

# HOUSING AUTHORITY OF GLOUCESTER COUNTY



## **"ONE STRIKE AND YOU'RE OUT" POLICY**

**Adopted: September 25, 1996**

*Revised: October 21, 1998;*

*May 1, 1999;*

*August 22, 2001;*

*June 18, 2002,*

*May 2018*

*May 22, 2019 – RES# 19-54*

*September 22, 2021 – RES# 21-97*

**"ONE STRIKE & YOU'RE OUT POLICY"**  
*CRIME AND DRUG FREE POLICY*  
**Adopted September 25, 1996**

**I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Effective June 25, 2001, the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) adopted final rules which set forth regulations for implementing fair, effective and comprehensive policies for screening out program applicants who engage in illegal drug use or other criminal activity, and for evicting or terminating assistance of persons who engage in such activity.

In accordance with *24 CFR Part 5, subpart I & J; Part 960, subpart B; Part 966, subpart A; Part 982, subpart L, Part 882, subpart D, 24 CFR 983.2(a); and HUD PIH 2015-19 and 2012-28*, The Housing Authority of Gloucester County ("The Authority") hereby adopts this revised Policy to be known as the "One Strike and You're Out" Policy ("This Policy"). This Policy shall apply to all Housing Programs administered by the Authority (hereinafter collectively referred to "Authority Programs") This Policy shall serve in addition or supplement to the Authority's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy ("ACOP"), Section 8 Administrative Plan, Management Plans, the Dwelling Leases, and the Grievance Procedure Policy.

The Objectives of this Policy are as follows:

1. To serve the substantial, legitimate and nondiscriminatory interest that all individuals, whether or not residents of an assisted housing unit or complex, have the right to live in peace and be free from fear, intimidation, and abuse.
2. To help create and maintain a safe and drug-free community by deterring criminal, alcohol or drug-related criminal activity of applicants and program participants, their guests, and any person under their control.
3. To safeguard the due process and privacy rights of applicants and assisted tenants/participants.

**II. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

*HUD PIH 2015-19*

Federal laws, including the Federal Fair Housing Law, require the Authority treat all applicants and assisted tenants/participants equally, providing the same opportunity to access services, regardless of family characteristics and background. Federal law prohibit discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status and disability. In addition, HUD regulations provide for additional protections regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and marital status. The Authority will fully comply with all Federal, State, and local nondiscrimination law in administering this Policy.

The fact that an applicant or assisted tenants/participants was arrested for a disqualifying offense

shall not be treated or regarded as proof that the individual engaged in the disqualifying criminal activity. The arrest will, however, trigger an investigation to determine whether the individual actually engaged in the disqualifying criminal activity. As part of the investigation, the Authority may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. The Authority may also consider any statements made by witnesses or the applicant or participant not included in the police report; whether criminal charges were filed; whether, if filed, criminal charges were abandoned, dismissed, not prosecuted, or ultimately resulted in an acquittal; and any other evidence relevant to determining whether or not the applicant or tenant/participant engaged in disqualifying activity. It is not necessary for the Authority to wait until an arrest disposition has been reached to take action in accordance with this Policy.

In terminating or denying assistance for applicants and participants of Authority Programs due to disqualifying criminal activity, HUD regulations specifically provide that disqualifying criminal activity must be demonstrated by a preponderance of the evidence. Preponderance of the evidence shall mean that when taking all the evidence together and considering its reliability or unreliability, it must be more likely than not that the person in question engaged in the disqualifying criminal activity.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

*Applicant* means any applicant to the Authority for prospective housing assistance under any housing assistance program.

*Assisted tenant or participant* means any tenant or participant who is currently receiving some form of housing assistance from the Authority.

*Drug-related criminal activity* is the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, use or possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use a controlled substance (as defined in Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. § 802)). *Drug-related criminal activity* means *on or off* the premises, not just *on or near* the premises.

*Covered person* means a resident, any member of the resident's household, a guest, or another person under the resident's control.

*Criminal activity* includes any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the resident's premises by other residents or employees of the Authority. Criminal activity shall include crimes against persons and property.

