HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT LAW INSTITUTE

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THE COUNSELLOR



~NEXT EVENT: HDLI'S SPRING LEGAL CLE CONFERENCE - APRIL 21-22, 2011 IN WASHINGTON, D.C.~



Registered Sex Offenders in Housing Programs: Can You Terminate Them Once They Already Are In?

By Lisa L. Walker

Federal law on the books today is clear that persons subject to a *lifetime* registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program are not eligible to be *admitted* to federally assisted housing. *See* Section 578 of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA) (titled "Ineligibility of Dangerous Sex Offenders For Public Housing"; 24 C.F.R. §960.204(a)(4) (2008) (public housing); 24 C.F.R. §982.553(a)(2)(i) (Section 8); 24 CFR §5.856.

Pursuant to QHWRA and the foregoing HUD regulations it is mandatory that PHAs deny acceptance into their public housing, Section 8, and other federally assisted housing programs (such as 811, 202, and 236) if any member of the household is subject to lifetime sex offender registration.

What has not been addressed in most jurisdictions (HDLI is aware of only one reported decision to date, discussed *infra*) is how a PHA handles a lifetime sex offender registrant who

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currently is living in a public housing or Section 8 unit. Interestingly, HUD issued a notice in 2002 explicitly stating that "households already living in Federally-assisted housing units are not subject to the provisions in the regulations at 24 CFR 5.856. Neither the statutory nor regulatory requirements specifically address sex offenders currently living in Federally-assisted housing." But, it is at least questionable whether H 2002-22 applies to public housing and tenant-based housing programs, since these programs are not listed in the "Applicability" section of the Notice. The Notice has, however, been relied upon by at least one court considering a public housing eviction. See Giggers v. Memphis Hous. Auth., 2010 Tenn. App. LEXIS 779 @ *24 (Tenn. Ct. App. Dec. 14, 2010).

It would appear that in the case where the underlying circumstances of the sex crime could be classified as "violent criminal activity," and the crime was recent (as per your PHA's standards), termination would be warranted irrespective of the sexual nature of the offense under the

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Greetings Friends and Colleagues:

On the heels of the success of HDLI's 2011 General Counsel Forum, I encourage you to attend HDLI's Spring CLE Conference next month. Lisa Walker's message details the many interesting panel discussions that we have planned for you. If you have an interest in lending your experience and expertise to a conference panel in the future, let Lisa know of your interest. We always are looking for fresh faces and perspectives.

"One Strike" Evictions Training!

Great news! HDLI has developed another excellent on-site staff training program tailored to the specific needs of public housing agencies - focusing on the considerably difficult area of "One Strike" evictions. Lisa Walker recently provided full-day. a comprehensive training to nearly 100 directors, attorneys, property managers, and other program staff from several Florida housing agencies on the many complicated issues associated with denying, or evicting household when a family member, guest, or other person under the tenant's control has engaged in criminal or drug-related criminal activity. Among other areas, the training focuses on the pitfalls often associated with carrying out these evictions, juvenile activity, how domestic violence impacts such evictions, and provides "Best Practices" for conducting lawful and

President's Page

Greetings from HDLI's President



Mattye Gouldsby Jones, Esq.

defensible evictions. Every PHA should ensure that its site staff, admissions staff, hearing officers, and attorneys are fully trained on "One Strike" evictions. A registration form is attached at the end of this newsletter.

You have heard me encourage you to suggest that your business partners make the investment in your business and our industry by joining HDLI. We often pay our partners top dollar for developing and managing our properties, only to find out that they lack a grounded understanding of our complex and highly-regulated industry. Have development teams, management firms, and other business partners join our group so that they may quickly get up to speed on the many issues, laws, and regulations that impact our planning and implementation decisions. We will all be the better for it!

Mattye 12

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ordinary violent criminal activity provisions of 24 CFR §§ 982.551(I) and 982.553(b)(2), which state:

The members of the household may not engage in . . . violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

Terminating assistance for other criminals.

The PHA must establish standards that allow
the PHA to terminate assistance under the

982.552(c)(1)(i)(violation of family obligations).

But the issue that some PHAs grapple with is what if the sex crime arguably was not "violent" or could not arguably be seen to threaten other residents— such as consensual sex between teens? What if the sex offender's registration period is for less than a lifetime, say 10 years? This article discusses applicable HUD guidance, reports, and case law which shed light on these issues.

