

# LOCAL TENANT ORGANIZATIONS

In collaboration with RSCs

## Slide 1

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**WK(4**

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# Presentation Overview

## ***Goal of this presentation is to discuss***

- ✓ Defining a Local Tenant Organization, Resident Association, and Resident Advisory Board
- ✓ Functions and uses of having a Local Tenant Association
- ✓ The role you play as an RSC
- ✓ What governs an LTO and how is it formed

## ***Takeaways***

- ✓ Knowledge what regulations relate to an LTOs
- ✓ Understanding of how an LTO is formed
- ✓ Clear understanding of the limited role an RSC plays in the formation of an LTO

# Review - General Role of the RSC at the LHA

## Yes:

- ✓ Assist tenants in finding/accessing resources such as:
  - ✓ Benefits (DTA, SNAP)
  - ✓ Summer programs for children
- ✓ Event planning
  - ✓ Coffee hours, movie, bingo (✗ LTO responsible for their own events)
  - ✓ Newsletters

## No:

- ✗ Getting involved in disputes between the Tenant and Housing Authority
- ✗ You are not lease enforcement
  - ✓ Can assist tenants with complying with lease violations
- ✗ Rent recertification calculation
  - ✓ Can assist tenants with getting needed documents

# What is a Local Tenant Organization, Resident Association, and Resident Advisory Board

- Autonomous groups for tenants of residents of housing authorities
- Created or defined by state or federal policy, but not overseen or managed by DHCD or HUD
- Self-led, self-directed
- Could represent a mix of tenants and other residents in state-aided and federally subsidized public housing. (i.e., City-wide tenant organizations)

# Definitions

## **CMR 6.03 Definitions**

- **Local Tenant Organization** - An association of tenants and other residents which has been officially recognized by an LHA to represent tenants and other residents residing in some or all of the LHA's state-aided public housing & federally subsidized units.
- **Resident Association** - Any organized group of LHA tenants and other residents that has not been officially recognized as an LTO by the LHA, does not have the rights and obligations of an LTO under this regulation, but may still serve a useful function in providing an opportunity for residents to work together on matters that affect their interests.

**\*\* these boards are not overseen by DHCD or the Executive Director \*\***

# Differences between an LTO & a Resident Association?

## **Local Tenant Organization**

- Is recognized by the LHA
- Receives funding as outlined in DHCD's Annual Budget Guidelines
- Governed by bylaws
- Able to have a direct input in the following ways;
  1. Quarterly meetings
  2. Matters affecting "rights, status, duties, or welfare of residents or designee"
  3. Modernization projects
  4. Participate in specific matters if requested by the Executive Director or LHA Board (ex: Hiring committees)

## **Resident Association**

- Is NOT formally recognized by the LHA
- Input not formalized
  - Ex: no requirement to meet
- No required funding from DHCD
- More of a social focus
  - Ex: coffee hour, bingo, etc.

## Definitions continued...

- **Resident Advisory Board**- A group of residents formed for the purpose of advising the LHA on its Annual Plan and any other matters of concern to all of its residents, including a Resident Advisory Board established pursuant to federal regulations at 24 CFR 903.13.

**\*\* RABs are for federal housing and have federal guidance \*\***

**DHCD is not involved with RABs\*\***



## Functions of an LTO

- Input when the LHA proposes to adopt or amend a rule or policy which will affect the rights of tenants
- Input when an LHA requests DHCD waive regulation to requirements that affects tenant rights
- Review of the LHA's Annual Plan and opportunity for input and substantive comments to be included.
- Input on the LHA's Modernization Program
- Keep tenant informed

## RCS can collaborate with an LTO

- Build community connections
- LTOs can assist with organizing LHA events
- LTOs can assist with outreach
- Identify funding sources for special events
- Remain informed on matters that are affecting the Tenants and community
- Create a sense of community and well being in housing
- Liaison between Management and Residents

