

public housing fact sheet #1: **PHA annual and 5-year plans**

questions answered in this fact sheet:

- What are PHA Plans?
- Why are they important?
- What is the PHA Plan process?
- How do you get involved?

important terms:

- PHA: Public Housing Authority, referred to here as “housing authority”
 - HUD: The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. HUD is the government agency that oversees all housing authorities. HUD looks at and approves the PHA Plans.
 - Resident Advisory Board (RAB): a group of residents that advises the housing authority on the PHA Plan.
 - Resident Council: a group of public housing residents in your development that meet and talk about issues important to all residents.
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1. WHAT ARE PHA PLANS?

PHA Plans are developed by your housing authority. They contain a lot of information about your housing authority’s rules, including:

- how tenants are admitted and evicted
- decisions on collecting and raising rents
- plans for resident programs, such as youth groups and job training workshops
- decisions about spending money on maintenance, repairs, security, and other programs
- plans for how your housing authority will manage the apartments that you and your neighbors live in

HUD has a form that each housing authority follows when developing these Plans. Each Plan has two parts:

- the Annual Plan talks about the next 12 months
- the 5-Year Plan talks about long-term goals for your housing authority

There are several other documents that go along with the PHA Plan. They get attached to the PHA Plan so that everything is in one place. These other documents give more detail about specific issues. These can include:

- the Admission and Occupancy Plan (nicknames for this one include “A and O” or “ACOP”)
- the Community Service Requirement Plan
- the Section 3 Plan
- Grievance Procedures
- HOPE VI plans
- Designated Housing Plans

2. WHY ARE PHA PLANS IMPORTANT?

PHA Plans cover many issues that are important to residents and applicants. Examples are:

- how much rent residents pay
- when rents go up or down
- who gets priority for admission, and
- which units are fixed up.

Also, your housing authority uses the PHA Plan to ask the government for money. This money is called “capital fund” money. Capital funds pay for your development’s major repairs and upgrades. Each year, your housing authority has to decide how it wants to spend this money. **Resident input is very important because residents know what needs to be fixed and what needs fixing now!**

3. WHAT IS THE PHA PLAN PROCESS? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The PHA Plan Process is a step-by-step process of writing out the Plan. Your housing authority has to follow each step, every year. **A big part of the process is resident participation.** The annual PHA Plan process is your chance to get involved, ask questions, talk about important issues, and make your voice heard. You can say what you like and don’t like about your development. It is your chance to try to change and improve the rules.

The major steps of the process are:

- (1) The housing authority puts together a Resident Advisory Board (“RAB”)
- (2) The housing authority meets with the RAB to talk about the PHA Plan. The housing authority asks the RAB for comments on the Plan.
- (3) The housing authority holds a hearing on the PHA Plan. The hearing is open to the public. The housing authority’s Board of Commissioners talks about the Plan and answers questions.
- (4) The housing authority sends the PHA Plan into HUD. HUD will approve it or send it back for more work.

Residents can get involved by being a member of the RAB, talking to RAB members about the Plan and the comments, and going to the public hearing. Residents can always get a copy of the Plan—it is their right to read and review the document anytime they want.

The PHA Plan and Plan process help to make your housing authority *accountable* for the decisions it makes. These decisions affect public housing programs, the conditions of apartments, and the residents. **You have the power to influence your housing authority’s policies. You have the power to hold your housing authority accountable. Participate in the PHA Plan process!**

4. HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE? WHEN DOES IT START?

Annual Plan: Your housing authority has to do an annual Plan every year. From beginning to end, the whole process takes about five months. Ask your housing authority, your Resident Council, or your Resident Advisory Board about when the process begins, how you can participate, and when the Plan is supposed to be finished.

You can also find out your housing authority's schedule by going online to: <http://www.FILL-IN.gov/zzz/zzzz>. Once you log on, go to page 25, to "The PHA Plan Development Process and Time Table".

5-Year Plan: Your housing authority's next 5-Year Plan is due in 2005. The 5-Year Plan is usually done at the same time as the annual Plan. Ask your housing authority, your Resident Council, or your Resident Advisory Board for more information about the 5-Year Plan.

5. WHERE CAN YOU GET A COPY OF HOUSING AUTHORITY'S PHA PLANS?

They should be available from three different sources:

- **HUD's Web site.** Your housing authority's most recent and past PHA plans are on HUD's web site. Go to <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/approved/index.cfm>.
- **Resident Advisory Board.** Your Resident Advisory Board should have a copy of the approved PHA plans.
- **Housing Authority.** You should also be able to get a copy directly from your housing authority.

6. HOW DO YOU GET INVOLVED?

There are many ways to get involved. You can:

- Work with your Resident Council to make comments on the PHA Plans.
- Volunteer to become a member of the Resident Advisory Board (RAB).
- Try to become a member of your housing authority's Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners oversees the housing authority. Most housing authorities must have at least one resident on this Board.
- Meet with the resident who is a member of the Board of Commissioners to discuss the PHA Plans.
- Meet with your housing authority staff to comment on the PHA Plans.
- Attend the public hearing and make comments on the PHA Plans.
- Work with other partners in the community, such as legal services and homeless advocacy groups.

Your housing authority is supposed to ask for comments from residents about the PHA Plans. So talk with your Resident Council and your RAB about the Plans. If there is no Resident Council at your property, talk with your neighbors about forming one.

This is your process and it affects your home! Get involved!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For more information about the Resident Advisory Board (RAB), see **Public Housing Fact Sheet #2: The Resident Advisory Board**.
- “Residents’ Guide to the New Public Housing Authority Plans” (Center for Community Change, June 1999), available in English and Spanish at <http://www.communitychange.org/publications/housingcommdev.htm>
- The following government documents describe the PHA Plan rules and regulations:
 - “PHA Plan Desk Guide” (available at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/policy/pha-plan-guide.pdf>)
 - HUD Form 50075 PHA Plans (available at <http://www.hud.gov/pih/pha/plans/phaps-templates.html>)
 - 24 CFR § 903.3–903.25 (PHA Plan process)
 - 42 USC § 1437c–1 (PHA Plan process)
 - 24 CFR Part 964 (Resident Counsel and Resident Member on Board of Commissioners)
- *HUD Housing Programs: Tenants’ Rights* (National Housing Law Project, March 2004), Chapter 12

ABOUT THIS FACT SHEET

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