



**East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority**

# **Public Housing Resident Handbook**

**“Ensuring Your Success”**

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## WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

This handbook has been prepared to ensure your success on our program. It will also highlight the rules and regulations that you are expected to follow; as it relates to your lease with the East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority. It is important that you read your lease as well as ask questions for clarity. If you or anyone in your family is a person with disabilities, and require a specific accommodation in order to fully utilize our programs and services, please contact the housing authority.

## THE LEASE

Your lease is the agreement between you and the Housing Authority. It can be overwhelming to read, but it's important for you to understand it thoroughly. Be sure to ask management about sections of the lease that are not clear to you. This handbook is a snapshot of the terms of your lease; keep your lease handy at all times.

## PAYMENT OF RENT

Your rent is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and becomes delinquent on the 6th day of the month. Payments not received by 5pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> day will be charged a \$25 late fee. If rent is not paid by 5pm on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month a \$60 court cost will also be applied to your account. EBRPHA **does not accept cash or partial payments**; all balances **MUST** be paid in full. If your check is returned, all future payments **MUST** be made by money order.

- Make rent checks or money orders payable to:  
East Baton Rouge Housing Authority  
4731 North Boulevard  
Baton Rouge LA 70806
- Payments must be delivered or mailed to the main office. **The rent window hours are:**  
\* Mon-Friday 9am-4pm, there is also a drop box available for afterhour's usage.

*\*Payments are NOT accepted at the onsite Management Office.*

## **ONSITE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

The Property Management office is your contact with the Housing Authority. The offices are open from 8:00 to 5.00 Monday through Friday. Feel free to come in and speak with them regarding any questions and/or problems in your community

## **SECURITY DEPOSIT**

When you signed your lease, you paid a Security Deposit. Your Security Deposit will be refunded to you by mail after move out- IF

1. You do not have a balance due.
2. You have paid for all damages for which you were responsible.
3. You have cleaned your house thoroughly enough so that there is no extraordinary cleaning to be done that would involve unusual expense to the Authority.
4. You have given us (30) days notice in writing that you intend to move, so that the Authority can rent the unit promptly, and not lose any money because you failed to let us know in time.
5. You have returned your apartment and mailbox keys.

## **UTILITIES**

At your lease signing, you were told that your utilities are included in the rental amount or that it is your responsibility to pay them directly to the utility company. If your utilities are included in your rent, a fixed amount for utilities has been set in establishing your rent. Use what you need for comfort and convenience, but don't waste. Any utility usage that exceeds the pre-established amount will be charged to your account. If your utilities are not included in your rent, you are responsible for the connection and ongoing utility bill with the utility company. **PLEASE SEE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT FOR CLARITY.**

## **MAINTENANCE**

The Property has an assigned maintenance crew that makes necessary repairs when something leaks, breaks, or is otherwise damaged. When something in your unit is not working properly, please request their services by getting in touch with your Property Management Office. An early repair job often saves a lot of trouble and expense. You will be charged for any damages to the home resulting from your negligence or damages caused by visitors. Damage due to normal wear and tear is the agency's responsibility.

## **INSPECTIONS**

Your apartment is inspected prior to you moving in and also when you move out. Throughout the year, there will be the need to perform routine follow up inspections. You will be notified in advance of any inspections. Upon scheduled inspections, tenant-caused damage will be repaired and your account will be charged. As we work to keep our units in the best possible condition, there will be the need for upgrades or enhancements to your unit. You will be notified in advance of such work and we ask for your patience as we work to improve your home.

## **EXTERMINATION**

Insects, mice, rats, etc., usually are found where food is carelessly left around. Report any evidence of pests around your home to the Management Office. Every unit must be treated for pests every (3) months. This is for your protection as well as your neighbors.

## **AUTOMOBILES**

No parking on lawns. If your car is no longer operable, please don't leave it on our parking lot. Abandoned parked cars are an invitation for vandalism and will be removed at your expense.