# Limitation on RSC's role in the formation of an LTO

## **An RSC can...**

- ✓ Provide references to the regulations
- ✓ Can assist with posting notices
- ✓ Referral to outside sources that assist in forming LTO's

## **An RSC should not...**

- ✗ Oversee the election of an LTO (*must be done by a disinterested party*)
- ✗ Campaign
- ✗ Facilitate LTO meetings

**\*\* Important - your supervisor should be aware of your tasks and approves how your time is allocated \*\***

# CMR 760 6.09 Regulations Governing an LTO

## 6.09: LTO and Resident Participation

(1) Purpose. Participation by residents of public housing, including representation on LHA governing boards and through effective Local Tenant Organizations (LTOs), is beneficial to the administration of public housing. Cooperative working relationships enhance housing programs and benefit both LHAs and residents. The purpose of 760 CMR 6.09 is to encourage the formation of representative organizations and to provide all residents the opportunity to be heard on and participate in matters affecting the interests of the residents. Each LHA shall comply with 760 CMR 6.09 and any additional written guidance issued by the Department.

## (2) LTO Recognition.

(a) Recognition Requirements for LTOs. The LHA shall encourage and assist public housing tenants and adult household members (referred to in 760 CMR 6.00 as "residents") to form one or more Resident Associations with democratically elected officers to represent the residents in dealing with the LHA on matters which affect their rights, status, duties, welfare, or other interests. Once formed, a Resident Association may, but is not required to, submit a written request to the LHA to recognize the Association as the official LTO representing a specific group of residents for a five year term. In order to be recognized as an LTO, an Association shall demonstrate that:

1. Persons Represented. The Association is and will be representative of one of the following groups: all residents of LHA operated public housing city-wide, town-wide, neighborhood-wide, or program-wide (all of which may include tenants in federally subsidized housing); all residents in state-aided family housing; all residents in state-aided elderly/handicapped housing; or all residents in a particular state-aided development or in public housing operated on behalf of an LHA which is not owned or managed by the LHA.

2. Participation by Residents. The Association does not and will not impose any unreasonable restriction on participation by any resident whom it represents.

3. Purpose of Representation. The purpose of the Association is to provide representation for residents in matters which affect their rights, status, duties, or other common interests, and to seek and maintain a courteous working relationship with the LHA.

4. Notices. The Association provides the residents whom it represents with sufficient notice of its activities. Any notice required to be given by an LTO to the residents will be sufficient if given at least seven calendar days before the event and if posted in prominent locations in the development lobby or community room and in the LHA's Office(s). More notice, including notices delivered by flyers, mail or email, is encouraged. In an emergency, such as in response to an emergency board meeting called by the LHA or in other situations in which it is not possible to give seven days' notice, notice will be sufficient if given 48 hours before the event.

5. Written Rules or By-laws. The Association is and will be governed by written rules or by-laws which may be changed only by a majority vote of a quorum of residents as defined by the Association's by-laws who are present at a meeting after notice was given of the time, date, location, and purpose.

6. Meetings. Regular meetings open to attendance by residents are required to be held and are held at least twice per year at times and places that are reasonably convenient to residents, that notice will be given of these meetings, and that residents have reasonable opportunity to make known their views on matters of common interest at the meetings.

# CMR 760 6.09 Regulations Governing an LTO

- 3. Purpose of Representation. The purpose of the Association is to provide representation for residents in matters which affect their rights, status, duties, or other common interests, and to seek and maintain a courteous working relationship with the LHA.

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## **What it means:**

- Residents the opportunity to come together and address issues that affect them collectively
- More professional organized to work with the housing authority

# CMR 760 6.09 Regulations Governing an LTO

- 4. Notices. The Association provides the residents whom it represents with sufficient notice of its activities. Any notice required to be given by an LTO to the residents will be sufficient if given at least seven calendar days before the event and if posted in prominent locations in the development lobby or community room and in the LHA's Office(s). More notice, including notices delivered by flyers, mail or email, is encouraged. In an emergency, such as in response to an emergency board meeting called by the LHA or in other situations in which it is not possible to give seven days' notice, notice will be sufficient if given 48 hours before the event.

