforts of my colleagues, and by all other proper means available.
2. I pledge to view my service on the Housing Commission as an opportunity to serve my community, and my state and nation because I support the objectives of providing a decent, safe, and sanitary home and a suitable living environment for every American family.
3. I pledge that I recognize my responsibilities are to serve in this capacity as a government official, a community leader, and an advocate for the Commission, its programs and objectives.
4. I pledge myself to seek and maintain an equitable, honorable and cooperative association with fellow Public Housing Officials and all others who are concerned with the proper and professional management of Public Housing Developments.
5. I pledge to try to make decisions in terms of the most economical and efficient method toward the best interests of all citizens, particularly those of low and moderate income. Decisions will provide an equal opportunity to all citizens regardless of race, creed, sex or age.
6. I will recognize that my responsibility is not to make the day-to-day management decisions of the Commission, but to see that it is well run by carrying out policy-making, planning and appraisal functions and by providing direction and taking formal action in support of these functions.
7. I pledge to refuse to represent special interests or partisan politics or to use this Commission for personal gain or for the gain of friends or supporters. I recognize that although I have been appointed by the City Commission, my responsibility is to the entire community.
8. I pledge I shall not receive, directly or indirectly, any fee, rebate, commission, discount, gratuity or any other benefit whether monetary or otherwise for the proper professional discharge of my duties, except authorized established expenses and other benefits.
9. I will arrive at conclusions only after I have discussed matters fully with members of the professional staff and Commission members. Once a decision has been reached by the majority of the Commission assembled at a meeting, I will support it graciously.
10. I will recognize that Agency vests with the whole Commission assembled in meetings and that the powers of the Commission shall be vested with the Commissioners thereof in office at any time.

11. I pledge to support and protect Commission personnel in performance of their duties. Where and when Commissioners are involved in employment of staff I will vote to hire only competent and trained personnel who have been recommended by the Executive Director, otherwise I will support the Executive Director in the Executive Director's choice of hiring and handling of personnel without involvement by the Commission.
12. I pledge to refer all complaints, including my personal criticisms, to the Executive Director and only after failure of administrative solution will pursue such matters outside the Commission while also recognizing the individual rights of a Commissioner as a citizen appointee and the responsibilities such appointment implies.
13. I pledge to observe and enforce local and state laws and regulations pertaining to the Commission and the housing that the Commission represents.
14. I pledge to respect the limited intent and scope of executive session and respect privileged communications from executive sessions and other sources for the privacy of the personnel and clients we are involved with.
15. I pledge myself to place honesty, integrity, industriousness, compassion, and understanding above all else; to pursue my gainful efforts by study and dedication to the end that service to my Housing Agency and the people I serve shall always be maintained to the highest possible level.
16. I pledge to make diligent use of the time of the Commission as a whole and to endeavor to attend all meetings barring unforeseen conflicts, in which case I shall promptly notify the chairperson or his designee.
17. I pledge myself to comply with the rules and regulations and principals and this Code of Professional Ethics.

I HEREBY SUBSCRIBE TO AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY the foregoing **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING COMMISSIONER**. I understand that a violation of any provision of this Code may result in reprimand, suspension or revocation of my appointment as a Public Housing Commissioner.

Name of Applicant

Signature of Applicant

Date

City, State

Witness

Date