

# Implementing HUD's **SMOKE-FREE POLICY** in Public Housing



OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

## HUD FACT SHEET

### Smoke-Free Policy Recommended 18-Month Timeline

#### MONTHS 1–3

- Review HUD's rule. Check out HUD's Fact Sheets and Guidebook about the rule.
- Inform housing staff, advisory board, and residents of the final rule.
- Invite residents to an informational meeting.
- Follow the standard process for annual plan review and amendments.
- Prepare materials for your resident meeting. You can find resources including PowerPoints on HUD's website.
- Provide your staff with talking points.
- Prepare a Frequently Asked Questions document.

#### MONTHS 4–6

- Host first resident town hall meeting explaining the policy, the health benefits of going smoke-free, and the implementation process. Record the residents' feedback.
  - Invite representatives from the local health department, nonprofits involved in smoke-free initiatives, legal aid, and medical professionals to the meeting.
- Survey residents about their experience with secondhand smoke. You might ask residents how restrictive they would like the policy to be. Compile the results of the surveys and any other feedback. Use this information to help shape your policy.
- Identify partners that might sponsor residents who want to quit through their cessation journey.

#### MONTHS 7–9

- Formalize your PHA's smoke-free policy implementation and enforcement plans.
- Request feedback from the residents on the proposed smoke-free policy.
- Develop new leases, a lease addendum, and updated language for your PHA Plan. Use HUD's guidebook and suggested lease language to assist you.
- Obtain Housing Authority Governance Board and Resident Advisory Board approval of your smoke-free policy and lease amendment.
- Educate and train your staff on the final policy and enforcement strategy.
- Formally notify your residents about the policy in a letter. Include the start date, how to request reasonable accommodations, and how to provide feedback about the policy. Explain that some tenants will sign new leases and others will sign lease addendums.
  - Make sure the letter is easy to understand and written in the languages spoken by your residents.
- Work with resident youth to design flyers and/or signage about the policy. Flyers can include information about the policy, cessation support, or success stories.
- Begin posting information in your buildings and electronically (e.g., website, resident portal, email notice).



## MONTHS 10–12

- Host an additional resident meeting. Announce the official policy and enforcement plan. Include information about the health benefits of the policy, the dangers of secondhand smoke and available cessation help.
- Begin signing lease addendums for residents who aren't required to renew their lease before the policy starts.
- Sign new leases and renew existing leases to include the smoke-free policy.
  - ▶ Possible approach: Have all residents over 18 years old initial beside the policy to ensure they have read it and understand it. Include the policy start date in the lease.
- Reach out to residents who may have difficulty complying with the new policy, such as people with a physical or mental disability. Develop a plan for helping them comply.

## MONTHS 13–15

- Continue renewing and signing new leases to include the smoke-free policy.
- Host a final resident town hall meeting to address concerns and lay out the steps for implementation of the smoke-free policy.
- Engage partner organizations to schedule and provide cessation classes.
- Consider ordering magnets with information about the smoke-free policy for people to use inside their units.
- Begin building a smoking area, if your PHA decides to have one.
- Order smoke-free signs for the property.

## MONTHS 16–18

- Ensure 100% of residents have signed a lease or lease addendum with the smoke-free policy language included.
- Install the smoke-free signs around the property. Replace them if they are defaced.
- Ensure your staff is ready to enforce the policy.

## LAUNCH YOUR POLICY

- Host a kickoff celebration to mark the implementation of the smoke-free policy.
- Maintain records of violations.
- Communicate with your residents, staff, and Housing Authority Governance Board often about the policy and the benefits.
- Respond to all requests for reasonable accommodation according to your protocol.