HUD REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE

In 2002 HUD provided its initial sex offender

"[W]hat if the sex crime arguably was not "violent" or could not arguably be seen to threaten other residents- such as consensual sex between teens? What if the sex offender's registration period is for less than a lifetime, say 10 years?"

program for a family if the PHA determines that any household member has violated the family's obligation under §982.551 not to engage in violent criminal activity.

Of course, the PHA would have to have access to reliable evidence establishing the violent nature of the prior sex crime – such as through a court order, etc. Hearsay or conjecture would not suffice. One might argue that whenever a sex offender has a registration requirement of any length, a court has determined that s(he) is an inherent threat to the health and safety of other residents, at least during the pendency of the registration requirement. Termination would, thus, be permitted under 24 C.F.R.

guidance to PHAs and owners that addressed the exclusion of lifetime sex offender registrants who were program applicants, but not persons who already were living in assisted housing. PIH Housing Notice 2002–22; HUD Handbook 4350.3, *Occupancy Requirements of Subsidized Multifamily Housing Programs*.

Later, in 2009, HUD PIH and provided additional guidance which indicated that HUD was exploring regulatory and legislative changes "to ensure that individuals subject to lifetime registration requirements do not continue to reside in federally assisted

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Lisa L. Walker, Esq.

Director's Dialogue

News from the Executive Director & General Counsel

Dear HDLI Members,

This year got off to a tumultuous start with record-setting snowfall and wintry conditions across the country. But nonetheless HDLI has been busy at work. Please take some time to read the lead article on registered sex offenders.

HDLI's General Counsel Forum

HDLI's Sixth Annual General Counsel Forum was another great success. In-house and "Out-house" PHA counsel from across the country descended onto Tampa Bay, FL for 1 1/2 days of high-level discussion roundtable-style on a wide-range of topics, including legal ethics. As always, the networking and social events were a real hit, which included dinner at the Tampa Museum of Art, jazz music at The Fox Nightclub, and the Gasparilla Parade and after party. A huge thank you to our gracious event sponsors for enabling this to The Moses Group, CVR Associates, happen: Constellation Energy, Ricardo and Stephanie Gilmore, and Saxon Gilmore. What happens at Gasparilla, stays at Gasparilla . . .

HDLI's List Serve

We are so pleased that so many of you continue to use one of HDLI's greatest member benefits - the HDLI list serve. Where else can practitioners and attorneys alike get such practical and legal answers to the sticky situations that PHAs face every day? Kudos to all that ask, and answer, list serve questions. If you aren't sure how to use the list serve, just give us a call or email. It's as easy as sending an email.

HDLI Spring Conference!
Washington, D.C.
April 21-22, 2011

Please plan to attend HDLI's upcoming Spring Legal CLE Conference titled "What Housing Officials and Attorneys Must Know for 2011 & Beyond: Hot Legal Topics for Challenging Times."

This year's line-up of timely legal seminars includes:

- 1. Review of Case Law Affecting Public and Affordable Housing
- 2. Legal Ethics: Hot Topics for 2011
- 3. Sureties, Bonding, and Other Hot Construction Law Topics
- 4. The 2010 ADA Amendments Impact on Housing Agencies
- 5. Legal Strategies for Handling Juvenile Truancy
- 6. Assisted Living Programs for Public Housing
- 7. Federal Budgets, Off–Sets & Other Fiscal Issues for 2011
- 8. Hot Energy Issues for 2011

Also included: Welcome Reception, Keynote Luncheon, Open Forum *and much more!* A registration form is attached.

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"HUD "did not accomplish the objective of the statute to prevent admission of dangerous sex offenders" and allowed the "same offenders who were deemed too dangerous for admission" to remain in subsidized housing."

housing." HUD Notice H 2009-11 and PIH 2009-35(HA) (issued jointly). This joint Notice sets forth the processes by which PHAs are to handle offender involving sex applicants, (addressed herein supra) and also recommended that PHAs adopt several new procedures at admission and at annual recertification/ reexamination to prevent lifetime registered sex offenders from receiving federal housing assistance. Notably, HUD recommended that if the recertification/reexamination screening reveals that the tenant or a member of the tenant's household is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement, or that the tenant has falsified information or otherwise failed to disclose his or her criminal history on and/or recertification/ the application reexamination forms, the PHA or owner should pursue eviction or termination of tenancy to the extent allowed by their lease and state or local law. Of course, the rub lies in the italicized part.