*Currently engaged in* is defined as recently enough to justify a reasonable belief that there is continuing conduct by the household member.

*Engaged in or history/pattern of engaging in* means any act within the past three (3) years by applicants or participants, household members, or guests which involved drug-related criminal activity including, without limitation, drug-related criminal activity, possession and/or use of narcotic paraphernalia, which did or did not result in the arrest and/or conviction of the applicant or participant, household members, or guests.

*Drug* means a controlled substance as defined in Section 102 of the Controlled Substance Act (21 U.S.C. § 802).

*Guest* means a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a tenant/participant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the resident.

*Head of the household* means the primary beneficiary of the housing assistance from the Authority.

*Household* means the family and Authority-approved live-in aide.

*Housing Assistance* means any form of assistance or subsidy provided by the Housing Authority.

*Members of the household* shall include anyone else residing in the same residential unit occupied by the head of the household.

*Other person under the resident's control* means that the person, although not staying as a guest (as defined above) in the unit is, or was at the time of the activity in question, on the premises (as defined in this Section) because of an invitation from the resident or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the resident.

*Pattern of* means more than one (1) incident in a twelve (12) month period of time.

*Premises* means the building or complex or development in which the dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

*Screening* means the Authority applying discretion to consider all available information when making a decision to deny or grant admissions into a Housing Program.

*Violent criminal activity* means any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage.

#### **IV. DUE PROCESS RIGHTS**

*24 CFR 960.204(c); 24 CFR 966.53(c); 24 CFR 982.552(d); 24 CFR 5.851; HUD Due Process Determination for the State of New Jersey (April 16, 1992, Legal Opinion GCH-0054);*

Federal law requires that the Authority provide applicants and participants to Authority Programs due process rights including adequate notice of the grounds for adverse action, right to be represented by counsel, opportunity to refute the evidence presented by the Authority, the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses, to present and affirmative legal or equitable defense and to have a decision on the merits.

#### **Applicants**

Before the Authority denies admissions to an Authority Programs on the basis of a criminal record, the Authority will notify the household of the proposed action to be based on the information and will provide the subject of the records and the applicant with a copy of the criminal records and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the record.

## **Tenant/Participants**

### Authority Owned and Managed Properties

HUD has made a determination that the State of New Jersey landlord-tenant process provided the necessary pre-eviction hearing and other basic elements of due process. Therefore, the Authority can exclude from its grievance procedures and cases involving termination of tenancy for any activity, not just criminal activity, that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other tenants or employees of the Authority, or any drug-related criminal activity on or off such premises, not just on or near such premises. Therefore it shall be the policy of this Authority to exclude the forgoing from the grievance procedure and apply directly to court for eviction.

Once the Authority has determined that there is sufficient documented justification to proceed with termination of tenancy and eviction in cases involving (a) any criminal activity or other activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or employees of the Authority, or (b) any drug-related criminal activity on or off the Authority's premises, the Authority shall promptly issue notification to the tenant specifying: (1) that the tenant is in serious violation of the terms and conditions of the dwelling lease and are grounds for termination of tenancy; (2) the lease provisions that the tenant has violated; (3) that the Authority is terminating tenancy as of a specified date; (4) a description of the evidence and information relied upon by the Authority; (5) that the termination action is not subject to the grievance procedure; (6) that if the tenant has not vacated the premises by the date specified in the notice, then the Authority will file eviction proceedings in court; and (7) that prior to the judicial hearing, the tenant or his counsel may request copies of any relevant documents, records (including criminal records) upon which the Authority is relying as bases for the termination of tenancy or eviction.

### Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, Moderate Rehabilitation, and Section 8 Project-Based Voucher

Once the Authority has determined that there is sufficient documented justification to proceed with termination of participation in cases involving (a) any criminal activity or other activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or employees of the Authority, or (b) any drug-related criminal activity the Authority shall promptly issue notification to the participant specifying: (1) that the participant is in serious violation of the program obligations and this Policy; (2) the program and Policy provisions that the participant has violated; (3) that the Authority is terminating participation as of a specified date; (4) a description of the evidence and information relied upon by the Authority; (6) the procedures for requesting an informal hearing and (7) and that the tenant or his counsel may request copies of any relevant documents, records (including criminal records) upon which the Authority is relying as bases for the termination.

