



TITLE: OCCUPANCY SPECIALIST

STATUS: EXEMPT

REVISED: 08/21/2026

SALARY: \$32,000.00 – \$44,000.00 Commensurate with Experience

REPORTS TO: Property Manager

JOB SUMMARY:

The Occupancy Specialist will have overall responsibility for maximizing the utilization of available housing resources through "front office" clerical and program-specific functions for the public housing programs at assigned locations including office and phone reception services, interviewing and processing applications for all continued occupancy, maintaining waiting lists, obtaining verifications related to continued occupancy (income/assets/expenses/family composition), conducting all recertification processes (annual and interim), accurately calculating tenant rent, and other related tasks that support the goals and objectives of the Knox County Housing Authority. This position will be a primary point of contact for applicants, program participants, participant families, other social service agencies or community organizations, employers, KCHA staff, neighboring housing authority staff, HUD staff, and the general public. Leasing units is the primary function of this position.

EXPECTATIONS:

It is essential that the Occupancy Specialist maintain occupancy at assigned locations of at least 97% on an ongoing basis. The position must demonstrate working knowledge of the Knox County Housing Authority Public Housing Lease (and all associated documents), all applicable agency procedures (as defined in the Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy - ACOP), applicable federal regulations, directives from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and state and local laws. The position is expected to be accurate in all reporting and calculations, and meticulous and timely in tenant communication and file documentation. This position must be firm, fair, professional, and must maintain appropriate confidentiality in communication with applicants, program participants, participant families, other agencies, KCHA staff, neighboring housing authority staff, HUD staff, law enforcement, and the general public. Certification in income/rent calculation and public housing authority occupancy required within first year in position (at KCHA expense).

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Occupancy Specialist duties include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

1. Waiting List Management:

- a. Processes applicants (waiting list and special admissions) as directed by the Property Manager in a manner consistent with achieving a 97 percent occupancy rate;
- b. Ensures application preference points are fully verified for each applicant selected from the waiting list;
- c. Evaluate initial and continued eligibility based on information provided by applicants;
- d. Purges the waiting list at least annually;
- e. Places 98% of applicants on the waiting list in accordance with the ACOP;
- f. Selects 98% of applicants from the waiting list in accordance with the ACOP

2. Admissions:

- a. Conducts eligibility interviews with applicants;
- b. Provides basic information regarding housing assistance programs, eligibility requirements, unit availability and occupancy standards, and general procedures to applicants.
- c. Conducts interviews in the client's home as needed;
- d. Determines eligibility and suitability of applicants from the waiting list, including but not limited to:
 - i. Income verification – employment, assets, SSI, etc.
 - ii. Family composition
 - iii. Criminal Background
 - iv. Past rental history
 - v. Reference checks
- e. Informs ineligible families of decisions and informal meeting procedures;
- f. Documents family composition, citizenship or eligible immigrant status and social security numbers of family members over age six (or certification that no number exists) in accordance with HUD requirements;

- g. Determines Annual Income in accordance with HUD rules;
- h. Obtains EIV or third party verification of income in accordance with HUD's Verification Hierarchy (or documentation of why third party verifications are not present);
- i. Calculates Adjusted Income correctly in accordance with HUD rules;
- j. Obtains verification of deductions in accordance with HUD's Verification Hierarchy (or documentation of why third party verifications are not present);
- k. Calculates Total Tenant Payment accurately;
- l. Determines the applicable bedroom size for which each family qualifies in accordance with the occupancy guidelines set forth in the ACOP;
- m. Sets up complete and accurate files with all necessary participant-supplied documents and third party verifications (or documentation of why third party verifications are not present);
- n. Schedules and conducts all leasing interviews, from intake through lease-up, ensuring applicants and program participants are informed of all program obligations and requirements including, but not limited to, rent amounts, lease documents and addendums, and other such policies pertinent to continued occupancy;
- o. Enters correct information and forwards accurate and timely 50058 form to program support specialist for submission to HUD;

