



Rural Development  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



USDA Rural Development  
Tenant Rights  
and Responsibilities

Together, America Prospers





## You can help make your USDA Rural Development-assisted housing a better home for you, your family, and your neighbors.

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USDA Rural Development provides financial assistance subsidies for the apartment in which you live. To maintain a positive environment for all residents, we encourage:

- Open communication between property owners, management and residents
- Property managers to consider and resolve resident complaints

### **We support your right to:**

- File complaints with property management, owners or USDA without fear of retaliation, harassment or intimidation
- Organize and participate in certain decisions regarding the well-being of the property
- Use the USDA Rural Development Multifamily Housing program grievance process <https://tinyurl.com/a2tezt7c> to appeal a management decision

Together with the property owner and management team, you play an important role in ensuring your apartment, the grounds, and common areas are a safe, healthy, and comfortable environment for all.



# Your Rights

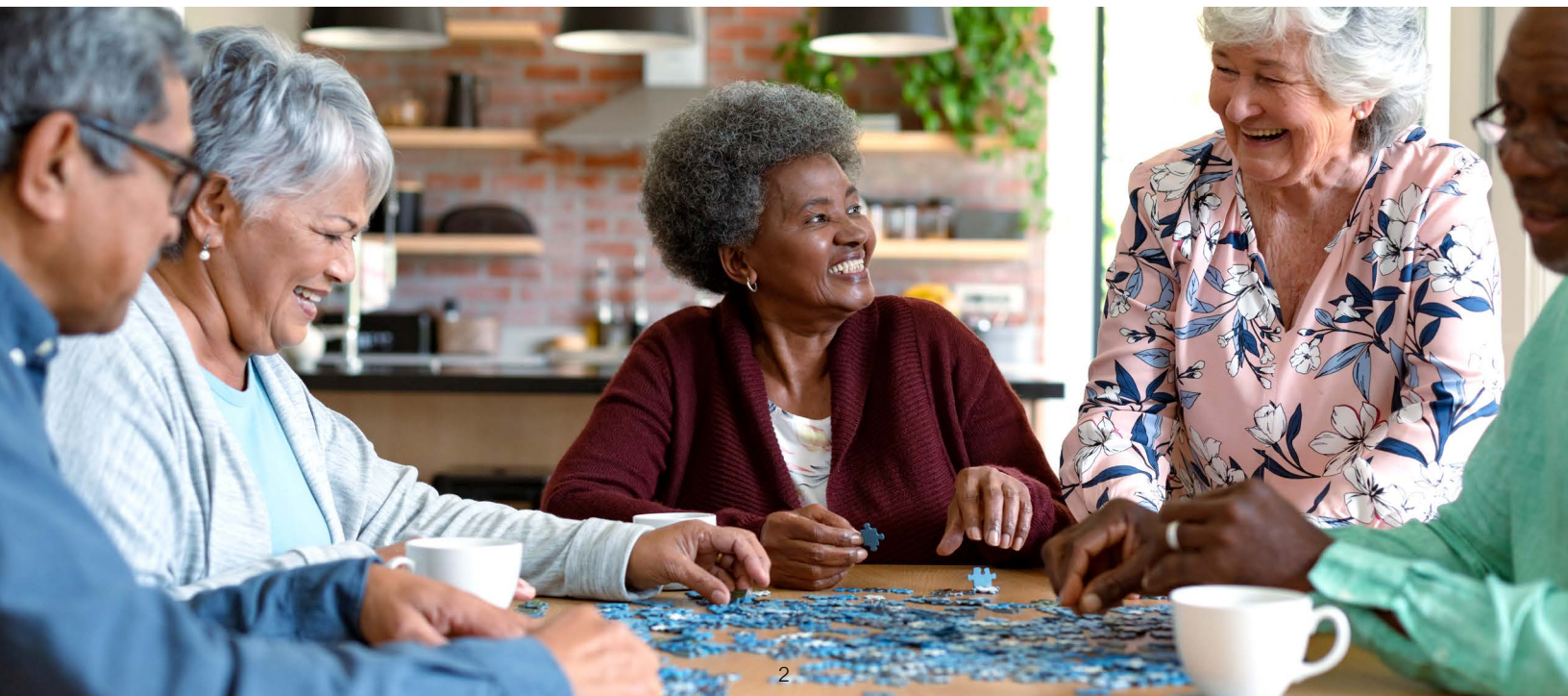
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## **As a resident, you have the right to:**

