

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Inspector General

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## **THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

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**Don't risk your chances for Federally assisted housing by providing false, incomplete, or inaccurate information on your application and re-certification forms.**

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Purpose: This is to inform you that there is certain information you must provide when applying for assisted housing. There are penalties that apply if you knowingly omit information or give false information.

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Penalties for Committing Fraud: The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) places a high priority on preventing fraud. If your application or re-certification forms contain false or incomplete information, you may be:

- Evicted from your apartment or house;
- Required to repay all overpaid rental assistance you received;
- Fined up to \$10,000;
- Imprisoned for up to 5 years; and/or
- Prohibited from receiving future assistance.

Your State and local governments may have other laws and penalties as well.

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Asking questions: When you sit down with the person who fills out your application, you should know what is expected of you. If you do not understand something, say so. That person can answer your questions or find out what the answer is.

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Completing the application: When you give your answers to the application questions, you must include the following information:

Income:

- All sources of money you and any member of your family receive – wages, welfare payments, alimony, social security, pension, etc.
- Any money you receive on behalf of your children – child support, social security for children, etc.

- Income from assets – interest from savings accounts, credit union, certificate of deposits, dividends from stocks, etc.
  - Earning from second job or part time job.
  - Any anticipated income (such as bonus or pay raise you expect to receive).
  - All bank accounts, savings bonds, certificates of deposit, stocks, real estate, etc that are owned by you and any adult member of your family or household who will be living with you.
  - Any business or asset you sold in the last 2 years for less than full value, such as your home to your children.
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Family Household Members: The names of all the people, (adults and children) who will actually be living with you, whether or not they are related to you.

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Signing the application:

- Do not sign any form unless you have read it, understand it, and are sure everything is complete and accurate.
  - When you sign applications and certifications, you are claiming that they are complete to the best of your knowledge and belief. You are committing fraud if you sign a form knowing that it contains false or misleading information.
  - Information you give on your application will be verified by your housing agency. In addition, HUD may do a computer match of the information that you report with various Federal, State or private agencies to verify that it is correct.
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Re-certifications: You must provide updated information at least once a year. Some programs require that you report changes in income or family/household composition immediately. Be sure to ask when you must re-certify. You must report on re-certification forms:

- All income changes, such as pay increases or benefits, changes of jobs, loss of job, loss of benefits, etc., for all adult members of your household.
  - Any family/household member who has moved in or out.
  - All assets that you or your family/household members own and any asset that was sold in the last 2 years for less than it's full value.
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Beware of fraud: You should be aware of the following fraud schemes:

- Do not pay any money to file an application.
- Do not pay any money to move up the waiting list.

- Do not pay for anything not covered by your lease.
  - Get a receipt for any money you pay.
  - Get a written explanation if you are required to pay any money other than rent (such as maintenance charges).
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Reporting Abuse: If you should become aware of anyone who has falsified an application, or if anyone tries to persuade you to make false statements, report them to the manager of your project or to the Housing Authority. If you cannot report to the manager, call the local HUD office or the HUD hotline at (202) 472-4200. This is not a toll free number. You can also write to the HUD HOTLINE, Room 8254, 451 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20410.