

Elijah Family Homes Policies & Procedures - Tenant Assistance

Elijah Family Homes (EFH), a faith-based organization, fosters hope, dignity, and self-sufficiency through stable housing and supportive services for families in recovery. We serve families with low income who do not qualify for public housing because of past criminal offenses, often as a result of drug and alcohol addiction. Elijah Family Homes provides services without regard to race, religion, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Qualifications:

EFH is an alcohol, marijuana, and drug-free program. All tenants, while receiving supportive housing, remain abstinent from all substances except those prescribed by their physician. Marijuana or marijuana-like substances are not allowed, even when used for medicinal purposes. Those tenants who have a history of substance abuse are required to have been clean and sober for a minimum of one year and be actively participating in a treatment and/or a recovery program.

Other qualifications for admittance to Elijah Family Homes are as follows.

The applicant:

- Must be age 18 or older and have children under the age of 18 expected to be legally living with them during their tenancy.
- Must not qualify for public housing.
- Must have income, adjusted for family size, below the HUD Home Program limits for Kennewick-Richland-Pasco, WA for the current or previous year at 50% of the median income of this area. May not have assets greater than the SSI requirements without approval from the Board of Directors for special situations.
- Must complete a criminal background check. Level 2 or 3 sex offenders do not qualify. The applicant pays the fee required for the background check or provides similar information, current within 90 days.
- Must be involved in social services with the intent of making positive changes in their lives.
- If domestic violence is in their history, must have participated in domestic violence treatment and have at least one year free of any complaints against the applicant.
- Must complete periodic, random, urine analysis or hair sample to test for drugs.

Application Process:

- Complete every step on the application checklist. Only complete applications will be considered.
- Complete a criminal background check.
- Attend community meetings monthly while waiting for an opening with Elijah Family Homes.
- Attend and document weekly recovery meetings as applicable while waiting for an opening with Elijah Family Homes.
- Participate in an interview with members of the Tenant Selection Committee.
- May be asked to submit a hair follicle sample upon approval for admittance by the Board of Directors.

Tenant rent share:

Upon entering the program, the tenant/participant's share of the rent will be a minimum of \$100 + utilities. Their actual share of the rent is calculated so that rent and utilities do not exceed 40% of the participant's adjusted household income, using an established format. When possible, the allowance for utilities is based on the prior year average utility bills for the rental unit.

In the situation that an approved participant finds a rental which exceeds maximum rental amount set by EFH each year, a consideration of exceeding the 40% is made. The participant must provide a budget showing how they are able to afford the rent and utilities, along with their other expenses. EFH may choose to refuse funding for units deemed too expensive for tenant to meet their monthly expenses

The tenant is required to provide documentation regarding their household income at the time of their acceptance into the program and at least annually. If there are any substantial changes in income (increase of \$200 or more, or decrease of \$100 or more), they will provide documentation within 45 days of those changes. Rent may be adjusted based on the new information. At least once a year, the rent calculation is evaluated for all tenants.

Requirements for ongoing housing assistance:

- Tenants maintain healthy drug and alcohol-free lifestyles, demonstrated through periodic random urine analysis or hair samples. Any narcotic or psychotropic medication changes are immediately reported to EFH staff.
- Unless otherwise stated in these policies, EFH follows HUD policy.
- Tenants pay rent consistently on or before rent payment due date and follow through with any other agreements made with landlord.
- Tenants participate in community services that are helpful in maintaining a healthy lifestyle such as counseling, parenting classes or anger management groups.
- Tenants document annually their long and short term goals towards self sufficiency.
- Tenants maintain their homes such that they are clean and safe for the children residing in the homes, demonstrated by random site visits and home inspections.
- Adult family members who are not disabled obtain employment or are on a track to obtain employment.
- All alterations in income and other changes of circumstance, as well as copies of current annual tax returns, are reported to appropriate staff or officers of EFH.
- Tenants notify appropriate staff or officers of EFH of any criminal activity, fines, tickets, arrests, convictions, etc. since their approval to become a tenant.
- Tenants notify appropriate staff or officers of EFH regarding changes in family makeup. In order to add additional people to households or to house overnight guests for more than two nights, tenants **must** obtain prior approval. All guests in the household must comply with EFH requirements regarding alcohol and drug usage. No level 2 or 3 sex offenders are allowed in the home. Any additional adults staying in an EFH-supported home for more than seven days (consecutive or not) within any 60 day period, must complete an application packet and meet the qualifications for acceptance. Children in EFH properties must sign rental agreements upon turning 18. The number of residents in a home may not exceed the number allowable by city ordinances.
- Tenants regularly document how they are taking steps to handle their financial responsibilities using available resources.
- Tenants attend regular EFH meetings, along with providing emotional support to other participants of EFH. Tenants treat all EFH members with respect, courtesy and dignity.
- Tenants with a history of drug or alcohol abuse attend and document at least one 12-Step or comparable "recovery" meeting per week.

Housing assistance may be provided for up to three years to participants who actively pursue their goals. At the end of three years, a participant who is not ready to establish suitable housing without ongoing support may petition the Board of Directors for a time-limited extension.

Non Compliance:

Families not complying with program responsibilities will be notified of noncompliance and may be immediately terminated from the program. If a family responds favorably, meets with the compliance committee, and the Board of Directors approves, the participant may be permitted to continue with the program.

If terminated from this program for any reason, tenant cannot be reinstated or re-apply for a minimum of twelve calendar months following the date of termination. Potential for re-instatement is not guaranteed or implied.

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Requirements for Applicants

Individuals who have completed the application packet and turned it into the office are considered to be members of Elijah Family Homes(EFH). The following is required of those who want to stay on the applicant housing list and to participate in the family support programs:

- Applicants will attend the monthly EFH Community meetings that are currently being held on the third Tuesday of each month.
If you are finding difficulty in attending this meeting, please contact the office of EFH (943-6610) and make an appointment to have an update with the program administrator.
- Applicants will attend at least one 12 Step or comparable recovery meeting **each week**. Documentation of attendance will be required from each applicant. You will need to provide documentation to EFH by the third Tuesday of each month at the Community meeting. If you do not attend this meeting, you will be required to provide this at your follow up appointment as noted above.
- If you are chosen to be accepted into the tenant support program, you will need to have a hair sample drug test before final acceptance as a tenant. This service will be provided by EFH at the time of finalizing your housing acceptance.