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Methuen Housing Authority
Resident Handbook
Elderly/Disabled Resident Edition



“TAKING PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITY”

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Methuen Housing Authority's mission is to provide affordable housing opportunities in meeting the needs of our low-income residents.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Methuen Housing Authority. We hope that you enjoy your home with the Methuen Housing Authority.

This handbook is intended to be a guide and resource for residents. It is not meant to supersede or override the lease. In the event of a discrepancy, the signed lease or lease addendum prevails. Please contact your housing manager if you have any questions regarding the information contained in this handbook.

Your lease outlines Methuen Housing Authority's (MHA) obligations as your landlord and your obligations as a tenant. Your primary obligations as a tenant are to pay rent on time, respect the rights of your neighbors to live quietly in their apartment, only allow those approved by MHA to live in the unit, not engage in criminal activity or allow others living in or visiting the unit to do so, do not damage your apartment or the property, do not smoke on the property, and accurately report on income/family composition. It also includes rules regarding the occupancy of your apartment, the conduct of your guests, and how long visitors may stay with you.

OFFICE HOURS

The Methuen Housing Authority office is open on the following days and hours:

Monday	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Thursday	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Friday	8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY:	911
POLICE:	978-983-8698
FIRE:	978-983-8940
METHUEN HOUSING AUTHORITY - MAIN	978-682-8607
BUSINESS HOURS MAINTENANCE REPAIRS	978-682-8607 X10
AFTER-HOUR EMERGENCY REPAIRS	978-682-8607
ANNE-MARIE MOGLIA, Executive Director	978-682-8607 X14
YEIMY MEDINA, Director of Public Housing	978-682-8607 X11
ROSELANNY TEJADA, Sr Housing Manager	978-682-8607 X26
YANNIS GALVEZ, Housing Manager	978-682-8607 X19
LIZ SPERANZA, Supportive Services Coordinator For the following complexes:	978-682-7355
• 22 MYSTIC	
• 24 MYSTIC STREET	
• 75 EDGEWOOD AVE	
JOHANNA ORTIZ, Resident Services Coordinator For the following complexes:	978-682-8607 X25
• 36 OAKLAND AVENUE	
• 101 BROADWAY	
OVERNIGHT COORDINATOR (75 Edgewood & 22-24 Mystic Only)	1-978-618-8245
COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY:	
MAYOR	978-983-8505
COUNCIL ON AGING	978-983-8825
HEALTH DEPARTMENT	978-983-8655
NEVINS LIBRARY	978-686-4080
AGESPAN	978-683-7747

PAYING RENT

Residents will pay 30% of their adjusted income toward rent and utilities (heat, hot water, electricity). The exact amount will be calculated through an annual, biennial, or interim recertification process. Rent is due and due in advance on the 1st of every month. For residents participating in the ACH debit rent payment, the rent is deducted on the 5th of the month. The ACH debit process is a process where the rent is automatically deducted from your checking/savings accounts. All new residents are required to pay their rent through an automatic ACH debit. All residents are encouraged to participate. Please contact your housing manager for assistance in setting up your ACH payment withdrawal.

There are times when residents disagree with their rent amount, have a dispute over a past-due balance, or need help working out a payment plan. If you have a problem paying your rent, you should discuss this with the manager.

Rent Redeterminations

The Housing Authority determines your continued eligibility and rent amount through an annual, biennial, or interim recertification process. Annual and biennial recertifications are initiated by the Housing Authority.

Annual Recertifications

Once every two years, the Housing Authority requires a complete annual recertification. You will complete the annual recertification through an appointment scheduled by and with your housing manager. The MHA will send you an appointment date and time in the mail which will include a list of the information you should bring with you to your appointment. This includes information about income, assets, certain deductions, and emergency contact information. You must also sign releases so MHA can verify your income.

Biennial Recertifications

Every other year, the Housing Authority will not require tenants to provide verification of household income, assets, medical expenses, etc. On this year, the tenant's rent will be adjusted by the same percentage amount as the cost-of-living increase made by the U.S. Social Security Administration to its Social Security benefits that year. All tenants will be notified of the cost-of-living increase before their recertification month. Residents have the right to request a complete annual recertification if they disagree with the biennial calculation.

