

## **POLICY ON PROHIBITED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

### **HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE'S POLICY ON PROHIBITED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

**July 1, 2021**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The mission of the Housing Authority is to transform and promote healthy, thriving communities, re-ignite hope and restore human dignity through the creation and preservation of high quality and innovative housing and community development programs which enhance the quality of life and revitalize neighborhoods to foster self-sufficiency.

#### **PURPOSE**

To establish a Housing Authority (HA) policy to prohibit housing fraud and/or welfare fraud, violent-related, gang-related, alcohol-related and drug-related criminal activity (including medical/recreational marijuana) or any other criminal activity.

#### **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Housing Authority of the County of Riverside that prohibited criminal activity will not be tolerated. The Housing Authority has implemented aggressive strategies to deny and/or terminate assistance for households that violate conditions set forth in this policy.

Criminal activity as listed in this policy, misdemeanor and/or felony, will hereinafter be called 'prohibited criminal activity'. Prohibited criminal activity includes, but is not limited to, the following: housing fraud and/or welfare fraud, violent-related, gang-related, alcohol-related, and drug-related criminal activity (including medical/recreational marijuana). Marijuana possession, distribution, and use, regardless of purpose, remains illegal under Federal Law [Controlled Substances Act (United States Code Title 21)].

"Minor traffic offenses" may include offenses such as parking violations, registration violations or failure to provide proof of insurance. Traffic offenses that include illegal use of controlled substances or alcohol related violations of traffic laws are not considered minor. Two or more alcohol related criminal actions within the last two (2) year period constitute an abuse of alcohol (excluding alcohol-related DUI/DWI, or equivalent, criminal charges). Alcohol-related Driving Under the Influence (DUI) and Driving While Intoxicated (DWI), or equivalent, criminal charges do not require more than one offense to be considered abuse of alcohol; one alcohol-related DUI/DWI, or equivalent, offense is a violation of the HACR Policy on Prohibited Criminal Activity.

All persons applying for or receiving rental assistance, regardless of age, will be held to the same standard. Exceptions to this policy may be granted to VASH Program applicants and participants, Mainstream 811, the Family Unification Program (FUP), Project Room Key and other referrals through the Coordinated Entry System (CES) or an established Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Housing Authority targeting people experiencing homelessness, transitional age youth, and other special populations. On a case by case basis, exceptions may be granted to minors who have committed acts in violation of this policy, but has or is enrolled in a court or probation mandated program and is in satisfactory compliance with this program. Once admitted to the program, all participants will be subject to the Policy on Prohibited Criminal Activity.

Participant households must report, in writing, all criminal activity for any household member within 10 calendar days of its occurrence.

The PHA may deny or terminate assistance for criminal activity by a household member as authorized in this Policy on Prohibited Criminal Activity if the PHA determines, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that the household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted for such activity [24 CFR 982.553 (c)]. Preponderance of evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probably than not. The intent is not to prove criminal liability, but to establish that the act(s) occurred. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence. Credible evidence may be obtained from police and/or court records. Testimony from neighbors, when combined with other factual evidence can be considered credible evidence. Other credible evidence includes documentation of drug raids or arrest warrants.

Persons convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing will be permanently denied admission [24 CFR 982.553(a)(1)(ii)(C)] to or terminated from any federally assisted housing program [24 CFR 982.553(b)(1)(ii)]. Persons convicted of sex offenses that require a lifetime registration as a sex offender are prohibited from participation in any housing assistance programs administered by the Housing Authority in accordance with Federal Regulations [24 CFR 982.553(a)(2)(i)].

Exceptions in this policy do not apply to registered sex offenders or any person who was convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing, or housing fraud.

1. The Housing Authority will deny or terminate assistance to any household containing a member that has one or more occurrences of criminal activity unless that member can demonstrate the following:
  - a. No occurrence of prohibited criminal activity (other than minor traffic offenses) within the last three (3) years, **and**
  - b. Applicant/participant would not threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of others such as crimes of physical violence to persons or property and other criminal acts which would not be a detriment to the health, safety, or welfare of others including HA staff.); **and**
  - c. Satisfactory adherence to all court and probation/parole mandated conditions for any action related to any prohibited criminal activity; **and**
  - d. For violent-related, drug-related and alcohol-related criminal activity, the HA may consider enrollment in a supervised anger management/parenting course, drug diversion/substance abuse or alcohol rehabilitation program. At PHA discretion, first offenders may be only granted a once in a lifetime exception to the Policy on Prohibited Criminal Activity due to participation in supervised anger management/parenting course, drug diversion/substance abuse or alcohol rehabilitation program. Approval is not automatic. Repeat or habitual offenders will not be granted an exception to the Policy on Prohibited-Criminal Activity and rental assistance will be denied and/or terminated. The

applicant/participant cannot elect to join an anger management/parenting courses, drug diversion/substance abuse or alcohol rehabilitation program in lieu of denial/termination of assistance after the HA has discovered prohibited criminal activity.