- Live in decent, safe, sanitary housing free from environmental, health, and safety hazards
- Have repairs performed in a timely manner, and upon request
- Receive reasonable written notice of any non-emergency inspection or other entry into your home
- Protection from eviction, except for specific causes stated in your lease
- Receive a 30-day notice prior to eviction for nonpayment of rent
- Request recalculation of your rent if your income decreases by \$50 or more per month
- Access your tenant file
- Access resources to help you avoid eviction, ensure the legal process during an eviction proceeding is fair, and avoid future housing instability
- Protections under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA provides housing protections for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, harassment, and stalking who are applying for or living in federally assisted housing. The law applies to a survivor regardless of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or age.
- File a complaint alleging discrimination without fear of retaliation or reprisal

## **As a member of a resident organization, you have the right to:**

- Organize without difficulty, harassment, or retaliation from property owners or management
- Provide leaflets and post materials in common areas informing other residents of their rights and opportunities to be involved in matters concerning their rental homes
- Use appropriate common space or meeting facilities to organize. (There might be instances in which a reasonable, USDA-approved fee applies for common space use.)
- Meet without representatives or employees of the property owner or management company present
- Be recognized by property owners and the management company as having a voice in residential community affairs





# Your Nondiscrimination Rights

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## You have the right to:

- Equal and fair treatment
- Use of services and facilities without regard to your race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, disability, familial status, national origin (ethnicity or language), and age

# Your Rights Regarding Clear and Fair Leases

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## Leases must:

- Be clearly and fairly written, with well-defined rental terms, rights and responsibilities
- Not include provisions limiting how disagreements will be settled, unauthorized terms, hidden or illegal fees, false representations, or other unfair or deceptive practices
- Include transparent information regarding the security deposit policy, with appropriately sized deposits placed in a federally insured bank account for the duration of the lease
- Provide reasonable advance notice of actions related to the unit, including notice of entry for inspection, and notice of any significant changes to the unit
- Be written in simple, plain-language, accessible to the renter, and the leasing process must ensure tenants understand the terms of the lease
- Describe the rights and protections provided to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, harassment, and stalking.







## Your Rights Regarding Adverse Actions and Appeals

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- The owner must notify applicants and tenants in writing about any proposed actions that would have negative consequences, such as denial of occupancy or changes in the occupancy rules or lease.
- The written notice must give specific reasons for the proposed action and must also advise applicants and tenants of their appeal rights. Housing complexes in areas with concentrations of non-English-speaking residents must provide notices both in English and in the majority non-English language.
- Applicants and tenants can file a grievance in writing with the property owner in response to the owner's actions – or failure to act – that result in a denial, significant reduction, or termination of benefits.
- Grievances can also be filed when an applicant or tenant disputes the owner's notice of proposed adverse action. Refer to USDA Rural Development Multifamily Housing Grievance Process FAQs (available at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/a2tez7c>) for more information.

## Your Responsibilities

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As a resident of a USDA-assisted multifamily housing property, you also have certain responsibilities to ensure your building remains a suitable home for you and your neighbors.

- By signing your lease, you, the property owner, and the management company have entered into a legal, enforceable contract. You must comply with the rules and guidelines of your lease and all local laws governing the property.

### Responsibilities to your property owner or management agent

#### **As a tenant, you must:**

- Pay the correct and total amount of rent due – on time – each month
- Provide accurate information to the property owner or management agent to determine your total payment. You must also consent to the release of information to a third party to allow for verification.
- Report changes in your family's income or composition to the property owner or management agent in a timely manner.