Interim recertification

Your lease requires that you report any changes in your income or family size AT THE TIME THE CHANGE OCCURS. Reporting these changes may help lower your rent. Interim recertifications are initiated by the resident if any of the following occurs between your annual or biennial recertifications:

- You want to add member/members to your household (**Please note you must obtain authorization from the Housing Authority in advance of the change.**)
- You want to remove member(s) from your household.
- You receive an increase or decrease in income for any reason.

- Your assets increase or decrease.
- Your medical/disability deductions or insurance increases or decreases.

Failure to report such changes between annual review could result in being back billed for higher rent or eviction.

If you have a question or disagree with your rent change, you should ask for a meeting to discuss your rent calculation with your housing manager. If after this meeting, you still disagree with the rent calculation you can request a meeting with the Director of Public Housing. Finally, you have the right to use MHA's Grievance Procedure to dispute your rent amount. A copy of the MHA's Grievance Policy is available upon request.

Wage Exclusion

Any resident 62 years of age or older who is employed may work 20 hours per week at minimum wage and the income will be excluded from rent adjustment. Should you work more than 20 hours, the difference will be included in your income. All income should be reported regardless of whether you qualify for the wage exclusion.

Minimum Rent

All residents that report a "No Income Status" will be required to complete a "No Income Statement" on a monthly basis and a notarized "No Income Statement." The rent will be set at a Minimum Rent of \$5.00 until the resident begins receiving income.

Wage Match Program

Methuen Housing Authority participates in the Wage Match Program. All residents are required yearly to provide social security numbers and signatures to verify the wages of all employed tenants. This information is reviewed at your annual recertification. Any unreported income or discrepancies in income will be addressed at this time and you may be obligated to repay the Housing Authority for rent that was miscalculated due to failure to report wages/income as required.

MOVING IN & OUT

Upon move-in, each resident is given a set of keys. One for their apartment and one for their mailbox. It is important that you do not lose your keys. All keys are to be returned when you move from your apartment. It is recommended that you make a set of spare keys and keep them with a friend, neighbor, or relative.

Locks

You cannot change the locks of your apartment on your own because the Housing Authority needs to have access to your unit in case of an emergency. Should you change the locks without MHA's permission, you will be responsible for any associated repair, replacement, or damage costs.

Lock Outs

Should you lose your keys or get locked out of your apartment during Methuen Housing Authority's office hours, you can come to the office or call the office and one of the Maintenance Men will let you into your apartment. Should you lose your keys or get locked out of your apartment after office hours, you may call 682-8607 and the on-call Maintenance Staff person will let you into your unit. A lock-out fee will be charged for all after-hour lockouts.

Transfer Policy

Tenants may request a Transfer for medical reasons. You must complete a Transfer Application if you are requesting a Transfer. A letter from your physician must accompany the Transfer Application.

Vacating Procedure

Any tenant who is considering vacating their unit must give the office 30 days written notice by the first of the month for the following month. Residents who do not give 30 days' notice will be asked to pay the full rent. The Methuen Housing Authority will consider waiving the 30-day notice, under extreme circumstances only.

Renters Insurance

The Methuen Housing Authority does not provide insurance coverage for your personal belongings. You may wish to consider renters insurance to cover the belongings in your apartment in the event of a flood, fire, or other damage.

Lease Violations

If you violate your lease, eviction proceedings will be carried out. Some reasons for eviction are:

1. Failure to pay rent.
2. Allowing boarders/lodgers in your apartment.
3. Failure to keep your apartment clean and neat.
4. Damage to the property by you or your guest.
5. Failure to live in a peaceful manner.

PROPERTY POLICIES

Smoke-Free

Effective May 15, 2023, Smoking (including the smoking of medical marijuana) is prohibited by residents and their guests ANYWHERE ON THE PROPERTY. There are no Designated Smoking Areas on the property. The term "smoking means the inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying of a lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, pipe, or other tobacco product intended for inhalation in any manner or form, including but not limited to the use of electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic or other similar products that rely on vaporization or aerosolization.

