

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUBLIC HOUSING COMMISSIONERS

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## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM

### Federal

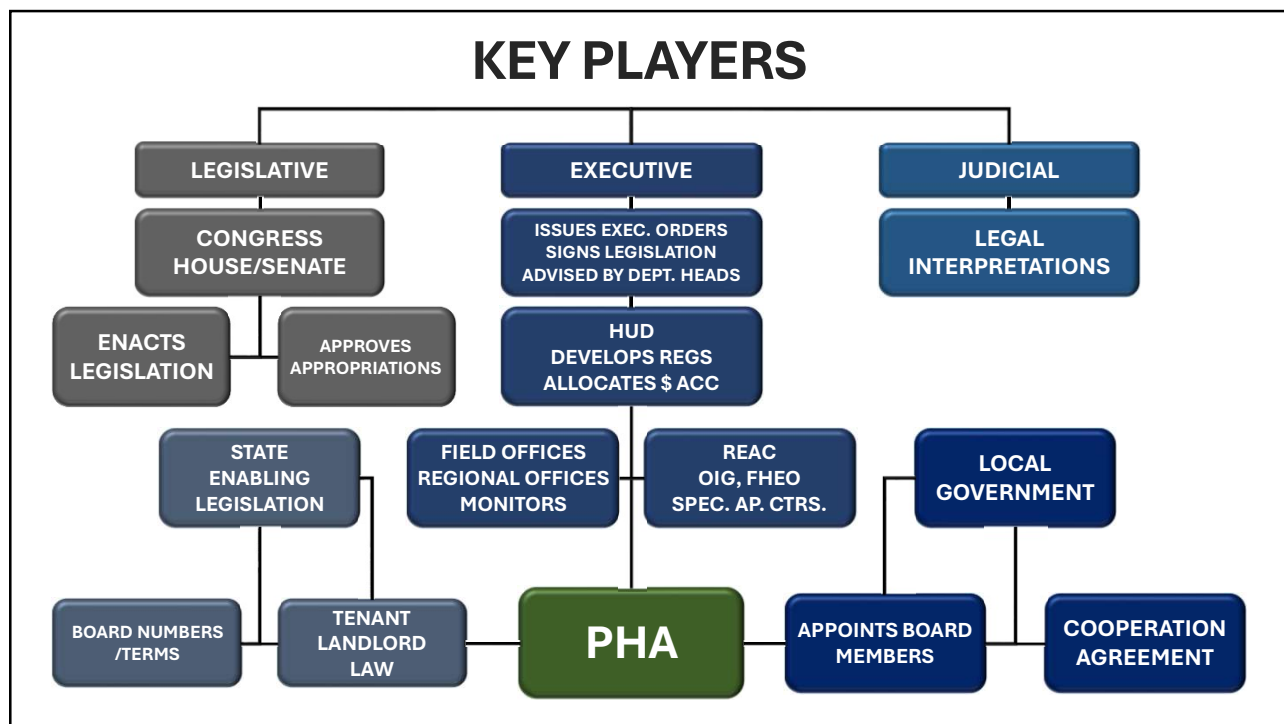
- ✓ 1937 Housing Act
- ✓ Brooke Amendment
- ✓ QHWRA
- ✓ HOTMA

### States

- ✓ Enabling Legislation

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## HOW DOES THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WORK

- Funding: Where does the money come from?
- Accountability
- Mission Statement
- Plans, Policies, and Procedures
- Measuring Performance

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## **FIRST 90 DAYS ARE CRITICAL**

### **VERY CRITICAL**

- For understanding the role that you play
- For building relationships with the different players
- For receiving a comprehensive PHA orientation
- For understanding State and Federal Laws governing a PHA
- For understanding the PHA's Policies and Finances

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## **ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- Creating Important Relationships
- The key elements of an Effective Relationship
  - ✓ Purpose
  - ✓ Leadership
  - ✓ Communication
  - ✓ Performance
  - ✓ Accountability
  - ✓ Coordinated Effort

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## THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

- The Board of Commissioners, as a whole, is the Governance Body
  - ✓ No single commissioner or committee can act for the Authority
- Policy-Making Body
- Provide Oversight
  - ✓ Evaluate the Work of the PHA

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## THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Board monitors agency performance in:

- ✓ Property management
- ✓ Administration
- ✓ Property development
- ✓ Regulatory compliance

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## ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Manages Day-to-Day Operations of the Agency

