

CHAPTER 2. APPROVED CERTIFYING ORGANIZATIONS

7. STANDARDS FOR HUD ACCREDITATION. As a condition for initial HUD accreditation as an Approved Certifying Organization and for continuing HUD approval, an organization must meet the following standards:
- a. The organization must be a national housing management organization. For this purpose, the organization must demonstrate that it:
- (1) Is legally organized and empowered to carry out on a national basis all of the activities required for the conduct of its certification system. In this connection HUD shall determine, on the basis of pertinent statements submitted by the organization and the organization's record of experience, whether the organization is so organized and empowered or would be legally constrained to limit its certification program to only a part of the country. An organization which for legal or other reasons can carry out a certification program in only a part of the country is not eligible to act as an Approved Certifying Organization.
 - (2) Has as its principal purpose, or one of its principal purposes, the improvement of housing management on a national basis. While an organization's stated purposes and intent may be considered persuasive on this point, HUD will give primary consideration to the nature and geographical extent of the organization's actual activities, past and current.
 - (3) Has an established national housing management constituency, in terms of national membership or a substantial record of other forms of association involving individual housing management professionals or other organizations and institutions which are active in the field of housing management. For this purpose, HUD will rely upon information about the nature, quantity and geographical extent of membership or the other specified forms of association.
 - (4) Has experience in the field of housing management which has been national in scope, including activities in, or concerning, many parts of the country. For

this purpose, HUD will consider the extent to which the organization's record of experience indicates that it has the knowledge and background to carry out the housing management need and conditions of PHAs of different sizes and other characteristics in all parts of the country.

- (5) Can conduct a certification program which will attract and serve a large number of applicants and certificate holders from all parts of the country. For this purpose HUD will consider interest on the part of PHAs and potential applicants and whether the organization has been able to attract and serve a large and geographically varied constituency in the past.
- b. The organization's past performance in the field of housing management must clearly demonstrate that it has the experience and capacity to deal with low-income housing projects assisted under the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended, or assisted under other Federally or State assisted programs. The organization's past performance must also demonstrate that it is fully capable of carrying out a national certification program in accordance with the objectives and requirements set forth in the regulation and this Handbook. For this purpose, HUD will consider the nature, extent and quality of the organization's performance with regard to the following types of activities:
- (1) Developing and conducting training programs, workshops and conferences relating to housing management.
 - (2) Developing and furnishing technical assistance relating to housing management.
 - (3) Providing information services relating to housing management.
 - (4) Developing and conducting research projects, demonstration programs, studies and evaluations relating to housing management.
 - (5) Publication of materials relating to housing management.
 - (6) Participating in the development of Federal, State or local policies and procedures relating to housing management.

- c. The organization must comply with HUD's nondiscrimination policies with regard to its internal administration and conduct of its certification program.
- d. The organization's certification program shall be suitable in terms of the objectives and requirements set forth in the regulation and this Handbook. For this purpose, the organization's certification program must:
- (1) Constitute a complete and workable program meeting all requirements of the regulation and this Handbook and specifying the administrative method and procedures in

sufficient detail to assure continued administration of the program.

- (2) Evidence that the organization has the capacity and commitment to carry out the program in a successful manner over a long-term period, in terms of:
 - (a) Thorough professional knowledge and skills relating to program requirements and conditions on Federal, State and local levels and to the specific administrative requirements of the organization's certification program.
 - (b) Adequate staffing and funding for long-term administration of the certification program.
- (3) Provide standards and procedures for certification, in accordance with Chapter 3, in a manner which will afford any person the opportunity to obtain and maintain certification if the organization's certification standards are met, unless there are grounds for denial, revocation or suspension under paragraph 20a.

8. ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES.

- a. Pre-application consultation. Before submitting an application for accreditation, an interested organization should consult informally with HUD staff. This will provide an opportunity to clarify requirements and avoid superfluous efforts. For this purpose the organization should write or telephone the Public Housing Manager Certification Review Committee, Room 6246, HUD Building, 451 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20410, (202-755-6460).

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- b. Application. To request HUD accreditation as an Approved Certifying Organization, an organization shall submit to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Housing and Indian Programs (Attention: Public Housing Manager Certification Review Committee at the address noted above) a letter requesting such accreditation. This letter shall be signed by the organization's chief executive officer or other authorized official, and the following attachments shall be submitted with the letter:
 - (1) A copy of a resolution, duly adopted by the organization' board of directors, authorizing the organization's application on the basis of the certification system proposed by the organization. The resolution must state that, if the applicant is accredited, the organization will carry out the system as proposed and in compliance with all requirements

set forth in the regulations and this Handbook.

- (2) A statement demonstrating that the organization meets the standards of a national housing management organization, as specified in paragraph 7a.
- (3) A statement demonstrating that the organization's past performance meets the standard of experience and capacity to deal with low-income housing management processes, as prescribed in paragraph 7b.
- (4) A statement that the organization is and will continue to be in compliance with applicable HUD nondiscrimination requirements, along with an analysis of the organization's current employment by race/ethnicity and gender for each employment category and a copy of its affirmative action plan.
- (5) A complete description of the organization's proposed certification program, including descriptions of:
 - a. How an individual applies for certification.
 - b. The assessment methodology or testing instrument, including a statement from an organization or individual acceptable to HUD as being qualified in the field of assessment methodology declaring that the organization's certification system has been reviewed and found acceptable in terms of current standards in the field of assessment

methodology (including compliance with the standards set forth in paragraph 15) and with accepted standards related to freedom from racial and cultural bias. A copy of the testing instrument itself need not be submitted unless specifically requested by HUD.