3. Coordination of a high level of continued occupancy, including:

- a. Leasing property in a timely manner;
- b. Completes and reviews proposed lease documents and addendums governing occupancy with applicants/tenants to include the following:
 - i. Review of signature, initials, security deposit information, etc.,
 - ii. Review complex lease, lease addendum, and KCHA policy and procedures with applicant/tenant to acknowledge understanding;
- c. Enforcing property rules, lease requirements, and maintaining associated records;

- d. Issuing ban letters, as needed to Residents with guests engaging in anti-social activities, as well as, to Non-Residents engaging in the same activities on or off the property;
 - e. Performing home visits of Prospective Residents as identified by the Admissions Specialists and based on the waiting list;
 - f. Leasing units by showing the property, reviewing, and signing lease, issuing keys, etc.;
 - g. Assisting with marketing and recruitment of applicants for the waiting list;
 - h. Coordinating with property manager and maintenance staff on vacancy preparation in order to minimize time units are vacant and as such minimize vacancies;
 - i. Conducting property inspections, including move-in, move-out, housekeeping and grounds in order to assure adherence to established standards;
 - j. Maintaining records of the status of assigned units, e.g. filled, vacant, anticipated vacancy, etc.;
 - k. Assisting with security activities on assigned properties by communicating with property manager regarding specific problems;
 - l. Responding to after-hours emergencies on nights, weekends, and holidays, if necessary;
4. **Assist residents with special problems and promote amicable tenant relations, including:**
- a. Counseling residents who are not complying with the terms of the lease, and concerning delinquent payments;
 - b. Referring residents with special problems, such as economic, social, legal, health, etc. to groups or agencies that provide assistance or to social service coordinator, as appropriate;
 - c. Maintaining liaison with resident service coordinator to assist with resident activities, address specific problems, plan meetings, or support activities as appropriate;
 - d. Resolving conflicts and complaints among residents, if possible, in order to avoid grievances;

- e. Recommending eviction if resident behavior warrants, and preparing related documentation to support recommendation;
- g. Participating in hearings and appeals as needed.

5. Annual Recertification and Interim Recertification:

- a. Schedules and conducts annual recertification interviews in a manner that ensures that notices of rent increase are provided at least 30 days before the anniversary date and the entire process is completed by the anniversary date;
- b. Determines whether the participant family qualifies for a different unit size than previously determined, works with property manager to facilitate transfer process if necessary;
- c. When participant reports changes in income or family circumstances, processes Interim Adjustment;
- d. Documents all information (complete information for the Annual Recertification, only changed information for the Interim) using EIV when available, otherwise verifications in accordance with HUD's Verification Hierarchy or documentation of why third party verification was unavailable;
- e. Calculates tenant rent adjustments accurately;
- f. Notify tenants accordingly as to changes in tenant rent;
- g. As the utility allowance schedule is updated, ensures that the utility allowances used in determining tenant rent are correct and accurate;
- h. Makes determination in accordance with the ACOP when tenants request to add household members for reasons other than the birth, adoption or Court-awarded custody of children;
- i. Enters correct information and forwards accurate and timely 50058 form to Assistant Administrator for submission to HUD;
- j. Properly processes client files as assigned within prescribed timeframe.

6. General Requirements:

- a. Works cooperatively with other members of the agency, adjusting workload as necessary;
- b. Investigates and resolves participant complaints minimizing involvement of property manager and administration to the satisfaction of all parties;
- c. Communicates with applicants, participants, and other staff in a manner that is courteous and professional;
- d. Answers resident questions, providing information on status of rent, unit inspections, provisions of the lease, tenant obligations, program regulations, KNOX COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY policies and procedures, etc.;
- e. Returns calls to participants and residents within one business day;
- f. Places information received through the mail, by fax or email in appropriate part of participant file within two workdays of receipt;
- g. Participates in the revision of agency policies and procedures;
- h. Submits monthly reports as requested;
- i. Any other related tasks that support the goals and objectives of the Knox County Housing Authority.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- 1. Knowledge of Authority policies and procedures, particularly as they pertain to admissions and continued occupancy;
- 2. Knowledge of Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rules and regulations that apply to occupancy;
- 3. Knowledge of laws and standards that apply to occupancy, such as Fair Housing Laws;
- 4. Knowledge of basic building maintenance, fire prevention, and liability reduction principles;
- 5. Knowledge of basic office practices, procedures, and equipment;
- 6. Knowledge of the principles of case supervision and file management;
- 7. Knowledge of the operation of authority computer system and software;