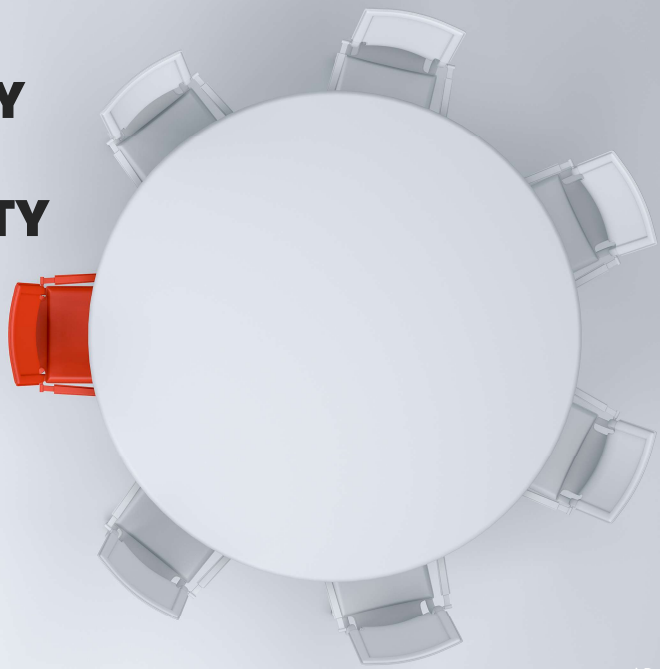
- ✓ PHA Staffing
- ✓ Prepares and Monitors/Supervises Operating Budget
- ✓ Enforces Policies
- ✓ Primary advisor to Board
- ✓ Monitors operations
- ✓ Maintains compliance with Laws and Policies
- ✓ Implement Standard Operating Procedures
- ✓ Maintains Units

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## BOC RESPONSIBILITY VS EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?



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## **BOARD RESPONSIBILITY VS. EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY**

- The HUD Inspector General Program details the responsibilities of board members
  - ✓ Establishing and adopting PHA Policies
  - ✓ Approving By-Laws, Resolutions and Policies
  - ✓ Selecting qualified Executive Directors
  - ✓ Monitoring Agency performance
  - ✓ Ensuring PHA is acting legally and with integrity

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## **BOARD RESPONSIBILITY VS. EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY**

### The Board can:

- ✓ Establish internal controls
- ✓ Establish personnel selection and evaluation policies
- ✓ Establish performance criteria
- ✓ Establish accountability standards
- ✓ Review independent audits and HUD reviews
- ✓ Visit the properties

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**A RELATIONSHIP OF  
TRUST AND CONFIDENCE  
IS REQUIRED BETWEEN  
THE BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS AND  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!**

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## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **THE BOARD AS A WHOLE**

- Represent the Agency in your Community
- Public Speaking
- Developing Resources
- Represent the Greater Community Within the Board
- Understand and Operate within your Agency By-Laws

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## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER**

- Be informed!
- Represent the PHA positively
- Represent the community fairly
- Support the Executive Director
- Commit to be part of the solution rather than the problem
- Actively recruit partnerships

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## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **BOARD CHAIRPERSON**

- Promote fiduciary responsibility and integrity of Agency governance
- Operate the Board “As a Whole”
- Preside at Meetings
- Signs Contracts, Deeds and Other Instruments
- Sets Agenda
- Lead by Example

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## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **BOARD VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

- Perform duties of Chairperson in their absence or incapacity

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## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **BOARD SECRETARY**

- Recordkeeping
- Preparing all Reports
- Power to affix PHA Seal to Contract and Other Instruments
- Financial Officer
- Preparing for required Board Meetings and Public Hearings

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## LIABILITIES OF THE BOARD

- The Board is legally responsible for the operation of the Authority  
- be alert to **“Red Flags”** such as:
- ✓ Ineligible or unsupported costs
  - ✓ Negative cash flow
  - ✓ Inadequate accounting records
  - ✓ Unusual expenses or payments

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**HOW DO YOU  
KNOW WHAT  
CONSTITUTES  
A “RED FLAG”?**



**ACQUAINT  
YOURSELF WITH  
INFORMATION  
ABOUT THE  
AGENCY!**

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## **SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERNAL CONTROLS/PROGRAM INTEGRITY**

- Handling cash, record keeping, and authorization should be separated
- (2) signatures on checks
- Each disbursement is supported by documentation
- Review financial records regularly
- Determine whether daily deposits are made

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## **LITIGATION**

- When the PHA is sued or receives an announcement of intent for litigation, the PHA must:
  - ✓ Contact HUD's Regional Counsel
  - ✓ Contract with an attorney
  - ✓ Submit contract to HUD's Regional Counsel
  - ✓ Submit all pleadings and briefs to HUD
  - ✓ To initiate, settle, or appeal, HUD must concur

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## **PITFALLS A BOARD COMMONLY FACE**

- Ineffective oversight of the overall operation of the PHA
- Failure to read and question policies presented for approval
- Failure to monitor key performance indicators
- Failure to ensure the PHA's resources are effectively spent
- Failure to implement internal controls and separation of duties

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## **PITFALLS A BOARD COMMONLY FACE**

- Lack of external checks on financial reporting
- Improper disposition of assets
- Failure to carefully review outside contracts
- Failure to make ethical, unbiased decisions
- Failure to comply with State laws
- Involvement in day-to-day operations of the PHA

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## WHAT THE BOARD SHOULD PERFORM HANDS ON...

- Establishing and Approving Policies
- Setting Board Work Plan and Agenda for year and each meeting
- Determining Board training and development needs
- Attending to discipline of Board attendance and following By-Laws
- Becoming expert in governance
- Community Representation
- Evaluating Executive Director's performance

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## WHAT THE BOARD SHOULD KEEP HANDS OFF...

- Day-to-Day Operations
- Approving Procedures from implementing Policies
- Decisions or assessments related to staffing

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**STRONG GOVERNANCE**

**SOUND FINANCIAL  
OVERSIGHT**

**LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE  
PERFORMANCE**

**MORE FAMILIES SERVED**



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