



# Public Housing Grievance Process for Tenants



What can I do if I have a problem with my public housing lease or PHA policies?



## 1. How can I start the grievance process?

You must let the PHA know about your grievance either in writing or by telling someone in the PHA office or the office of the development where you live. A PHA cannot require you to present your grievance in writing.

## 2. What happens after I start the process?

The PHA will make sure the issue is right for the grievance process. Not all disputes are eligible for the grievance process.

 If the PHA determines that the dispute is eligible, they will schedule an informal settlement meeting with you to discuss the issue and attempt to settle it without a hearing. After this informal settlement meeting, the PHA must share a summary of the discussion with you and explain the reasons for the decision.

 Certain disputes are not eligible for the grievance process. These include:

- Personal disputes between neighbors that don't involve the PHA.
- Disputes involving tenants as a group.
- Certain evictions involving criminal activity.

PHAs may also bypass the informal settlement and move ahead to the grievance hearing related to certain terminations or evictions. Learn more [here](#).



Public housing agencies (PHAs) all have a **grievance process** to resolve disputes that are between tenants and PHAs.

If you have been harmed because of actions or a lack of action by your PHA that is not in accordance with your lease or the PHA's regulations, you have the right to start a grievance process.

A **grievance** means a dispute that a tenant has with a PHA action or lack of action related to the tenant's lease or PHA regulations which adversely affect the tenant's rights, duties, welfare or status.

## 3. What if I am not satisfied with the outcome of the informal settlement?

The summary of the informal settlement includes information on the next step in the grievance process, which is how to obtain a grievance hearing.



See the next page for details on the grievance hearing process.

## What happens at a grievance hearing?

Grievance hearings are held before an impartial hearing officer.\* Grievance hearings must be scheduled promptly for a reasonably convenient time and place.



At the hearing, the hearing officer will hear from both sides in the dispute. The hearing is required to be fair. Your rights for a fair hearing include:

- Opportunity to examine and copy documents
- Right to be represented
- Right to a private hearing
- Right to support the complaint with evidence and arguments, and to face and cross-examine all PHA witnesses
- A decision based on facts presented at the hearing



**You are responsible for your own costs—for example, with copying documents or representation.**

*\* See your lease to learn about PHA policies for selecting hearing officers.*

## 4. What happens after my grievance hearing?

The hearing officer must provide a written decision in a timely manner about the hearing.

The decision must:

- State the reason(s) for the decision.
- Be sent to you and placed in your tenant file.

The hearing officer's decision is binding on the PHA, meaning the PHA must follow the decision.

## 5. What if I am not still satisfied with the outcome?

If the hearing officer finds in favor of the PHA, and you disagree, you still have the right to pursue further legal options.

## What if I need assistance with accessibility, effective communication, or limited English proficiency?



PHAs must provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities throughout the grievance process. All notifications and communications must ensure effective communication for persons with disabilities. PHAs must also take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).



For more Public Housing resident resources, visit the Public Housing Tenant Resources on the HUD Exchange at <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/public-housing/tenant-empowerment/public-housing-tenant-resources/>.



Contact your local PHA for more information.