## **What it means:**

- The Association must be transparent & provide equal opportunity for all residents to partake in activities
- Notices - The LTO Must Provide 7 day notice to Residents of any LTO Activities

# CMR 760 6.09 Regulations Governing an LTO

- 5. Written Rules or By-laws. The Association is and will be governed by written rules or by-laws which may be changed only by a majority vote of a quorum of residents as defined by the Association's by-laws who are present at a meeting after notice was given of the time, date, location, and purpose.

## **What it means:**

- Written Rules or By-laws- The LTO has to develop policies for their operation
- The Association must abide by the policies that have been adopted
- Bylaws may be changed only by a majority vote of a quorum of those who are present at the meeting

# CMR 760 6.09 Regulations Governing an LTO

- 6. Meetings. Regular meetings open to attendance by residents are required to be held and are held at least twice per year at times and places that are reasonably convenient to residents, that notice will be given of these meetings, and that residents have reasonable opportunity to make known their views on matters of common interest at the meetings
  - **What it means:**
  - Associations are expected to provide an opportunity for residents to voice their views or concerns
  - Regular meetings open to attendance by residents are required to be held at least 2x per year



# How do tenants form an LTO?

- **Tenants** display an interest in forming an LTO (tenant lead initiative)
- Outreach methods may include:
  - Door knocking
  - Flyers/newsletters
- LTO Board has to create written by-laws- these rules govern how the board will operate & establish how members are elected.
- Must submit a written request to the LHA to recognize the Association as the official LTO representing a specific group of residents for a five year term

In order to be recognized as an LTO, an Association shall demonstrate that:

- The Association has adopted, implemented and is in compliance with written rules or by-laws which set out the substance of all of the requirements in 760 CMR 6.09(2)(a)1. through 11.
- There is no other currently recognized LTO for the same group of residents which is active (i.e., has held at least two resident meetings during the prior 12 months)
- No other competing Association seeking recognition as LTO for the same group of residents.

# How is a Recognized LTO funded?

- Upon request, an LTO can be funded \$6.00 per unit or an annual total of \$500.00 dollars minimum for a recognized LTO, whichever is greater
- The LTO budget is adopted annually by the Board
- Must submit the LTO budget to the Housing Authority

The LTO budget is for business expenses, not social gatherings

- LHA shall provide funds based on the approved LTO budget

# What Operational Assistance is Available for a Recognized LTO?

## **760 CMR 6.09 (f)**

- (f) Meeting Space. Whenever possible, the LHA shall make community space or other appropriate space available for LTO meetings. The LHA and LTO shall cooperate in securing meeting space and in scheduling so that LTO meetings may be held at places and times convenient for the residents

## **What it means:**

- Upon request, an LTO can use community spaces at the LHA
- If the LTO demonstrates a need the LHA can provide resources for office space subject to LHA needs.

# RESOURCES FOR LTOs

- [760 CMR 6.09](#) outlines the entire process to become a recognized Local Tenant Organization
- Public Housing Notices (PHN) provide guidance, announcements, and other policy information
  - [General PHN page](#)
  - [PHN 2022-05 Guidance to LTO Officers who also serve as Housing Authority Board Members](#)
  - [PHN 2021-01 Tenant Board Member](#)

# RESOURCES FOR LTOs

- **Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants-** statewide tenant organization whose members are public housing tenants.
  - Knowledgeable & informed on legislative changes and advocating for changes in policy
  - Assist public housing tenants in the formation of tenant organizations
- **Mel King Institute** has a mission to advance skills, knowledge and leadership ability of professional practitioners and volunteer leaders in the community development field.
  - Has training programs specifically designed for public housing tenant organizations
  - Offers webinars that address frequently asked questions and concerns that Residents & Tenant Organizations have
- **Resident Advisory Board - Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plans | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** offers RAB guidance for LHAs with federal funding