For consideration of one (1) lifetime exception to the Policy on Prohibited Criminal Activity, the following conditions must exist:

- i. The applicant/participant must be a first time participant in a supervised anger management/parenting courses, drug diversion/substance abuse or alcohol rehabilitation program, **and**
- ii. The applicant/participant must have enrolled in and compliant with a supervised anger management/parenting courses, drug diversion/substance abuse or alcohol rehabilitation program prior to the date of the HA's discovery of the prohibited criminal activity, **and**
- iii. Completion of the treatment program must be achieved within the allowed time by the court/treatment program, **and**
- iv. Evidence of completion must be provided to the HA within 10 calendar days from the date of completion of the program.

If an exception to the Policy on Prohibited Criminal Activity is granted by the PHA, the PHA will monitor compliance for determination of continued rental assistance eligibility. If applicant/tenant fails to comply, the HA will proceed with termination.

2. If the household member participates in and is in compliance with a supervised anger management/parenting courses, drug diversion/substance abuse or alcohol rehabilitation program then it is the family responsibility to adhere to treatment program requirements and furnish to the PHA proof that the required program was completed. The applicant/participant must have enrolled in the treatment program prior to the date of the HA's discovery of the criminal activity. Failure to comply with anger management/parenting courses, drug diversion/substance abuse and/or supervised alcohol rehabilitation program will result in denial or termination. Supervised anger management/parenting courses, drug diversion/substance abuse or an alcohol rehabilitation program will be granted once in a lifetime.
3. The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA), as amended (42 U.S.C 13925 and 42 U.S.C 14043e et seq.) prohibits the eviction of, and removal of assistance from, victims living in Federally assisted housing if the asserted grounds for such action is an instance of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, engaged in by a member of a tenant's household or any guest or other person under the tenant's control shall not be cause for termination of assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights if the tenant or an immediate member of the tenant's family is the victim or threatened victim of that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, provided that the victim member demonstrates the following:

- a. The perpetrator of the domestic violence no longer resides in the assisted unit.
- b. Applicant/tenant requesting exception based on 3 above shall complete HUD form 50066 within 14 business days after the HA has requested such certification in writing.

- c. If the applicant/tenant does not provide the certification within 14 business days after the HA has requested such certification in writing, assistance may be denied/terminated.

Please note, pursuant to 24 CFR 5.2005 VAWA Protections nothing in 24 CFR 5.2005 may be construed to limit the authority of a PHA, owner, or management agent to evict or terminate assistance to any tenant or lawful occupant if the PHA, owner, or management agent can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the public housing or Section 8 assisted property if that tenant or lawful occupant is not terminated from assistance. In this context, words, gestures, actions, or other indicators will be considered an “actual imminent threat” if they meet the standards provided in paragraph (e) of 24 CFR 5.2005.

4. Alerting all rental assistance program participants and tenants residing in Housing Authority (HA) owned housing or housing owned by an HA affiliate (i.e. RCHC) about their obligation to keep rental units free from prohibited criminal activity.
5. Incorporating the HUD required Tenancy Addendum which includes grounds for termination of tenancy due to criminal activity into all rental leases used by the Housing Authority and requiring the use of said Tenancy Addendum for all private rental property owners in the county.
6. Conducting workshops for rental property owners and managers to stress the importance of screening potential tenants, inspecting the premises of rental property, and taking action against tenants engaged in criminal activity, fraud, or side payments.
7. Seeking a collaborative relationship with all law enforcement agencies within the County of Riverside and the Office of Inspector General to assist in the enforcement of Policy on Prohibited Criminal Activity.
8. Screening all housing program applicants and participants including but not limited to the Riverside Superior Court online system, Consolidated Courts of the County of San Bernardino online system, Consolidated Courts of the County of Los Angeles online system, Online Information Service (or similar service), any and all available Sex Offender registries, and any other available sources (i.e. police reports, court records, information that is independently verifiable, law enforcement investigations and arrest warrants) to disclose any criminal background information.

Exemption to the Housing Authority’s Prohibited Criminal Activity policy:

The Housing Authority is adopting the “Housing First-Supportive Housing” model as a best practice approach to address chronic homelessness and special needs populations. Special rental assistance programs administered by the Housing Authority which include but are not limited to Mainstream Section 811, FUP, Project Room Key and any other special housing choice programs can apply for an exception to the Housing Authority’s Prohibited Criminal Activity during admission. Additionally, affordable housing developments awarded Project Based Vouchers and targeting chronically homeless individuals or individuals referred by County Behavioral Health can apply for an exemption to the Housing Authority’s Prohibited Criminal Activity policy. Developments seeking an exemption to the Housing Authority’s Prohibited Criminal Activity policy described in this section will have to follow and be aligned with federal guidelines on the use of Housing First as referenced in the HUD Housing First Assessment Tool. All supportive Housing First programs will follow and be aligned with state guidelines on Housing First,

including core components outlined in the No Place Like Home program guidelines. A comprehensive plan of the wrap around supportive services proposed at the specific development will have to be approved by the Housing Authority and the owner must agree to provide dedicated case workers at a ratio of 20/1 to qualify.