

Anti-Harassment Policy

I. Policy Overview

The Housing Authority of the City of Anderson (“Housing Authority”) is committed to providing public housing, Housing Choice Voucher Program, and all housing programs that are free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. Unlawful harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based upon or derisive of a person’s race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, the presence of children, or other legally protected characteristics or conduct, where the unwelcome conduct affects tangible housing benefits, unreasonably interferes with an individual’s use and enjoyment of their housing, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive housing environment.

While the Housing Authority may have limited ability to directly control the conduct of property managers or owners of dwellings it does not own or operate, even when a housing choice (also known as Section 8) voucher issued by the Housing Authority is used to pay rent, applicants and tenants of such housing programs are encouraged to report any and all incidents of harassment to the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority may suggest that the program participant also report the harassment to HUD.

II. Sexual Harassment

While all forms of harassment are strictly prohibited, the Housing Authority emphasizes its prohibition of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. The following is a partial list of sexual harassment examples:

- Unwanted sexual advances.
- Offering housing benefits or services in exchange for sexual favors.
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
- Visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters.
- Verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs or jokes.

- Verbal sexual advances or propositions.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
- Physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting, or impeding or blocking movements.

Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical), requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical or visual conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of housing; (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making housing decisions; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the use and enjoyment of housing or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive housing environment.

III. Other Unlawful Harassment

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is prohibited. Under this policy, verbal, physical or visual conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, the presence of children, or other legally protected characteristics or conduct violates this policy. Prohibited harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following conduct: making epithets or slurs; negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the Housing Authority's premises.

IV. Complaint Procedure

If you experience or witness sexual or other unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation that violates this policy, please report it immediately in writing or by phone to the Low Income Public Housing Manager, the Executive Director or the Ombudsman pursuant to the Ombudsman Policy.

All allegations of sexual harassment and other unlawful harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be quickly and discreetly investigated. The investigation may include interviews with the person making the complaint, the person against whom the complaint is made, any potential witnesses identified by either person, or any person whom the Housing Authority believes has relevant information. To the extent possible, your confidentiality and that of any witnesses and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. However, the Housing Authority cannot guarantee confidentiality. The results of the investigation will be discussed with the person involved, and appropriate

disciplinary action, if any, will be taken, up to and including termination of employment.

The Housing Authority will not permit retaliation against anyone who complains or participates in the investigation. If an individual attempts to retaliate, severe discipline, up to and including termination or employment, will be imposed. If you believe you have been retaliated against for exercising your rights under this policy, you should report such conduct using the complaint procedure set forth above and/or in the Ombudsman Policy.

V. Discipline

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Such determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.

VI. Construction

Nothing in this policy is intended or shall be construed to limit the application or effect of any applicable HUD rule, notice or guidance, including but not limited to the HUD Rule governing harassment in housing, 24 C.F.R. Part 100, 81 F.R. 63054-63075 (09/14/2016)