If you have questions about your lease — or to obtain a copy of it — contact your property management agent or the USDA loan specialist assigned to your property. You can find a list of loan specialists at this link:

<https://www.sc.egov.usda.gov/data/MFH.html>.

# Your Responsibilities to the Property and Your Fellow Residents

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## You must:

- Conduct yourself in a manner that will not disturb your neighbors
- Not engage in criminal activity in your apartment, common areas or grounds
- Keep your apartment reasonably clean. Exits and entrances must be free of debris, clutter and fire hazards
- Properly dispose of garbage and waste. Do not litter on the grounds or common areas
- Maintain your apartment and common areas in the same general physical condition as they were when you took occupancy
- Report to management any health or safety hazards and any defects in building systems, fixtures, appliances, or other parts of the apartment, grounds or facilities



# Your Right to be Involved in Decisions Impacting Your Home

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## You have the right to be notified of – and sometimes, to comment on – the following:

- An increase or decrease in the maximum permissible rent
- Conversion of a property from property-paid utilities to tenant-paid utilities
- A proposed decrease or increase in the tenant utility allowance
- Changes in the occupancy rules or lease
- Improvements that represent a substantial change or addition to the property
- Payment in full of a mortgage note held by USDA Rural Development (if prior USDA approval is required)
- Any other action which could ultimately lead to the involuntary, temporary, or permanent relocation of tenants

**Note:** If you live in a USDA-owned property that is being sold, you have the right to be notified of – and comment on – USDA Rural Development's plans for sale of the property. You also will be given an opportunity to receive a Letter of Priority Entitlement (LOPE) that will help you find suitable rental housing elsewhere.



# Additional Assistance

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## For help, contact:

- Your onsite property manager, the management company or the property owner.
- Your local government tenant-landlord affairs office, legal services office, or other tenant organization.
- For all other questions or general inquiries, contact USDA Rural Development Multifamily Housing at **800-292-8293** or email your regional field operations division:.

For properties located in CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT, or WV:

Email **[MFHFODNortheast@usda.gov](mailto:MFHFODNortheast@usda.gov)**

For properties located in AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, PR, SC, TN, TX, or USVI:

Email **[MFHFODSouth@usda.gov](mailto:MFHFODSouth@usda.gov)**

For properties located in IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, or WI:


Email **[MFHFODMidwest@usda.gov](mailto:MFHFODMidwest@usda.gov)**

For properties located in AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, or WY:

Email **[MFHFODWest@usda.gov](mailto:MFHFODWest@usda.gov)**

## Online Resources:

- To report Housing Discrimination, visit **[www.hud.gov/fairhousing/fileacomplaint](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing/fileacomplaint)**.
- If your rights under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) have been violated, you can file a Fair Housing Complaint at **[www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing)**.
- To file a Program Discrimination Complaint as a USDA Customer, visit **[www.usda.gov/oascr/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer](http://www.usda.gov/oascr/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer)**.
- A list of USDA Rural Development Multifamily Housing Grievance Process FAQs is available at this link: **<https://tinyurl.com/a2tezt7c>**.
- To view a USDA Rural Development Multifamily Housing Adverse Action – Denial Memo, follow this link: **<https://tinyurl.com/jxz75zze>**.
- The USDA Multifamily Housing webpage is available at: **[www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multi-family-housing-programs](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multi-family-housing-programs)**.
- You will find a searchable map of USDA Rural Development-financed Multifamily Housing properties at this link: **<https://tinyurl.com/4t5r4zar>**.
- To find the USDA Rural Development loan specialist assigned to the Multifamily Housing property in which you live, follow this link: **[www.sc.egov.usda.gov/data/MFH.html](http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov/data/MFH.html)**.



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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, available at this link: <https://go.usa.gov/xzzfW>, and at any USDA office. Or, write a letter addressed to USDA and provide all of the information requested in the form. Call **(866) 632-9992** to request a copy of the complaint form. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) postal mail:

**U.S. Department of Agriculture**  
**Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights**  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) fax: **(202) 690-7442**, or (3) email [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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