8. Knowledge of the agencies that provide assistance and services to residents, including some knowledge of eligibility requirements;
9. Knowledge of Basic English in order to communicate verbally and in writing;
10. Knowledge of mathematics sufficient to perform calculations required for summarizing rent collections, making deposits, and for rent adjustments;
11. Ability to maintain required records such as tenant files, vacancy reports, etc.;
12. Ability to read and interpret policies and guidelines in order to make sound decisions;
13. Ability to prepare clear concise reports and make appropriate recommendations within scope of responsibility;
14. Ability to use basic office equipment such as telephone, fax, copier, and computer;
15. Ability to communicate verbally and in writing;
16. Ability to generate records, receipts, and reports efficiently using a calculator and the computer system;
17. Ability to establish and maintain effective work relationships with peers, superiors, subordinates, residents, community service agencies and the public;
18. Ability to manage multiple priorities and multiple demands to accomplish tasks in accordance with established requirements;
19. Skilled in analyzing situations in order to identify problems and offer solutions;
20. Skilled in communicating with all types of people in a wide variety of situations;

QUALIFICATIONS:

The individual must possess the following knowledge, skills and abilities or be able to explain and demonstrate that s/he can perform the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation, using some other combination of skills and abilities.

1. Requires basic knowledge typically acquired with a high school diploma or GED, including basic writing, math, and reading skills, plus knowledge of basic office procedures and skills, or any combination of education, training or experience that provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

2. Requires previous office experience working with the public in which the following skills were attained: effective telephone skills, ability to deal with a variety of people under constantly changing circumstances, ability to prioritize tasks with minimal direction, ability to compose and type basic written and numerical documents, and familiarity with filing systems and standard business machines (such as copiers, calculators, postage meters, typewriter, computer equipment, fax machines, telephone systems, etc.).
3. Requires intermediate knowledge of word processing software, preferably Microsoft OFFICE for Windows, or the ability to learn OFFICE with minimal training time. Requires intermediate knowledge and ability to use e-mail and the Internet. Ability to learn housing program software for data entry of applications, work orders, tenant account management, etc.
4. Must be capable of performing light lifting of up to 50 pounds, predominantly paper products, small office equipment, mail, files, etc. Many files are retrieved and stored in overhead shelving; these files may weigh up to 20 pounds. Files may be carried a distance of up to 500 feet from desk to storage facility. Mail is carried from office/car/post office a maximum of 500 feet. Mail is also retrieved daily from a postal box located across the street from the office.
5. One of the job employees must have a valid Illinois Driver's license and a good driving record to be insurable under the Knox County Housing Authority's auto insurance. Employees must be capable of picking up and delivering mail to the local post office daily.
6. Although not mandatory, the following qualifications will enhance an individual's chance for success in the job and are desirable.
 - a. Previous experience working with public programs and/or a basic familiarity with various local community agency programs and services available to low income individuals
 - b. Familiarity and/or fluency in Spanish is desired for all applicants.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS/MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Supervision Given and Received

The employee receives work assignments and instructions from the property manager. Normally, the instructions are broad and general, both written and oral. The individual in this position must be able to work independently, performing relatively complex work in an accurate and timely manner without close supervision. Situations not covered by instructions may be referred to the property manager or handled by the employee, depending on the circumstances. The employee's work is reviewed sporadically for

thoroughness, accomplishment of objectives, and compliance with existing policies and procedures. Employee has no supervisory responsibilities.

2. Guidelines

Most work is performed according to existing procedures or written guidelines, such as HUD regulations, handbooks, desk references, or existing records. The employee will frequently be required to use independent judgment in making recommendations and decisions.