HUD OIG Audit

The preceding 2009 HUD Notices arose out of an August 14, 2009 audit by the HUD Inspector General which sampled 67 households where household member social security numbers matched a database. Audit Report 2009–KC–0001, accessible at http://www.hud.gov/offices/oig/reports/files/ig0970001.pdf. The IG found that 36 included a lifetime registered sex offender. This number included 18 household members who were ineligible at the time of admission due to lifetime registration status, 10 who were admitted and convicted before the current law was enacted, and 8 who were eligible at the time of admission but later

became lifetime registered sex offenders. On that basis, the IG estimated that between 2,094 and 3,046 federally assisted households (.05 and .07 percent) contain a lifetime registered sex offender. The IG concluded that this occurred because HUD did not have adequate controls. monitoring, and authority to ensure that projects and housing authorities prevented admission and continued subsidy of lifetime registered sex offenders. The IG stated that HUD "did not accomplish the objective of the statute to prevent admission of dangerous sex offenders" and allowed the "same offenders who were deemed too dangerous for admission" to remain in subsidized housing. The IG recommended the changes that are reflected in the 2009 HUD Notices.

While not addressed in HUD's 2009 Notice, the HUD IG did give some guidance on how PHAs could effectuate the eviction of sex offenders living in their midst under current law and regulations. The HUD IG suggests that this could include those who have lied on their application or recertification forms or, as stated above, are otherwise covered by project or PHA policies to terminate assistance of residents whose criminal activity threatens the safety of other residents.

PHA Obligations Re: Sex Offenders At the Application Stage

24 CFR §§5.856 and 5.905 require PHAs to perform necessary criminal history background checks to determine if an applicant, or a member of an applicant's household (including juvenile

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household members), is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program. PHAs must check the State in which the housing is located and states where the applicant and members of the applicant's household are known to have resided. If these processes reveal that an applicant is a lifetime registered sex offender, or if the applicant withholds or falsifies information on the application, the O/A or PHA must deny admission to the program. Before admission can be denied, the applicant must be notified of the right to dispute the accuracy and the background relevance of information. See 24 CFR 5.905 (d) and 24 CFR 960.204 (c); Para. 8-14.C of Handbook 4350,3 REV-1, Occupancy Requirements of Subsidized Multifamily Housing Programs. There also are certain record-keeping responsibilities.

PHA Obligations Re: Sex Offenders At Recertification/Reexamination

HUD's 2009 Notice recommends that annual recertification/reexamination documents include a question asking whether the tenant or any member of the tenant's household is subject to a lifetime state sex offender registration program in any state. PHAs and owners should verify this information using the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Database and document this information in the same method used at admission.

HUD's 2009 Notice ostensibly creates an exception for admissions before June 25, 2001. Specifically, it states that, for any admissions after June 25, 2001 (the effective date of QHWRA's sex offender provisions), if

the recertification/reexamination screening reveals that the tenant or a member of the tenant's household is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement, or that the tenant has falsified information or otherwise failed to disclose his or her criminal history on their application and/or recertification/reexamination forms, the PHA or owner should pursue eviction or termination of tenancy to the extent allowed by their lease and state or local



law. Notwithstanding the above, if the tenant or a member of the tenant's household, regardless of when they were admitted, commits criminal activity while living in federally assisted housing, the PHA or owner should pursue eviction or termination of tenancy to the extent allowed by their lease and state or local law. This would seem to cover the situation where a PHA or owner receives information about lifetime sex offender registration status during the period interim between annual recertifications.

Revisions to PHA Leases & Section 8 Agreements

As a result of the 2009 HUD Notice, PHAs and



HDU BOARD MEMBER
SPOTUGHT

Barbara Holston



Years On HDLI Board: 4

Affiliated With: Fort Worth Housing Authority (FWHA)

Does Now: Since 1993 Barbara Holston has been the President and CEO of FWHA. FWHA's initiative to "Change the Face of Public Housing" has resulted in the deconcentration and redevelopment of aging public housing into quality mixed-income communities. Additional objectives to improve the quality of life for public housing residents and utilizing housing development to create alternate revenue streams have been achieved.

Immediate Past Career: Ms. Holston held numerous positions at the Los Angeles City Housing Authority where she worked for 22 years.