## **V. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

The Authority will ensure that any criminal record received by the Authority from a law enforcement agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed once the purpose for which it was requested is accomplished. The Authority will document in the family's file that the family was denied admission or the tenancy was terminated due to findings in the Criminal History Report.

## **VI. SCREENING FOR DRUG ABUSE AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

*24 CFR 5.851&2, 25 CFR 5.901-905; 24 CFR 982.553, 24 CFR 960.204*

With the goal of preventing drug related and other criminal activity, as well as other patterns of behavior that pose a threat to the health, safety or to the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by others, the Authority will screen all applicants and members of their household for evidence of criminal activity, alcohol abuse, and drug related activity.<sup>1</sup> The Authority will also screen program participants to ensure compliance with this Policy.

The Authority will obtain the consent of the applicant and adult members of the applicant's household to obtain and review criminal records. The Authority has the authority to obtain criminal records from the National Crime Information Center, police department, probation officer, parole officer and local social service provides, and other law enforcement agencies and sources such as the internet and private data banks related to all person over the age of 16 who wish to receive, whether directly or indirectly, housing assistance. The Authority also has the authority to obtain information from State, Federal or local agency responsible for the collection or maintenance of sex offender registration.

Under Federal law an adult is defined as a person who is 18 years of age or older or has been convicted of a crime as an adult under any Federal or State law although state law may allow review of criminal records of persons under the age of 18 in certain instances. The Authority or landlord may also receive information as to juveniles to the extent that the release of such information is authorized by state or local law. The Authority may rely upon any evidence it deems credible, including but not limited to, newspaper reports, complaints of neighbors and evidence of criminal complaints.

The Authority will question all applicants and adult members of the applicants household as to any criminal, drug related or alcohol related activity on the application for housing assistance and at the time of the eligibility interview. If as a result of the standardized inquire, or the receipt of a verifiable referral, there is an indication that any member of the family is engaged in drug-related criminal activity, alcohol abuse, violent criminal activity or any other criminal activity, the Authority will conduct a further investigation, as indicated above.

All applicants and members of the applicant's household, age 16 or older, shall be required to acknowledge in writing their understanding of this Policy prior to a determination applicant

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<sup>1</sup> In the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program, the Authority may only screen for and deny admission to a family member that is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

admissions into an Authority program. All program participants and members of the participant's household, age 16 or older, shall be required to acknowledge in writing their understanding of this Policy at the time of their annual reexamination. This Policy shall be incorporated by reference in all Lease Agreements provided to assisted tenants. The Lease Agreement/Addendum shall state that housing assistance will be terminated and/or the assisted resident will be evicted if this Policy is violated.

A copy of this Policy will be made available for review online at [www.hagc.org](http://www.hagc.org)

Applicants to Authority owned and managed properties shall be subject to additional screening as specified in the ACOP or applicable Management Agreements and Dwelling Leases.

## **VII. APPLICANT DENIAL OF ADMISSION**

### **A. Section 8 Programs –Housing Choice Voucher, Moderate Rehabilitation, Project-Based Voucher.**

*24 CFR 982.551-553; 24 CFR 882.413.*

The Authority **must** prohibit admission of an applicant in the following circumstances:

1. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant for three (3) years if any household member was evicted from federally assisted housing for drug-related criminal activity. The three years begins on the date of eviction. However, the Authority may admit the household if the circumstances leading to the eviction no longer exist or the household member has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program.
2. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if any household member is currently engaging in the illegal use of a drug.
3. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if the Authority has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's illegal drug use or pattern of illegal drug use may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
4. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if the Authority has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
5. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if any household member has been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacturing or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing. This denial shall be mandatory and permanent.
6. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if any household member is subject to a lifetime registration as a sex offender under a state registration program. The Authority will perform sex offender registration checks in the State of New Jersey and in other states

where the household members are known to reside. This denial shall be mandatory and permanent.

