



Tina Danzy, Executive Director

Pittsfield Housing Authority

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Social Aggression, Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy

Purpose and Authority:

This policy protects residents, guests, and staff's right to a safe, peaceful enjoyment by preventing and addressing social aggression, including harassment, bullying, intimidation, threats, stalking and other hostile conduct. It implements obligations under state/federal, fair housing and landlord-tenant laws, including the duty not to allow tenant-on-tenant harassment, VAWA, and PHA grievance requirements.

This policy applies to all PHA owned and managed properties, common areas, outdoor spaces, and to conduct (including digital/online) that foreseeably affects the housing environment. This policy will cover residents, household members, guests, PHA staff and any person on PHA property.

Definitions:

Social Aggression/ Harassment: A pattern or incident of unwelcome spoken, written, electronic, or physical conduct, including bullying, intimidation, humiliation, coercion, or threats that interfere with another person's peaceful use and enjoyment of housing.

Discriminatory Harassment: Harassment based on protected classes (Race, color religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, etc.).

VAWA. (Violence Against Women Act): Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking.

Prohibited Conduct:

Any social aggression as defined above; retaliation against a person who reports or participates in a process; knowingly false reports; and violations of safety/interim measures (no contact).

Reporting Options:

Residents or staff may report in writing, by phone, email, or in person. Anonymous reports are accepted (recognizing limits). Emergencies: call 911 first. Reports involving bias or threats can trigger civil rights intake and emergency transfer review.

Access & Support: PHA will provide language access and reasonable accommodations/modifications for people with disabilities to enable reporting and participation.

Intake, Triage and Interim Measures:

Upon receipt the PHA will:

- a. Assess safety, coordinate with police as appropriate
- b. Offer interim measures (no-contact instruction, schedule changes for shared spaces; safety planning; referrals, mediation where appropriate and voluntary):
- c. Consider emergency transfer where extreme or repeated bias-motivated harassment/threats exist.
- d. Provide VAWA-related options and confidentiality.

Investigation (within 20 business days):

The Executive Director will gather statements, review evidence, and interview involved parties/witnesses. The standard is preponderance of the evidence. The PHA may coordinate with law enforcement or outside agencies where appropriate.

Findings & Remedies:

Possible outcomes include:

- a. No policy violation.
- b. Informal resolution/mediation.
- c. Written warning/behavioral agreement.
- d. Lease enforcement up to and including termination/eviction for serious or repeated violation.
- e. Bifurcation of a lease to remove the offending household member while preserving tenancy for others (where permitted under VAWA).

Due Process and Appeals:

Notice will state facts, policies implicated and remedies. Residents retain rights under 760 CMR 6.00 (state-aided housing) and applicable grievance procedures/appendices, timelines and hearing rights apply.

Anti-Retaliation & Confidentiality:

Retaliation is strictly prohibited. Records are maintained securely; disclosures occur only as needed to administer the policy, comply with law, or in eviction proceedings, with advance notice to victims where required (VAWA).

Documentation and Recordkeeping

The PHA will log the allegation, actions and outcomes, and retain records per retention schedules.

The Pittsfield Housing Authority will not tolerate harassment by or of any applicant, tenant/resident, or visitor based on a person's actual or perceived membership in a protected class (or association with such person).

Harassing conduct by a tenant will result in action up to and including eviction. The conduct covered by this policy includes behavior, language, property damage, or writings based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, ancestry, disability or sexual orientation which can create an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive housing environment for residents or visitors.

Harassment based on religion, ethnicity or race includes the use of degrading, demeaning, insulting, abusive or threatening language which relates to a person's race, ethnicity or religion; graffiti, property damage, slogans or other visual displays which contain racial, ethnic or religious-based slurs or insults; demeaning remarks, jokes or gestures based on race, ethnic origin or religion; or racial, ethnic or religious stereotypes. Such behavior directed at a resident or visitor because of their membership in a protected class or association with someone who is a member of a protected class, is unlawful under federal and Massachusetts anti-discrimination laws.

These laws protect residents' use and quiet enjoyment of their apartments and the common areas and facilities at Pittsfield Housing Authority properties. Any tenant who believes that he or she is being harassed should promptly report the behavior to the Executive Director, who will promptly investigate any report related to tenant-on-tenant harassment.

The tenant has the right to request a transfer under PHA's transfer policy. Any PHA staff member who witnesses or becomes aware of tenant-on-tenant harassment as described in this policy shall immediately report such harassment to the Executive Director.

Complaints may also be filed with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 (617) 994-6000 or the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fair Housing Hub, Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building, 10 Causeway Street, Room 321 Boston, MA 02222 (617) 565-5308.