3. Complexity

The employee performs relatively complex work requiring a working understanding of HUD rules and requirements relative to public housing program eligibility, income, and rent procedures. In addition, the employee must be able to handle complex interpersonal situations involving conflicts with skill and professionalism.

4. Scope and Effect

The employee works with the public housing program participants, other KCHA staff, other agencies, and participant families. The employee's work is essential to the successful operation of the public housing program. The employee's efforts affect the Knox County Housing Authority's ability to maximize funding eligibility as well as the agency's performance within the Public Housing Assessment Subsystem (PHAS).

5. Personal Contacts

The employee has continual contact with public housing program participants, other KCHA staff, other agencies, and participant families. Most contacts are structured in nature and the employee is expected to use normal tact and professional courtesy. Occasionally a contact may be uncooperative or antagonistic, and the employee would be expected to use above-average tact and courtesy. Failure to respond courteously could adversely affect the public's opinion of the program and the Knox County Housing Authority.

6. Work Environment

The employee's work involves primarily sedentary office work in a typical office environment. Additionally there is some degree of stress resulting from contact with applicants, participants, the public and other employees. The work of the employee involves the normal risks or discomforts associated with an office environment, but is usually in an area that is adequately cooled, heated, lighted, and ventilated.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION:

This information represents a snapshot of the benefit package at the Knox County Housing Authority. A more detailed description of each benefit may be located in the KCHA Employee Handbook (R 03/01/2012).

1. **SALARY ADJUSTMENTS** – Salary increases are not automatic, but rather are based on the performance level of the employee. All salary increases, with the exception of salary increases resulting from classification changes, shall be recommended through the performance appraisal system. Newly hired employees beginning at the lowest level of the pay scale may be reviewed for a salary increase at completion of six (6) full calendar months. All others are reviewed for a salary increase at twelve (12) full calendar months, coinciding with the agency's fiscal year.
2. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM** – The agency's performance management system consists of the following components:
 - a. Evaluations of job performance will be performed by program managers or other administrative staff no less than annually.
 - b. Program managers will conduct 1-on-1 sessions with staff quarterly;
 - c. An organizational culture analysis will be conducted annually, comprised of meetings, anonymous surveys, and follow up reporting aimed at providing employees with an opportunity to provide and receive 360° feedback.
3. **HOLIDAYS** – Paid holidays will be based on the observance of legal holidays for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, published annually. Generally, there are thirteen (13) paid holidays.
4. **VACATION** – Regular full time employees accrue paid vacation based on anniversary years of continuous service on the following basis:
 - a. 10 days – first day of employment through the fifth anniversary
 - b. 15 days – Between the fifth anniversary and the tenth anniversary
 - c. 20 days – Annually after the tenth anniversary
5. **SICK TIME** – Available after thirty (30) days of continuous employment. Sick leave is accrued at the following rates:
 - a. 0.86 days per month from the first day of employment through the seventh year of employment;
 - b. 1.25 days per month for each year beginning with the eighth year of service;
 - c. Part-time employees receive sick days at ½ the rate of full-time staff.

6. PERSONAL TIME – Two (2) Personal Days are provided to employees based on the fiscal year. It must be used as an 8-hour increment and it cannot be carried over to the next calendar year nor can it be paid off at termination. Personal days are charged against accumulated sick time.
7. LEAVE TIME – The agency provides for the following types of employee leave:
 - a. Medical, Personal, Bereavement, Military;
 - b. Jury Duty and Court Appearances;
 - c. Voting time – employees entitled to vote will be given up to two (2) hours paid time to vote.
8. INSURANCE - Effective dates begin on the first day of the month following 90 continuous days of employment.
 - a. 100% of single rates paid by the agency; family options available at cost to employee;
 - b. Health Insurance – reviewed and selected by the Board of Commissioners annually based on rates;
 - c. Dental/Vision Insurance – reviewed and selected by the Board of Commissioners annually based on rates;
 - d. Retirement – 401(a) and 457 plans.