Interest(s):International Travel; Shopping and Reading

Little Known Secret:

As a high school student in Birmingham, AL, in 1963, was arrested and jailed for participating in a civilrights demonstration.

Contact: Barbara@ftwha.org

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owners need to revise their leases and other tenant agreements to permit termination/eviction if, either prior or subsequent to admission, any household member is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration, or the household member has falsified information or otherwise failed to disclose his or her criminal history on their application and/or recertification/reexamination forms.

Where to Find Sex Offender Registration Information

While sex offender registration programs are different from state to state, the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act of 2006 provides a comprehensive set of minimum standards for sex offender registration, including standards for requiring lifetime registration. HUD recommends that PHAs use the U.S. Department of Justice's Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website, which searches registries for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five territories. Additionally, the FBI maintains the National Sex Offender Registry database. You might also learn relevant information from your local police department.

Case Law

Following is a chronology of important sex offender case law in the context of public housing.

2007

 Matter of Gilmore v. Hernandez, 2007 NY Slip Op 4233 (N.Y. App. Div. 1st Dep't May 17, 2007) (reversing trial court and ordering blanket prohibition of tenant's

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Sex Offenders from page 7

grandson's residency as well as visitation, on the ground that such was clearer, easier to enforce, and better protected the community from a potential danger)

2008

 People v. Martin, 2008 Cal. App. Unpub. LEXIS 1893 (Cal. App. 4th Dist. Mar. 5, 2008)(merely acknowledging that 24 C.F.R. § 960.204(a)(4) (2008) is a mandatory prohibition against admitting persons who are lifetime registrants into public housing)

2009

Miller v. McCormick, 605 F. Supp. 2d 296, 296-314 (D. Me. 2009) (overruling magistrate's recommendation to terminate, noting distinction between "applicant" and "participant" and holding that Congress & HUD treated residents who are lifetime registrants differently from illegal drug users and alcohol abusers, since there is no law or regulation expressly mandating termination of offenders currently in public housing).

2010

- Matter of Boddie v. New York City Hous. Auth., 2010 NY Slip Op 3383 (N.Y. App. Div. 1st Dep't Apr. 27, 2010) (affirming denial of applicant due, in part, to his sex offender status).
- Matter of Robinson v. New York City Dept. of Hous. Preserv. & Dev., 2010 NY Slip Op 31530U (N.Y. Sup. Ct. June 4, 2010) (affirming PHA's discretionary decision to terminate a Level 2 sex offender, but remanding case to determine whether

lifetime registration was required under facts)

Belajac v. Allegheny County Hous. Auth.,
 2010 Pa. Commw. Unpub. LEXIS 413 (Pa. Commw. Ct. Jun 30, 2010) (upholding termination based on violation of family

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Congratulations HDLI Member

Mahoney, Silverman & Cross, LLC

On its recent victory in Latif Khan v. Hous. Auth. of Champaign Co, et al., where the Seventh Circuit held that a Section 8 landlord had no property right in the renewal of his HAP contracts and that due process did not require a pre-deprivation hearing. Great work Eric Hanson & colleagues!

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obligation, rather than sex offender regs. Holds that PHAs may, but need not, consider mitigating factors, and that the court improperly substituted its discretion for that of the hearing officer by deciding that circumstances militated against termination.)

Conclusion

With regard to applicants, it is seems safe for PHAs to exclude sex offenders with lifetime registration requirements. With respect to sex offenders already participating in housing programs, until HUD promulgates more explicit regulations concerning sex offenders already in housing programs, which it promised, it might be prudent to follow Pennsylvania's lead in the *Belajac* case and proceed under a "violation of family obligations" theory, rather than under sex offender regulations and guidance. Stay tuned for updates in this area as they develop.

WELCOME NEW HDLI MEMBERS!