Violating the policy by smoking anywhere on the property will be considered a lease violation. Repeated violations will result in enforcement actions as per the Enforcement Policy.

Parking

Parking is very limited and receiving a parking spot is not a guarantee if you have a vehicle, you need to ask the manager to explain the process for getting a parking permit. Parking permits must be placed on the driver's side rear window. You must park in the space assigned by your housing manager. Do not park in handicapped spaces unless you have the appropriate parking sticker. You also cannot park in front of fire hydrants or in a way that blocks access to dumpsters or wheelchair-accessible ramps. You must immediately notify your housing manager of all vehicle changes including disposition.

Any car without a parking sticker or that is parked in a restricted area (yard, grass, fire lane, alley, etc.), or that is inoperable, disabled, without plates, or abandoned, will be towed.

Visitors are allowed to park in designated visitors' spaces only. A complete parking policy is available upon request.

Repairing and washing vehicles are not allowed on MHA property.

Trash Rules

All trash must be disposed of properly. Please place your trash and your recycling in the dumpsters located at multiple locations around the property. Trash should be placed in the dumpsters labeled for trash and recycling should be placed in the dumpsters labeled recycling. You can use whatever dumpster is most convenient for you.

No accumulation of debris or junk is allowed inside or outside of apartments. **Bulk Items are no longer picked up with your trash and cannot be placed at the curb for pickup. The Housing Authority cannot dispose of your bulky items. If you wish to dispose of bulky items there are 3 ways to do so:**

- Option 1: Schedule a curbside pickup through E.L. Harvey (508-836-3000)
- Option 2: Schedule a curbside pickup through Methuen DPW (978 983-8545)
- Option 3: Drop off at the Transfer Station for Methuen Residents (978-983-8892)

Bulky items/trash left by residents requiring maintenance disposal are subject to:

- 1st Offense: Warning
- 2nd Offense: \$100 fine
- 3rd Offense: \$200 fine

Guests and Visitors

Normal visits from friends and relatives can be a pleasant experience. However, when a guest is visiting for more than two (2) days, you must notify the office. You are allowed to have a visitor stay for three (3) weeks in a 12-month period, although, you must notify the office for approval.

Pets

Residents in Methuen Housing Authority's (MHA) public housing developments are allowed to have pets. There are restrictions on the number, size, and type of pets allowed. All pet requests must be approved prior to obtaining the pet. Prior to approval, tenants must provide the Methuen Housing Authority with verification of veterinary records and a one-time pet deposit of \$160.00 (or one month's rent, whichever is smaller) is due and payable before bringing in the pet.

Emergency Buzzers

Most apartments are equipped with emergency buzzers. In case of an emergency, pull the cord attached to your bathroom or bedroom switch, which will activate the emergency buzzer. The buzzer will alarm a neighbor to come to your aid. To reset the emergency buzzers, put the bathroom or bedroom switch up to the original position.

Air Conditioners

You may install an air conditioner as long as it does not block a second exit from a room; for example, if a bedroom has only one window, it cannot be blocked with an air conditioner. This is a safety requirement in the event of an emergency. MHA does not provide air conditioners.

Telephone and Cable Service

You can choose from a variety of telephone and cable service companies. When calling the cable company, let them know that you reside in Senior Housing and you will receive a discounted rate. Please contact the office 48 hours before any appointment that you have scheduled with either the telephone or cable service. You must schedule your appointments between 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. This is when the maintenance department is available to unlock the utility room for these companies to access. If you do not give proper notice of an appointment, we cannot assist you and you will need to reschedule. **Satellite dishes are not permitted on housing authority property.**

Laundry Facilities

Washers and Dryers are supplied for residents only. Card Operated Washers and Dryers are located in each community room. **Laundry Facility hours are 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Tenants must use only one washer and one dryer at a time. The last wash must start by 7:00 p.m.** Lint filters should be cleaned following every use, and you should not overload the machines. Should any machine malfunction, please contact the Washing Machine company directly. Their telephone number is listed on the washers and dryers. The Laundry Facilities should be kept clean and neat at all times.