- c. Provisions for probationary certification (see paragraph 16).
- d. Provisions for certification based solely on on-the-job performance prior to January 1, 1981 ("grandparenting," see paragraph 17a) if the organization elects to offer certification on this basis.
- e. Provisions for certification based on prior credentials granted by the same organization ("blanketing-in," see paragraph 17b).
- f. Any provisions for renewal or maintenance of

certification (see paragraph 13c).

- g. Procedures relating to appeals (see paragraph 21), with particular emphasis on the reasonableness of the applicant's access to the appeals process, in terms of both expense and geographic proximity to hearing sites.
- h. Administrative systems and staffing, including identification and background of key individuals responsible for administering the program and organizational structure (e.g., relationships between the organization's headquarters office and its local affiliates or associated organizations).
- i. All fees required for certification including (if applicable) a breakdown of fees charged for application, examination and reexamination (in the event of failure on initial examination).

b. HUD Review of Applications.

- (1) The Public Housing Manager Certification Review Committee will be responsible for reviewing applications and for making recommendations for accreditation to the Assistant

Secretary for Housing. The members of the Certification Review Committee will be appointed by the Assistant Secretary for Housing and will be chaired by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Housing and Indian Programs. The Committee's review functions will include screening applications for completeness, conferring with applicant organizations to obtain additional information deemed necessary, verifying the accuracy of pertinent information, and determining whether applicant organizations and their certification programs meet the standards specified in paragraph 7.

- (2) If the Committee finds that an organization and its proposed certification program meets those standards, it shall recommend accreditation. If the committee finds that an organization does not meet those standards, it shall recommend denial of accreditation or, in instances where the committee believes that deficiencies can be remedied with a modest effort, request the organization to take appropriate remedial action.

- (3) The Assistant Secretary for Housing shall be responsible for reviewing the recommendations of the Certification Review Committee and for granting or denying accreditation by letter to the applicant organization.
- (4) If accreditation is denied, the letter from the Assistant Secretary for Housing to the applicant organization shall set forth the reasons for denial in sufficient detail to enable the organization to request reconsideration of the determination and shall advise the organization that it may request reconsideration.
- (5) A request for reconsideration of an organization's application shall be processed in a manner similar to that specified for the processing of an original application; i.e., review and recommendation by Certification Review Committee, followed by the decision of the Assistant Secretary for Housing, and the latter's letter advising the organization of the decision.

9. NOTICE OF HUD ACCREDITATION. To provide public notice as to which organizations are Approved Certifying Organizations, HUD shall periodically publish current lists of such organizations. The Assistant Secretary for Housing shall be responsible for preparing these lists for Federal Register publication and also for publishing them in the form of HUD Notices to PHAs, State Housing Agencies and HUD Field Offices.

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10. PERIODIC HUD REVIEW OF APPROVED CERTIFYING ORGANIZATIONS. The Certification Review Committee shall, at least annually, review the performance of each Approved Certifying Organization to determine whether the organization is actually conducting its certification system in the manner adopted by the organization and approved by HUD and whether the organization is continuing to comply with the standards prescribed in paragraph 7 and all other applicable HUD requirements. Each Approved Certifying Organization shall be required to submit to the Committee an annual report on the operation of its certification system. Unless otherwise specified by HUD, the annual report shall cover the year ending on August 1, and shall be submitted by September 1. The annual report shall provide information on the number of individuals applying for certification; the number of individuals actually certified; the number of individuals refused certification and for what reasons; an evaluation of how all elements of the system are working and any problems encountered during the year; any adjustments to the program which are planned. As a result of its review of the annual report and any other information it may receive based upon periodic review, the Committee may find that the organization's accreditation should be continued with or without changes or

should be revoked.

- a. If the Committee finds that the organization's accreditation should be continued without change, the chairman of the Committee shall so inform the organization by letter.
- b. If the Committee finds that the organization's accreditation should be continued, but that changes should be made in the organization's certification program, it shall either inform the organization by letter from the committee chairman or forward its recommendations to the Assistant Secretary for Housing for such further action as he shall direct.
- c. If the Committee finds that the organization's accreditation should be revoked, it shall forward a recommendation to that effect to the Assistant Secretary for Housing, who shall be responsible for deciding the issue. If the Assistant Secretary for Housing decides that the organization's accreditation should be revoked, he/she shall so advise the organization by letter, stating the reasons for such action in sufficient detail so as to enable the organization to request reconsideration of the determination, and advising the organization that it may request reconsideration. Requests for reconsideration shall be reviewed by the Committee, which shall then forward its recommendations to the Assistant Secretary for Housing for decision and notification to the organization.

- d. If an organization wishes to make substantial interim changes (i.e., between annual reporting dates), it shall submit to the committee a written request for HUD approval of such changes.

11. EFFECT OF REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION. If the Certification Review Committee revokes the accreditation of an Approved Certifying Organization because of failure to comply with HUD standards, notice of that revocation will be published by HUD in the Federal Register. To ensure fairness to certificate holders and promote orderly program administration, current certificates from such an organization shall remain in effect until such date as HUD direct. If revocation of an organization's accredited status should occur, HUD will take appropriate steps to assure that certificates issued by that organization will remain in effect.