

# Cooperation Agreement for Economic Self-Sufficiency between the Public Housing Agency and the Welfare Agency

## MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA)

This Memorandum of Agreement, hereinafter referred to as “MOA,” is made and entered into between the \_\_\_\_\_ (Public Housing Agency), a governmental entity corporation hereinafter referred to as the “PHA,” and \_\_\_\_\_ (Local Welfare Agency), an organization hereinafter referred to as “Welfare Agency.” The parties hereto agree as follows:

**WHEREAS**, the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (hereinafter referred to as “PHRA,” the Public Housing Reform Act) envisions that the PHA and the Welfare Agency will target services to families who receive housing assistance, and will work together to help these families to become self-sufficient;

**WHEREAS**, the PHA and the Welfare Agency recognize the significant overlap in the population receiving welfare assistance and living in public housing or receiving Section 8 tenant-based assistance;

**WHEREAS**, the PHA and the Welfare Agency recognize that these families have the potential to succeed and become economically self-sufficient where adequate supportive services are provided;

**WHEREAS**, the PHA and the Welfare Agency recognize that coordinated administrative practices support participant self-sufficiency and it is in the best interest of all parties concerned to coordinate efforts aimed at jointly assisting these families in becoming economically self-sufficient so that efforts are not duplicated and so that the strengths of both the PHA and the Welfare Agency can be used to benefit all families; and

**WHEREAS**, the PHA and the Welfare Agency recognize the need for a streamlined process to collect, verify and provide information as necessary to either party in a timely manner to ensure efficient delivery of service, and to detect and deter participant fraud and program noncompliance;

Therefore be it resolved that the parties agree to the following:

### **PURPOSE OF MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA):**

The purpose of this MOA is to carry out, on a local level, Sec. 512(d)(7) of the Public Housing Reform Act of 1998 (PHRA) (implemented at 24 CFR 5.613). That section states, in relevant part, the following:

*“A public housing agency...shall make its best efforts to enter into such cooperation agreements, with State, local, and other agencies providing... welfare or public assistance..., as may be necessary, to provide ...information to facilitate administration (of their program requirements) and other information regarding rents, income, and assistance that may assist a public housing agency or welfare or public assistance agency in carrying out its functions”*

*“A public housing agency shall seek to include in a cooperation agreement...requirements and provisions designed to target assistance under welfare and public assistance programs to families residing in public housing projects and families receiving tenant-based assistance under section 8, which may include providing for economic self-sufficiency services within such housing, providing for services deigned to meet the unique employment-related needs of residents*

*of such housing and recipients of such assistance, providing for placement of workfare positions on-site in such housing, and such other elements as may be appropriate.”*

This MOA carries out this provision by identifying common goals and purposes of both the PHA and the Welfare Agency that support the economic self-sufficiency efforts of low-income families receiving welfare assistance and living in public housing or receiving Section 8 tenant-based assistance. The PHA and the Welfare Agency agree to the following goals:

- (1) Targeting services and resources to families to assist them in achieving economic self-sufficiency;*
- (2) Coordinating and streamlining the administrative functions to ensure the efficient delivery of services to families; and*
- (3) Reducing and discouraging fraud and noncompliance with welfare and housing program requirements.*

#### **A. TARGETING SERVICES AND RESOURCES**

Sec. 512(d)(7)(B) of the Public Housing Reform Act (PHRA) and 24 CFR 5.613 states that housing authorities and local welfare agencies should enter into cooperative agreements which include provisions designed to target assistance and services to families receiving federal housing assistance. The PHA and the Welfare Agency agree to carry out this provision through targeting services and resources to programs that support the economic self-sufficiency of low-income families receiving welfare assistance and living in public housing or receiving Section 8 tenant-based assistance.

(This section may include but is not limited to: pre and post employment and training activities, job search activities, job development, case management, mentoring, counseling, childcare, transportation, etc. Commitments should include specific information regarding the type of resource or activity, eligible group, length of time, size of program, contract person and any other pertinent information.)

**Pursuant to this commitment made by the Welfare Agency and the PHA, the following commitments and responsibilities will be provided by the Welfare Agency:**

1. **(EXAMPLE ONLY)** The Welfare Agency will arrange for child care for (x number of) families receiving welfare and living in public housing or receiving Section 8 tenant-based assistance during their participation in employment and training related activities for a period agreed upon by the Welfare Agency and the PHA.
2. **(EXAMPLE ONLY)** The Welfare Agency will provide or arrange for employment related workshops/job training for (x number of) families receiving welfare and living in public housing or receiving Section 8 assistance for a time period agreed upon by the Welfare Agency and the PHA.

**Pursuant to the commitment made by the Welfare Agency and the PHA, the following commitments and responsibilities will be provided by the PHA:**

1. The PHA will send out timely notification to all public housing residents of all joint services provided by the PHA and the Welfare Agency to ensure that an adequate number of families are being served.
2. **(EXAMPLE ONLY)** The PHA will provide meeting space for employment related workshops and/or services provided by the Welfare Agency for families receiving welfare and living in public housing or receiving Section 8 assistance for a time period agreed upon by the Welfare Agency and the PHA.
3. **(EXAMPLE ONLY)** The PHA will provide for (x number of) families receiving welfare assistance and living in public housing or receiving Section 8 assistance to participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program.
4. **(EXAMPLE ONLY)** The PHA will provide for placement of (x number of) workfare positions on-site or with PHA-partner agencies.