The Authority **may** prohibit admission of an applicant in the following circumstances:

1. The Authority may prohibit admission of an applicant if any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in during a reasonable time before admissions, drug-related criminal activity, violent criminal activity or other criminal activity which may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity; or threaten the health or safety of the owner, property management staff or person performing a contract administration function or responsibility on behalf of the Authority.

## **B. Public Housing & Multi-Family Programs.**

*24 CFR 960.204, 24 CFR 5.852-857*

The Authority **must** prohibit admission of an applicant in the following circumstances:

1. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant for three (3) years if any household member was evicted from federally assisted housing for drug-related criminal activity. The three years begins on the date of eviction. However, the Authority may admit the household if the circumstances leading to the eviction no longer exist or the household member has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program.
2. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if any household member is currently engaging in the illegal use of a drug.
3. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if the Authority has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's illegal drug use or pattern of illegal drug use may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
4. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if any household member has been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacturing or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing. This denial shall be mandatory and permanent.
5. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if any household member is subject to a lifetime registration as a sex offender under a state registration program. The Authority will perform sex offender registration checks in the State of New Jersey and in other states where the household members are known to reside. This denial shall be mandatory and permanent.
6. The Authority must prohibit admission of an applicant if there is a reasonable cause to believe that a household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

The Authority **may** prohibit admission of an applicant in the following circumstances:

1. The Authority may prohibit admission of an applicant if any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in during a reasonable time before admissions, drug-related criminal activity, violent criminal activity or other criminal activity which may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity; or threaten the health or safety of the owner, property management staff or person performing a contract administration function or responsibility on behalf of the Authority.

## **VIII. PARTICIPANT TERMINATIONS AND EVICTIONS**

### **A. Section 8 Programs- Housing Choice Voucher, Moderate Rehabilitation, Project-Based Voucher**

*24 CFR 982.551, 553; 24 CFR 882.413; 24 CFR part 5, Subpart I & J.*

The Authority **must** terminate the assistance of a program participant the in the following circumstances:

1. The Authority will terminate a household if the Authority determines that a member of the household has been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacturing or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.
2. Lifetime Registered Sex Offenders [Notice PIH 2012-28] Should the Authority discover that a member of an assisted household was subject to a lifetime registration requirement at admission and was erroneously admitted after June 25, 2001, the Authority must immediately terminate assistance for the household member. In this situation, the Authority must offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, the Authority must terminate assistance for the household.

The Authority **may** terminate the assistance and/or seek an eviction of a program participant the in the following circumstances:

1. The Authority may terminate a household if a household member is currently engaged in any illegal use of a drug.
2. The Authority may terminate a household if the Authority has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's patterns of illegal use of a drug interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
3. The Authority may terminate a household if the Authority determines that a member of the household has violated program obligations contained with the regulations to engage in any drug-related criminal activity.
4. The Authority may terminate a household if the Authority determines that a member of the household has violated program obligations contained with the regulations not to

engage in any violent criminal activity.

5. The Authority may terminate a household if the Authority determines that a household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety, or peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

## **B. Public Housing and Multi-Family Programs**

*24 CFR 960.204; 24 CFR 966.4; 24 CFR 5.858-861*

The Authority **must** terminate the tenancy in accordance with the provisions of the Lease Agreement under the following circumstances:

1. The Authority will terminate the tenancy if the Authority determines that a member of the household has been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacturing or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.
2. Lifetime Registered Sex Offenders [Notice PIH 2012-28] Should the Authority discover that a member of an assisted household was subject to a lifetime registration requirement at admission and was erroneously admitted after June 25, 2001, the Authority must immediately terminate assistance for the household member. In this situation, the Authority must offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, the Authority must terminate assistance for the household.

The Authority **may** terminate the tenancy in accordance with the provisions of the Lease Agreement the in the following circumstances:

1. If a tenant is fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, or is a high misdemeanor, or violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under Federal or State law.
2. The Authority may evict the tenant by judicial action for criminal activity if it determines that the covered person has been arrested or convicted for such activity and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction.
3. The Authority may evict a family when it determines that a household member is illegally using a drug or when it determines that a pattern of illegal use of a drug interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
4. Drug related criminal activity engaged in, on or off the premises, by any tenant, member of the tenant's household or guest, and any such activity engaged in on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control, is grounds for the Authority to terminate tenancy.
5. Any criminal activity by a covered person that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents, including the Authority's management, or threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of their

residences by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises is grounds for termination of tenancy.

