



# Public Housing Tenant Rights



Participants in the Public Housing program have rights and responsibilities as program participants. Some details may vary, so check with your public housing agency (PHA). Learn more about your rights by reading your lease.

## Q How do I submit a grievance to my PHA?

- ✓ You have a right to submit a grievance to your PHA, either orally or in writing, if you think your PHA has applied a policy incorrectly:
  - Typically, the PHA will first schedule an informal settlement to resolve the issue. A summary of that informal settlement discussion will be made available to you within a reasonable time and added to your housing file.
  - If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal settlement, you will find information on the summary to tell you how to request a formal grievance hearing.
- ✓ Learn more about the [Public Housing grievance process](#).
- ✓ Learn about the [types of terminations or evictions that are excluded](#) from the Public Housing grievance process.

## Q How do I get repairs made to my unit?

- ✓ You must tell PHA management about needed repairs, especially repairs that are hazardous to life, health, or safety. Be sure to tell your PHA about any pest management issues you notice, such as roaches or rodents! The PHA is required to keep your unit safe and sanitary.

## Q Can I withhold rent if the PHA is not making repairs quickly?

- ✗ No. The PHA is required to keep your unit safe and sanitary, but withholding your rent will put you at risk of termination. If repairs for physical hazards cannot be made in a reasonable amount of time, the PHA must offer standard alternative accommodation. If alternative accommodations cannot be provided, and the damage was not caused by your household or guests, you can refer to your lease about credits or "[abatements](#)" that can be applied towards your rent proportional to the damage.

## Q What is a reasonable accommodation? When can I receive a reasonable accommodation?

- ✓ If you or someone in your household has a disability, you are eligible for reasonable accommodation. This is a change to your PHA's processes or policies to give people with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the program. Here are some examples:
  - A larger unit to allow a person with a disability to have a live-in-aide.
  - A sign language interpreter during a public PHA meeting so a person with hearing loss can participate.
  - Large-print documents for a person with a visual impairment.
  - A unit without carpeting if it is a mobility hazard.

## Q English is not my first language. Can I get information in my language?

- ✓ The PHA must provide you with oral information in your preferred language. This can be from either a staff member or a qualified free interpreter.

## Q Am I allowed to have a pet?

- ✓ Typically residents of public housing are allowed common pets, subject to the rules and requirements established by their PHA. Check with your PHA to learn what their rules are for pet ownership.
- ✓ Assistance animals do not fall under the same rules and requirements as pets. PHAs may not apply or enforce any pet ownership rules against animals that are necessary as a reasonable accommodation to assist, support, or provide service to persons with disabilities.

## Q How can I participate in PHA decisions and management?

- ✓ All PHA residents are entitled to participate in the PHA decision and management process. Resident opportunities include:
  - **Resident Advisory Boards (RAB).** The main role of the RAB is to make recommendations in the development of the PHA Plan. PHAs are also required to request input from the RAB for any significant amendment or modification to the PHA Plan.
  - **Resident Commissioners/Board Member.** The Board of each PHA must include at least one eligible resident board member. (See the link for exceptions to this rule.)
  - **Tenant organizations.** You have the right to participate in a tenant organization or create one if none exists at your housing development. Learn more at the [Public Housing Resident Organizing Toolkit](#).
  - **PHA redevelopment planning processes** such as [Rental Assistance Demonstration \(RAD\)](#) and Section 18.

## Q How can I report discrimination?

- ✓ To report discrimination, contact your [federally supported local fair housing organization](#) or file a [complaint](#) directly with HUD.



For more Public Housing resident resources, visit <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/Public-housing/tenant-empowerment/public-housing-tenant-resources/>.



Contact your local PHA for more information.