Laundry Facilities are for TENANT USE ONLY.

Hallway and Common Areas

In an effort to ensure compliance with the state Safe and Sanitary Housing Code and State Fire Code and ensure the safety of all, the MHA prohibits all personal belongings in hallways, common alcoves, stairwells, and any other common space outside individual apartments including furniture and decorative items. A copy of the Hallway and Common Area Policy is included in the initial lease packet and is also available upon request.

Flower Planting

Beautification of the complex is always welcome, and residents are allowed to plant flowers around the area of their buildings. However, all gardens must be maintained. Failure to maintain the garden area will result in the MHA removing the garden.

Gas Grills

The use of gas grills is prohibited on MHA property.

MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS

Inspections

Methuen Housing Authority (MHA) is required to perform at least one inspection of your apartment each year. During this inspection, MHA staff enters all occupied apartments to assess their condition and determine if any repairs are necessary.

MHA residents are given advance notice of the inspection, and it is not required that you be present during the inspection. MHA staff will record any repairs required and create any necessary work orders for the repairs. If clutter or dirty conditions are seen at the inspection, you will receive a written notice to correct these conditions and re-inspection will be made to ensure that the correction is completed. A written notice may also be issued for damages, improper disposal of garbage, smoking, or other lease violations.

Repairs

Methuen Housing Authority (MHA) is obligated to maintain your apartment in good repair. If something breaks in your apartment, you should submit a work order request to 978-682-8607 x10. MHA will schedule the work to be completed. Repairs will be prioritized based on urgency. Conditions that are considered emergencies will be addressed within 24 hours. Items that are classified as emergencies are refrigerator not working at all, stove failure of all burners, Flooding, Fire, Gas odor, Toilet stoppage; flooding or inability to use the toilet if the unit has only one toilet, no heat in the entire apartment (September 15 to June 15 only), no hot water, waste line backup/blockages.

Payment for Damages

All repairs due to normal wear and tear are provided at no cost to the resident. If repairs are made as a result of negligence or carelessness by the resident or a guest, the resident will be charged for the full cost of labor and materials for such repairs. (A list of charges has been included in an attached addendum)

Major Alterations to the Unit

No major alterations are permitted to your unit without written permission from the Housing Authority. You are not allowed to install border paper, wallpaper, flooring, carpeting, change of locks, etc. Any resident who makes any major alterations to their unit will be responsible for repair/replacement.

You may paint your apartment, although, you **MUST** use the basic Housing Authority color paint. Paint will be supplied upon request if you have lived in the unit for 5 years or more. If you have lived in the unit for less than 5 years, you will be responsible for the cost of paint. You will be responsible for any damage caused by paint.

Snow Removal

In the winter months, during a snowstorm, the Maintenance Department's priority is to clear all common areas and streetways. Residents are responsible for snow removal from their vehicles and their parking spaces. Once the common areas and streetways are completed, if time allows the Maintenance Department will then work on clearing out residents' parking spaces. Please do not jeopardize your safety by leaving your unit during inclement weather.

SERVICES & ADDITIONAL INFO

Supportive Housing Programs (22 - 24 Mystic & 75 Edgewood)

The Methuen Housing Authority and Agespan, formerly known as Elder Service of the Merrimac Valley, Inc., has formed a partnership to provide a Supportive Housing Program for the developments located at 22 Mystic St., 24 Mystic St., and 75 Edgewood Ave. This program provides an on-site coordinator and an overnight on-site attendant in the event of emergencies. Liz Speranza is the resident Service coordinator of this program. Liz can be contacted at 978-682-7355.

This program also provides several monthly activities to our residents. Although the monthly activities are located at the 22 Mystic Community Room, residents at 36 Oakland Ave and 101 Broadway are welcome to participate as well. This information is listed in the MHA Newsletter every month.