6. If the Authority determines that a household member has engaged in abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
7. Furnished false or misleading information concerning illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, or rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

## **IX. CONSIDERATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES**

*24 CFR 5.852; 24 CFR 982.552(c)(2); 24 CFR 960.205*

In cases where the denial or termination of assistance is discretionary and not mandated by statute or regulations, the Authority may consider relevant circumstances including the seriousness of the case, the extent of the participation by the household member, any mitigating circumstances related to the disability of the household member and the effect of denial or termination would have on the household member not engaged in the activity.

The Authority reserves the right to require the household to exclude the offending member in order to continue to receive housing assistance. The Authority reserves the right to require applicants or participants to execute Continued Housing Assistance Agreements or Continued Occupancy Agreements/Amended Lease. In such cases, the Authority and the applicant or participant may agree that the Authority will continue housing assistance or commence housing assistance payments conditioned upon the removal of the offending family member or guest from the residential unit or agree that the offending family member or guest will be excluded from receiving either direct or indirect assistance from the Authority. Said Agreement must be in writing, signed by the Authority, the head of the household and the offending family member or guest. The agreement shall provide that the offending family member or guest may not visit or stay overnight in the assisted rental unit and may not enter upon the Authority's property or property occupied by the assisted tenant whose residence therein is facilitated by the assistance provided by the Authority. The Continued Occupancy Agreements/Amended Lease shall also acknowledge that, if the offending family member, guest, or other party does enter the leased premises, such party shall be treated as a trespasser and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, and that such action shall also be a substantial violation of the lease that may allow an eviction action to be taken against the assisted resident.

In determining whether to deny admission or terminate tenancy for illegal use of drugs or alcohol abuse by a household member who is no longer engaged in such behavior, the Authority will consider participating in or completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or proof that the individual has been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging or engaged in the prohibited conduct. The Authority will require the applicant or participant to submit a written certification of rehabilitation from a social workers, counselor or physician. The Authority may request and obtain information regarding applicants from treatment facilities in accordance with federal regulations.

## **X. VAWA PROTECTIONS**

*24 C.F.R. 5.2005(b), 24 C.F.R. 5.2005(e)]*

The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA), provides that 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 the tenancy or occupancy rights, if the tenant or immediate family member of the tenant's family is the victim or threatened victim of that abuse. VAWA further provides that incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking may not be construed either as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim of such violence or as good cause for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence.

VAWA does not supersede any other Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking. Moreover, VAWA does not limit the Authority's duty to honor Court Orders issued to protect a victim or to address the distribution of property when a family breaks up.

### **Limits on VAWA Protections**

While VAWA prohibits the Authority from using domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking as the cause for a termination or eviction action against an applicant or tenant who is the victim of the abuse, the protections it provides are not absolute. Specifically: VAWA does not limit the Authority's otherwise available authority to terminate assistance to or evict a victim for lease violations not premised on an act of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking providing that the Authority does not subject the victim to a more demanding standard than other tenants.

VAWA does not limit the Authority's authority to terminate the tenancy of any participant if the Authority can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the property if that tenant's tenancy is not terminated.

In determining whether a participant, who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, is an actual and imminent threat to others the Authority will consider the following, and any other relevant, factors: Whether the threat is toward an employee or tenant other than the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; Whether the threat is a physical danger beyond a speculative threat; Whether the threat is likely to happen within a short period of time;

Whether the threat to other tenants or employees can be eliminated in some other way, such as by helping the victim relocate to a confidential location.

## **XI. DISABILITIES PROTECTIONS**

In considering whether an applicant or participant has violated this Policy, the Authority shall not focus on whether the individual happens to have a disability, but rather the focus shall be on whether the individual's behavior indicates that they are in violation of this Policy. Disabled applicants and participants may request reasonable accommodations if necessary.