**B. COORDINATING DELIVERY OF ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES**

The Welfare Agency and the PHA will coordinate and streamline the delivery of services to joint recipients of assistance. This will include coordination of resources and program activities, identification of eligible participants and coordination of verification of information to determine program eligibility.

(This section may include but is not limited to joint application and intake process; co-location of resources and staff; joint program resource and referral systems; or, streamlined resource and referral systems. Commitments should be specific regarding the actions to be taken by each Agency.)

**Pursuant to the commitment made by the Welfare Agency and the PHA, the following commitments and responsibilities will be provided by both the Welfare Agency and the PHA:**

1. **(EXAMPLE ONLY)** The PHA and the Welfare Agency will implement a joint process of referrals for families receiving welfare or living in public housing or receiving Section 8 tenant-based assistance to facilitate admission to welfare or PHA programs. This process is described in Attachment A. {Such an attachment is not included in this model agreement; however, the PHA and the Welfare Agency should attempt to develop a process for inclusion in this agreement}
2. **(EXAMPLE ONLY)** The PHA and the Welfare Agency will meet monthly to identify areas of coordination to avoid duplication of service delivery and ways to combine or maximize scarce resources. (This may include sharing a staff member jointly paid by the PHA and the Welfare Agency.)

**C. PROVIDING INFORMATION TO REWARD WORK AND PROMOTE COMPLIANCE WITH WELFARE AND HOUSING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The Public Housing Reform Act requires the PHA to obtain and verify information regarding families living in public housing or receiving Section 8 tenant-based assistance from Welfare Agencies for various specific purposes described below. To carry out these purposes, the PHA and the Welfare Agency have (or will) worked together to streamline and develop joint mechanisms to verify participant income and other information used to determine program eligibility and program compliance. The PHA and the Welfare Agency have (or will) developed and defined joint processes to address participant noncompliance, sanctioning of benefits, and any participant appeals processes. {Where the PHA and the Welfare Agency have developed the joint processes to be used, details of these processes should be included as an Attachment to this agreement. }

(This section may include but is not limited to streamlined collection and sharing of information to determine eligibility; streamlined verification methods; joint information to participants regarding program rules and regulations regarding fraud and program compliance; and, joint appeals process.)

**The following commitments and responsibilities will be provided by both the Welfare Agency and the PHA:**

1. Target Supportive Services. The Welfare Agency and the PHA will implement a jointly developed process for verification by each party, and the sharing of information, for all families jointly served by the Welfare Agency and the PHA in order to determine if a family in public housing or receiving Section 8 assistance is receiving welfare benefits/assistance. This will be done so that supportive services can be targeted as provided by this agreement.
2. Provide Welfare to Work Incentives. The Welfare Agency and the PHA will implement a jointly developed process for verification by each party, and the sharing of information, for all families jointly served by the Welfare Agency and the PHA in order to determine if a family in public housing is eligible for a “disallowance of earned income from rent determination” because of an increase in income due to employment during the 12-month period beginning on the date on which the employment began and a phase-in of fifty percent of the total rent increase for the next 12-month period. [Pursuant to PHRA, Sec. 508 (d)] The eligible family must:
  - A. *Reside in public housing; AND*
  - B. *Have experienced an increase in income as a result of employment of a member of the family who was previously unemployed for one or more years; OR*
  - C. *Have experienced an increase in income during participation of a family member in any family self-sufficiency or other job training program; OR*
  - D. *Have or has, within six months, been assisted under any State program for temporary assistance for needy families under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act and whose earned income increases.*
3. Encourage Welfare Compliance. The Welfare Agency and the PHA will implement a jointly developed processes for verification by each party, and the sharing of information, for all families jointly served by the Welfare Agency and the PHA in order to determine if a family in public housing or receiving Section 8 assistance that has a decrease in income may have their rent decreased. The Welfare Agency will ensure that the PHA has information *whether the family’s welfare benefits/assistance has been reduced or terminated and if*

*this reduction or termination was due to fraud or noncompliance with an economic self-sufficiency program or work activity requirement as defined in Sec. 512 (d)(2)(A) and (3) – not including any reduction or termination of benefits at expiration of a lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits.*

4. Determining Exemptions from Public Housing Community Service Requirements. The Welfare Agency and the PHA will implement a jointly developed process for verification by each party, and the sharing of information, for all families jointly served by the Welfare Agency and the PHA in order to determine if adult members of a family in public housing are exempt from Community Service because they are:
  - A. *Engaged in a work activity (as such term is defined in section 407(d) of the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 607 (d)], as in effect on and after July 1, 1997;*
  - B. *Engaged in a work activity under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601, et seq.) or under any other welfare program of the State in which the public housing agency is located, including a State-administered welfare-to-work program; or,*
  - C. *Receiving assistance under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security act (42 U.S.C. 601 et. seq.) or under any other welfare program, and has not been found by the State or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with such program.*
  
5. The Welfare Agency and the PHA will implement a jointly developed a process for timely verification, including a written verification form, to ensure that the Welfare Agency and the PHA can release relevant information to either party regarding all areas stated above. This process will include joint definition of terms used in verification and will take into account all applicable privacy considerations.

**Note:** The processes of verification for all of these five sections are described in Attachment B to this Agreement. *{Such an attachment is not included in this model agreement; however, the PHA and the welfare Agency should attempt to develop a process for inclusion in this agreement}*

WHEREAS, both parties herein fully understand and agree to the roles and responsibilities outlined in this agreement.

WITNESS OUR HANDS EFFECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Welfare (TANF) Agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official Authorized to Make Legal  
Commitments

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date