## REPORTING CHANGES

A change in your household composition, income or childcare/medical expenses can affect your rent or the size unit that you need. Marriage, births, deaths, as well as changes in your monthly household income **MUST** be reported to the Property Management Office within 10 days. Failure to report changes in family circumstances promptly, as required by your lease, may mean you will have to **PAY BACK RENT**, and that you have violated the terms of your lease, which may result in penalty or possible cancellation of your lease.

When such a change occurs, you must visit your property management office and complete an Interim Reporting form. In addition, you will need to supply proof of the change that has occurred, please see below for examples.

- ✓ Birth of Child - SS Card and Birth Certificate
- ✓ Reduction in Wages - 4 Most recent paystubs or letter from employer
- ✓ New Job - Letter from employer or 4 most recent paystubs
- ✓ Change in SSA/SSI Benefits - Current Award Letter

Special steps must be taken to add individuals to your lease. Prior approval must be granted by the Housing Authority to add an individual to your lease/household. If you are requesting to add an adult, they will need to attend an eligibility interview with the Property Manager, prior to living in the unit. If you are requesting to add minor children and are **NOT** the mother or father, you will have to provide custody or guardianship documents. **PLEASE SEE THE PROPERTY MANAGER FOR ASSISTANCE.**

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

There is a copy of the Grievance Procedure posted at your Property Management Office. Please read this procedure carefully. You will notice that if you feel that you have been a victim of discrimination or need to file a grievance, you must take certain steps within specific periods of time or you will forfeit your right to a hearing.

## **TRANSFERS**

HUD provides the Housing Authority with discretion when considering transfer requests from tenants. The only requests that the Housing Authority is required to consider are requests for reasonable accommodation. All other transfer requests will be reviewed on a case by case scenario. Below you will find our policy regarding the processing of transfer requests.

### **PHA Policy**

The types of requests for transfers that the PHA will consider are limited to requests for transfers to alleviate a serious or life threatening medical condition, transfers triggering the Violence Against Women Act or protective custody, reasonable accommodation, transfers to a different unit size as long as the family qualifies for the unit according to the PHA's occupancy standards; other requests to transfer will be reviewed on a case by case scenario.

### **PHA Policy**

Except where reasonable accommodation is being requested, the PHA will only consider transfer requests from residents that meet the following requirements:

Have not engaged in criminal activity that threatens the health and safety of residents and staff

Owe no back rent or other charges, or have a pattern of late payment

Have no housekeeping lease violations or history of damaging property

Can get utilities turned on in the name of the head of household (applicable only to properties with tenant-paid utilities)

A resident with housekeeping standards violations will not be transferred until the resident passes a follow-up housekeeping inspection.

You must meet with your Property Manager to initiate the transfer process. The PHA will respond by approving the transfer and putting the family on the transfer list, by denying the transfer, or by requiring more information or documentation from the family. EBRPHA will respond within ten (10) business days of the submission of the family's request. If the Housing Authority denies the request for transfer, the family will be informed of its grievance rights.

## **REASONABLE ACCOMODATION**

A “reasonable accommodation” is a change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service that may be necessary for a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, including public and common use spaces. If you or anyone in your family is a person with disabilities, and you require a specific accommodation in order to fully utilize our programs and services, please contact your Property Manager. After a request for an accommodation is presented, the EBRPHA will respond, in writing, within 10 business days.

## **ANNUAL RE-EXAMINATION**

According to Public Housing Program’s policies and procedures, each participating family must recertify their eligibility for the program at least once during every 12 month period. As a tenant you must provide information regarding family composition, income, and program compliance during recertification. Every year prior to your lease anniversary date, you will be required to attend an Annual Recertification Interview and supply specific documentation. Every attempt must be made to attend this appointment, however if the appointment conflicts with employment, school or you require a reasonable accommodation please contact the Property Manager as soon as you receive the letter.