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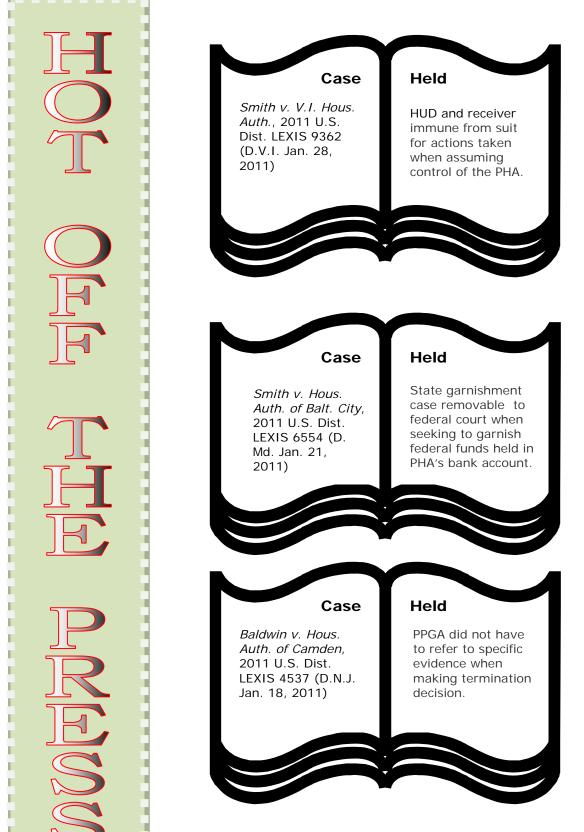
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HOUSING AUTHORITY INSURANCE GROUP

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A quick synopsis of recent cases of interest . . .



*Be sure to consult HDLI's Semi-Annual Case Law Review and *Authority* publication for more detailed summaries of recent cases in the industry.

Recent HUD Notices

Public & Indian Housing Notices (PIH):

Notice Number PIH-2011-11 (HA)	<u>Date</u> 2/11/11	Subject Extension – Administering the Community Service and Self–Sufficiency Requirement (CSSR)	Expiration Date 2/28/12
PIH-2011-10 (HA)	2/11/11	Appeals under the Operating Fund Program for Calendar Year 2011	2/28/12
PIH-2011-8 (HA)	1/28/11	Extension—Guidance for Obtaining HUD Consent for Takings of Public Housing Property by Eminent Domain	1/31/12
PIH-2011-5 (HA)	1/27/11	Amendment to PIH Notice 2010–40 on Set–Aside Funding Availability for Project–Basing HUD–Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers	1/27/12
PIH-2011-4 (HA)	1/21/11	Reissuance of PIH Notice 2009–12 – Information and Procedures for Processing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Capital Fund Formula Grants	1/31/12
PIH-2011-3 (HA)	1/19/11	Housing Choice Voucher Family Moves with Continued Assistance	1/31/12
PIH-2011-2 (HA)	1/12/11	Extension: Guidance - Verification of Social Security Numbers (SSNs), Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits	1/31/12
PIH-2011-1 (HA)	1/12/11	Rent to Owners in subsidized projects under the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program	1/31/12
PIH 2010-51 (HA)	1/1/11	Over Subsidization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program	1/31/12
PIH 2010-50 (HA)	1/1/11	Effective Use of the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System's Deceased Tenants Report to Reduce Subsidy Payment & Administrative Errors	1/31/12
PIH 2010-49 (HA)	12/28/10	Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act – Guidance on New Tenant Protections	12/31/11

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Public & Indian Housing Notices (PIH) continued:

Notice Number PIH 2010–46 (HA)	<u>Date</u> 11/10/10	Subject Performance of Physical Needs Assessments by Public Housing Authorities	Expiration Date
PIH 2010-44 (HA)	10/20/10	Revision and Extension of Guidance on requirement for PHAs to record current Declaration of Trusts (DOTs) against all public housing property and guidance on adding and removing public housing units and other property from the Annual Contributions Contract (ACC).	11/10/10
PIH 2010-41 (HA)	10/12/10	Using ENERGY STAR to Promote Energy Efficiency in Public Housing	10/31/11
PIH 2010-30 (HA)	8/2/10	Extension – Transactions between Public Housing Agencies and their Related Affiliates and Instrumentalities	8/31/11
PIH 2010-26 (HA)	7/26/10	Non-Discrimination and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	7/31/11
PIH 2010-18 (HA)	5/10/10	Revision to HUD Notice PIH 2009-51 PHA Determinations of Rent Reasonableness in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program - Comparable Unassisted Units in the Premises	5/31/11
PIH 2010-11 (HA)	4/13/10	Requests for Exception Payment Standards for Persons with Disabilities as a Reasonable Accommodation	4/30/11

Housing Notices:

Notice Number 2010-26	<u>Date</u> 12/20/10	Subject Subordination of Section 202 Direct Loans	Expiration Date 12/31/11
2010-20	12/20/10	Subordination of Section 202 Direct Loans	12/31/11
H 2010-23	11/9/10	Extension of Housing Notice H 09–15, Implementation of the Violence Against Women and Justice Department Reauthorization Act of 2005 for the Multifamily Project–Based Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program	11/30/11
H 10-22	9/30/10	Guidelines for Assumption, Subordination, or Assignment of Mark-to-Market (M2M) Program Loans in Transfer of Physical Assets (TPA) and Refinance Transactions	9/30/11
H2010-04	9/15/10	Optional Smoke-Free Housing Policy Implementation	9/30/11

*Note: This is only a partial list of recent HUD notices. All HUD notices are available online at HUDCLIPS: http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/program_offices/administration/hudclips/notices

SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Do you want to showcase your agency or company? Why not submit an article on a topic of interest to be featured in an upcoming *Counsellor*. Perhaps you can extract an article from one of your recent briefs, research projects, or other writings. Perhaps you have a colleague who has written something of interest to HDLI members.

Announcements! Has your housing agency done something noteworthy recently? Let us all know about it. Send us an announcement to be featured in the *Counsellor* (no job announcements, please).

Particulars: Articles and announcements should be in size 10 font and contain no more than 530 words. We welcome illustrations and photos. Please send in Microsoft Word format. Contact Tim Coyle for more information at (202) 289-3400 or tcoyle@hdli.org.

Happy Writing!

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HDLI'S FAIR HOUSING TRAINING REQUEST FORM

Contact person	
Agency	
Street Address	
State	
Zip	
Phone	
E-mail	

HDLI can provide both basic and advanced training for your staff. Please select one or more trainings:

- BASIC TRAINING includes approximately a half day of:
 - ♦ Fair housing law and policy as it affects PHAs, both under federal law and that of your local jurisdiction;
 - How fair housing intersects disabilities laws and the effect on daily operations;
 - Discriminatory and sexual harassment;
 - ◆ Best Practices for PHA staff;
 - ♦ Interactive fair housing case studies including realistic fact patterns illustrating the learning material; and
 - ◆ Useful training manual.
- ___ ADVANCED TRAINING includes approximately a half day of:
 - ◆ Enhanced Basic Training topics *PLUS*
 - Fair housing complaints and enforcement processes; and
 - Common fair housing litigation issues and defenses

0 – 50 persons* \$150 per person

51 – 100 persons \$125 per person * inquire about additional fee for 100 or more persons \$100 per person training fewer than 20 people

Fax or mail this form to: HDLI, 630 Eye Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001 phone (202) 289-3400 fax (202) 289-3401

^{*} Each training is customized based upon the needs of your agency. HDLI will contact you within 24 hours to discuss those needs and obtain additional information.

^{**}Training Fees consists of HDLI's actual travel costs plus a per person fee of:

HDLI'S "ONE STRIKE" EVICTION TRAINING REQUEST FORM

Contact person	
Agency	
Street Address	
State	
Zip	
Phone	
E-mail	

Who Should Attend?

PHA site managers, directors & management staff, hearing officers, attorneys, & anyone with a need to know these concepts.

Objectives of HDLI's "One Strike" Evictions Training Course:

- **√** Understand Applicable "One Strike" federal, state, and local laws.
- **√** Be knowledgeable about HUD's "One Strike" regulations and guidance.
- √ Be knowledgeable about relevant "One Strike" case law.
- √ Identify "One Strike" factual scenarios that arise in everyday PHA work days.
- √ Update or develop and implement legal, fair and effective "One Strike" policies and procedures for your agency.
- √ Conduct thorough and appropriate "One Strike" factual investigations.
- √ Provide legal and effective "One Strike" eviction and termination notices that satisfy due process requirements.
- √ Successfully conduct "One Strike" evictions and terminations that stand up to scrutiny on appeal.
- $\sqrt{}$ Conduct legal and defensible "One Strike" grievance hearings.
- * Each training is customized based upon the needs of your agency. HDLI will contact you within 24 hours to discuss those needs and obtain additional information.

**Training Fees consists of HDLI's actual travel costs plus a per person fee of:

 $0-50 \text{ persons}^*$ \$150 per person

51 – 100 persons \$125 per person * inquire about additional fee for training fewer than 20 people

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