Resident Service Coordinator (36 Oakland Avenue & 101 Broadway)

The Methuen Housing Authority has an onsite Resident services coordinator who provides support to our 36 Oakland and 101 Broadway residents. Our Resident Services Coordinator Johanna Ortiz will be glad to assist you with Referrals and Paperwork. Johanna also runs weekly activities at 36 Oakland and 101 Broadway. She can be reached at extension 25.

Tenant Organization

The Methuen Housing Authority has an active Tenant Organization in the Mystic Street Complex. The tenant organization gathers as a community to do activities. To become a member or to receive information, contact the Methuen Housing Authority office.

Board of Commissioners Meeting

Board of Commissioners meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month, with the exception of the months of July and August. Board of Commissioners meetings are posted in the monthly newsletter.

Newsletter

The Methuen Housing Authority distributes a monthly newsletter to keep the tenants updated on current and upcoming events. Tenants are encouraged to provide input, such as a recipe, new grandchild, anniversary, thank you, etc. For the Newsletter, contact Yeimy Medina at the main office.

Hairdresser

Hair Cutting and Styling are available in the comfort of your home. Barbara Roy is a licensed Hairdresser. Please contact Barbara Roy at 1-603-560-7228 for an appointment.

Addendum to the Resident Handbook

Resident Charge List

The following is a list of Resident Charges that will be charged to the resident as necessary to repair or replace Methuen Housing Authority property that is damaged by the negligence or intentional act of the tenant, a member of the tenant's household, a guest of the tenant, or guest of the household member.

after hours	Lockouts (11pm - 7am)		\$100.00
after hours	Lockouts (Business Hours		\$25.00
after hours	Lockouts -Non working hours (7am-11pm)		\$75.00
Appliance	Refrigerator Appliance Repair/Replace	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Appliance	Stove Appliance Repair/Replace	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Appliance	Stove Drip Pans each		\$12.00
Carpentry	Cabinetry or Vanity Replacement/Repair	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Carpentry	Counter Replacement/Repair	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Carpentry	Exterior Building Repair of Siding	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Carpentry	Painting Unit Over Unauthorized Color		\$500.00
Carpentry	Removal of wallpaper or wallpaper border		\$500.00
Door	Door - Repair Exterior Door	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Door	Door - Repair Interior Door	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Door	Door - Repair Storm Door	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Door	Door - Replace Exterior Door		\$500.00
Door	Door - Replace Interior Door		\$350.00
Door	Door - Replace Storm Door		\$350.00
Door	Flooring - Repair/Replacement	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Door	Key Replacement		\$25.00
Door	Lockset - Interior Passage		\$100.00
Door	Lockset - Mail box		\$50.00
Door	Lockset Exterior		\$300.00
Door	Screen - Repair		\$25.00
Door	Screen - Replace (Reframe)		\$50.00
Door	Window Replacement/Repair	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Electric	Electrical: Replace Light Fixture		\$50.00
Electric	Electrical: Replace outlet/switch/plate		\$50.00
Fire	Smoke Detector		\$50.00
Fire	Carbon Monoxide Detector		\$75.00
Fire	Smoke/Carbon Monoxide/Heat Combo		\$100.00
Fire	Smoke/Carbon/Combo Reconnect Fee		\$50.00
Plumbing	Plumbing/Clog Issue	Materials & Labor & Actual Vendor Cost	
Plumbing	Shower Head		\$50.00
Plumbing	Sink		\$150.00
Plumbing	Sink - Bathroom Faucet		\$150.00
Plumbing	Sink - Kitchen Faucet		\$150.00
Plumbing	Toilet		\$200.00
Plumbing	Toilet Seat		\$40.00

This list is for reference only. If any damaged items are not listed, the cost of the repair will be materials, labor, and vendor/contractor cost is applicable. The hourly rate for maintenance is \$45.00/hour. If the repair requires more than one maintenance person, you will be charged for each person's time.

The resident will be notified of the cost, or anticipated cost if the actual cost cannot be determined, in advance of the repair. Once the repair is completed the resident will receive an invoice or notice of billing for the completed repair. Repair costs are expected to be paid within 30 days.