## **EMERGENCIES AFTER OFFICE HOURS**

We all know that unforeseen things will happen even in the most well maintained households, and sometimes these situations can become emergencies. Real emergencies demand immediate attention for the protection of someone’s life, health, or property, whereas at other times, when something’s not working properly, it can wait until the next business day. Certainly, a fire, either in your home or in the community, is a real emergency. If a fire starts, call the Fire Department immediately. Burglary, vandalism, and disturbance of the peace are situations for the police to handle, so please do not hesitate to call them.

Maintenance emergencies, such as: gas leaks, broken water lines, broken sewer pipes, serious damages to roof as a result of storm, electric wires down, and any failure of lights when it involves hazards of life, health or property, require different handling. If any of these situations arise, get in touch with your management office and they will send maintenance men to make repairs. Please contact the Property Management office in the case of emergency on weekends and holidays, the on call Manager will be able to assist you.



## **CARE OF THE GROUNDS**

Keeping up the appearance of the community is a job that you and the Management share. Management is responsible for the care of all grounds and walks used by the community as a whole. Your help is requested only in seeing that your lawn never has that “after the picnic” look and that new grass is given a chance to grow. When it comes to the grounds and walks around your home, it is altogether a different matter. Keeping your yard clean of papers is a year round job. We think you’ll find it a good idea to go over your grass once a day and pick up any paper or trash that may have blown your way. If you do not keep your yard clean, maintenance will do it and charge your account.

## **WHEN YOU VACATE**

When you decide to move out, please come to the Management Office and complete a Notice to Vacate form at least thirty days in advance of your departure. If you do not give at least a thirty days notice in writing, we’ll continue to charge you rent and an eviction order will be filed due to non-payment of rent. When you leave, please clean your home thoroughly. A charge will be made if we have to clean and/or remove trash. Finally, return all keys to the Management Office and don’t forget to complete a change of address form.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The Community Service and Economic Self-Sufficiency requirements mandate that each non-exempt adult household member shall (1.) either contribute eight hours per month of community service within their community, **or** (2.) Participate in an Economic Self-Sufficiency program for eight hours per month. If you meet 1 of the following criteria you are exempt from these requirements:

1. 62 years of age or older
2. Working adult
3. Have a documented disability

The EBRPHA shall not renew or extend any lease, or provide any new lease, for a dwelling unit for any household that includes an adult member who was subject to the community service requirement and failed to comply with the requirement. If you have further questions regarding this requirement, please contact your Property Manager.

## **RESIDENT ACTIVITIES**

In most of our communities, there are resident association groups. These are groups of residents, who deal with needs that arise in the community. Each tenant has talents or interests which would mean a great deal to its community. The Management Office is always working to improve the conditions throughout this community that will benefit all of the residents. The Management needs the assistance of interested groups who will work closely with it toward this goal. Talk with Management about joining the resident association group in your community. If there is no such organization in the community, ask Management for assistance in organizing the residents. Take the lead-your neighborhood will be a better place to live if we work together. As an added benefit, participation in community programs also complies with the community service requirement of your lease.

## **FRIENDLY REMINDERS**

Don't neglect those wires that make your toasters, electric irons, radios, and lamps work. Check carefully for frayed covering, bent prongs on plugs, and loose wiring. Don't clutter up the space around stoves, hot water heaters or windows. Hallways, doors and windows must be kept clear at all times. Don't load your windowsills with flowerpots or other objects that a gust of wind can bring down and cause damage. Refrain from hanging radio or television antennas on or from any part of the unit, except that satellite dishes may be installed in accordance with regulations set forth by the agency and with prior written approval.

**\*\* If you are unclear about what to do, CALL YOUR MANAGEMENT OFFICE, THEY ARE THE BEST SOURCE OF INFORMATION.**

Lastly, be a good neighbor! Be respectful and considerate of the neighbors around you, as a community you must work together to provide a safe environment. You are responsible for the actions of your household members, visitors or relatives.

***Do not allow your company to affect your housing.***