

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Handbook is to detail requirements for the certification of Housing Managers and Assistant Housing Managers employed by Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), pursuant to the regulation set forth in 24 CFR Part 867. (A copy of that regulation, incorporating amendments adopted October 30, 1978, is attached as Appendix 1.)
2. APPLICABILITY. This Handbook applies to housing which is subject to an Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) between a PHA and HUD under the Low-Income Public Housing Program--including PHA-owned rental housing, leased housing, and homeownership opportunities projects--and to all PHAs administering such projects. This applicability encompasses Indian public housing which is owned or leased by Indian Housing Authorities (IHAs) and all references to PHAs are intended to include IHAs. This Handbook does not apply to the Housing Assistance Payments Program under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended.
3. DEFINITION. The following definitions apply to certain technical terms used in this Handbook.
 - a. "Low-Income Public Housing Program" means the HUD-assisted housing program established by the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended, except Section 8 of that statute. The terms "low-income public housing" and "public housing" refer to housing which is subject to the provisions of the Low-Income Public Housing Program, and, thus, do not include any housing with respect to which Section 8 assistance is provided.
 - b. "Approved Certifying Organization" means any organization accredited by HUD to administer a certification system pursuant to the provisions of this Handbook.
 - c. "Housing Manager" means any employee of a PHA (or of any managing agent of a PHA) who is responsible for the day-to-day management and operation, which may include the supervision of other employees, of low-income public housing. This term encompasses all employees who exercise the principal responsibility for direct general management operations at the project level. Such employees are usually known as "project managers," but the nature of the responsibilities, rather than job title, is the decisive factor here. An Executive Director shall be considered a Housing manager if he/she exercises direct, day-to-day, general management responsibilities at the project level. An employee whose functions are specialized (e.g., a maintenance worker or maintenance supervisor) shall not be considered a Housing manager.

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- d. "Assistant Housing Manager" means any employee of a PHA (or

any managing agent of a PHA) who, regardless of position title, is responsible for assisting a Housing Manager, on a regular day-to-day basis, in performing general managerial responsibilities for low-income public housing at the project level.

- e. "Certification" is used to refer to the process by which an Approved Certifying Organization determines and certifies that an individual has met the organization's certification standards. "Certification" is also used to refer to an individual's certified status; i.e., the result of the certification process.
- f. "Certificate" means a document issued to an individual by an Approved Certifying Organization as evidence that the organization has determined that the individual has satisfied the organization's certification standards. This term includes probationary certificates.

4. BACKGROUND. The quality of PHA management is obviously a crucial factor in determining the degree to which the goals of the Low-Income Public Housing Program are met. In recent years the challenge of public housing management has been compounded by increasingly complex fiscal, social and technical problems affecting PHAs of all sizes in all parts of the country. To a large extent the quality of PHA management depends upon the professional qualifications of individual managerial employees at the project level. The PHAs, as well as HUD, have long been concerned about improving the knowledge and skills of these managers and adding to the professional status of the field of public housing management. To address these concerns HUD has worked with PHA representatives and housing management organizations to develop a certification program for individuals qualified to manage public housing at the project level. These efforts resulted in the regulation 24 CFR 867, published in the Federal Register on September 29, 1976 (41 FR 43088), and amended October 30, 1978 (43 FR 50426). (See Appendix 1.)

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM. The overall goal of the certification system established by the regulation and this Handbook is to improve the quality of PHA management operations by enhancing the quality of performance by individual Housing Managers and Assistant Housing Managers. The following objectives of the certification system serve this goal, and represent the rationale which must be used in interpreting and applying all provisions of this Handbook:

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- a. Establish appropriate minimum qualification standards to be met as conditions for employment in Housing Manager and Assistant Housing Manager positions when compensation is paid out of PHA operating funds. As indicated by the definitions of the terms "Housing Manager" and "Assistant Housing Manager," the program establishes entry-level

credentials for personnel employed in project management.

- b. Provide PHAs with a reliable and convenient method for determining whether individuals meet minimum qualification standards for employment as Housing Managers and Assistant Housing Managers.
- c. Provide individuals interested in employment as Housing Managers and Assistant Housing Managers with well-defined standards for professional development.
- d. Encourage qualified or potentially qualified individuals to enter, and work in, the field of public housing management and to continue their training and education.
- e. Protect the rights of individual applicants and employees, including rights under Federal equal employment opportunity requirements and local civil service systems, and rights of appeal from actions denying, revoking or suspending certification.
- f. Enhance the professional prestige of public housing management by assuring that Housing Managers and Assistant Housing Managers have a high degree of professional competence.
- g. Assure that the tenants served receive competent management service.

6. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY. The following is a brief summary of the basic requirements and procedures of the certification system, subject to the detailed provisions of the regulation and Chapters 2 through 4 of this Handbook:

- a. Effective January 1, 1981, all persons employed by PHAs as Housing Managers or Assistant Housing Managers responsible for 75 or more public housing units must have certification from an Approved Certifying organization as a condition for payment of their salaries out of PHA operating funds, unless specifically exempt from this requirement under pertinent provisions of the regulation and this Handbook.

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- b. Approved Certifying Organizations must be national housing Management organizations accredited by HUD, which will give public notice of accreditations.
 - c. Certifications of individuals, including PHA employees and others desiring certification, will be made by the approved Certifying Organizations (not by HUD) in accordance with the HUD-approved certification systems adopted by such organizations. More than one approved Certifying Organization will be accredited, so that PHAs and individuals will have a choice in obtaining and maintaining certification.

- d. The primary method by which an individual may obtain certification is a written examination administered by one of the Approved Certifying Organizations. Probationary certification allows an individual to obtain temporary certification (maximum of two years) while preparing for an examination. There are two other methods for limited use: certification based solely on on-the-job experience (grandparenting) and validation of certification granted by an Approved Certifying Organization prior to its accreditation by HUD (blanketing-in).
- e. A certificate may be revoked or suspended by an Approved Certifying Organization on the grounds specified in the regulation and this Handbook, subject to a right to appeal such action.
- f. Certification of a Housing Manager or Assistant Housing Manager is no guarantee or employment in the field of low-income public housing. PHAs have the final authority in any hiring, promotion), or discharge policies. The criteria and standards established under the regulation and this Handbook are minimum standards upon which PHAs will develop their individual job qualifications.
- g. Information on Approved Certifying Organizations, as currently accredited by HUD, is provided in Appendix 2.