

SAULT STE. MARIE HOUSING COMMISSION

February 2025 Newsletter



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❄️ WINTER REMINDERS ❄️

With the cold weather here, please keep the following in mind to keep your home protected this winter season:

- **Protect Your Pipes:** Ensure your windows are fully closed to prevent freezing pipes. During the day, open your curtains to improve air circulation and reduce moisture, which can cause mold. Regularly wipe down window sills to avoid mildew buildup.
- **Clear Your Walkways:** You are responsible for clearing snow and ice from your walkways and maintaining a safe path to your door and/or mailbox. This is essential for everyone's safety, including staff, emergency responders, and mail carriers. Also, please do not encroach on your neighbors' cleared areas, as they maintain them for their own use.
- **Vehicle Maintenance:** Remove snow from on and around your vehicle. If snow is not cleared for an extended period of time, our office will presume the vehicle is inoperable, and a door tag will be issued. Inoperable vehicles left on the property will be towed at the owner's expense.
- **Guest Parking:** Guests must park in designated guest parking areas, not in tenant spaces. If no guest parking lot is available, guests should park on the street. This helps with snow removal and ensures parking remains accessible for tenants.

SAULT SEAL RECREATION



The Sault Seal Recreation Area is now open for tubing and winter activities! Enjoy tubing runs, a ski and snowboard hill, and a heated chalet offering a full view of the hill. Operating hours are Fridays from 4pm to 8pm, and Saturdays & Sundays from 1pm to 8pm. The hill is located at 2601 Minneapolis St.

Ticket prices are FREE for children ages 5 and under, \$10.00 for children/students ages 6-17, and \$15.00 for adults (18+).

POSTER CONTEST



As part of NAHRO's Housing America campaign, a poster contest is held annually for children living in affordable housing and community developments managed or administered by NAHRO member agencies. The posters should reflect the national theme of "*What Home Means to Me.*"

The contest is open to all children in grades K-12 who reside in affordable housing. Entries must be the work of a single artist—submissions by two or more individuals will not be accepted.

All participants, ages 5-18, must live in a household or receive housing-related services provided by a NAHRO member agency in good standing. The State Chapter of Michigan will select a winner from each age group, and each winner will receive a \$100 Visa gift card!

The Michigan submission deadline is March 20, 2025. All applications and posters should be mailed to: MI NAHRO at 169 Templar Ave, Pinckney, MI 48169. For more information or to apply, visit <https://www.nahro.org/membership/what-home-means-to-me>.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community Blood Drive

Blood donations play a crucial role in saving lives. The Upper Peninsula Regional Blood Center (UPRBC) depends on the generosity of the community to supply hospitals throughout the Upper Peninsula. MyMichigan Medical Center-Sault is hosting a free community blood drive on February 6, 2025, from 12:00pm to 4:00pm. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact the UPRBC at 906-449-1450.

2025 Polar Plunge

The Polar Plunge is the biggest fundraiser for Special Olympics Michigan. This event is free to all its participants and spectators. Are you able to brave the cold and take the plunge? If so, visit the website www.classy.org/event/2025-sault-ste-marie-polar-plunge/e622082 to register or donate today!

The Polar Plunge Check-In and Pre-Plunge Party will begin at 10:00 a.m. on February 15, 2025 at the 313 Venue on 313 Ashmun Street in Sault Ste. Marie. The Costume Parade and Plunge will begin at 11:00am. Following the event, drinks and lunch will be available for spectators to purchase on-site.



FOOD PANTRIES

Feeding America: Upper Peninsula

- Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 4:00pm. Located at the Big Bear Arena (Chi Mukwa) on 2 Ice Circle, Sault Ste. Marie, MI.

The Salvation Army

132 W. Spruce St: 906-632-6521

- Pantry: by appointment only.
- Community Kitchen: Mon-Fri (12pm-12:30pm)
- Bread Rack: Mon/Wed/Fri (10am-12pm) and Tues/Thur (10am-12pm & 12:30pm-3:30pm)

First Church of Christ

300 W. Spruce St: 906-632-6511

- Mon-Wed (9am-11am)

First United Presbyterian Church

555 Bingham Ave: 906-632-7771

- 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month (3:30pm-5pm)

St Joseph's Catholic Church

1101 Minneapolis St: 906-632-9625

- Every Tuesday (2pm-3pm)

CLM Community Action Agency

524 Ashmun St: 906-632-3363

- Mon-Fri (9am-4pm)



LOW INCOME SELF-SUFFICIENCY PLAN



DTE's Low-Income Self-Sufficiency Plan (LSP) provides eligible families with affordable monthly payments based on income and energy usage.

Participants benefit from protection against shutoffs while on the plan, fixed payments tailored to their income and energy usage, and no future late payment fees. They may also receive assistance from Michigan and/or DTE to help lower their bills, while past-due charges are frozen and reduced through forgiveness credits.

Payments are determined by income and energy usage. Past-due balances, up to \$3,000, are gradually forgiven—\$600 after one year, with up to \$1,800 forgiven by the end of 24 months. Energy usage is reviewed every six months to adjust payments if needed. At the end of the program, any remaining balance from higher energy usage must be paid.

To qualify, households must have an income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and an approved State Energy Assistance (SER). Income and energy usage must be verified annually. For more information, call 800-317-9073.

STATE EMERGENCY RELIEF

The State Emergency Relief (SER) program provides financial assistance to Michigan residents facing extreme hardship or emergencies that threaten health and safety. One part of this program, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), consists of federal funds for crisis assistance for energy-related services like heat and electricity.

Low-income households that meet all SER eligibility requirements may receive assistance with heat and electric costs. An applicant that has received a single payment for heat or non-heat electricity means that the household qualifies for additional energy services through the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP). For more information, dial 2-1-1 or visit newmibridges.michigan.gov.

4-FORMS



Any changes in your household are to be reported **within 10 days of receiving notice**. This includes updates such as new employment (which must be reported within 10 days of your hire date), job loss, changes in pay, child support, a minor starting a job, unemployment benefits, changes in SSI/Social Security, pension or retirement earnings, household size, childcare expenses, cash assistance, etc.

Updates cannot be made via phone or email; you must complete the 4-forms. To avoid retroactive rent charges that can accumulate quickly, complete and submit these forms as soon as possible.

ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION & INSPECTIONS

When you receive notice that it is time for your Annual Recertification, you may wonder why it's scheduled three months before your original move-in date. We start this process early to ensure we can complete the necessary verifications and file processing before your annual move-in date.

The notice will also include the dates when maintenance will enter your home for the annual inspection. You do not need to be present for this inspection. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our office.

WORK ORDERS



Any damages or work orders not reported when they occur and later discovered during an inspection are considered lease violations. As outlined in your lease, you must report these issues promptly. Be sure to notify us as soon as they arise to avoid any potential violations.

HOUSEKEEPING

When signing your lease for subsidized housing, you agreed to the specific requirements needed to keep your eligibility. Subsidized housing means that a portion of your rent is paid by the federal government, depending on your income. Although we understand there are many regulations associated with federally subsidized housing, these requirements are necessary in order to receive reduced rent. For instance, in Chippewa County, the fair market rent for a 3-bedroom unit is \$1,233/month.

Housekeeping is crucial and HUD has established standards for what is considered acceptable. These standards are outlined in your lease. When maintenance enters your home, they will assess and document its condition. If they find it below HUD standards, it will be reported, and you may receive notice of a follow-up housekeeping inspection. Sub-standard housekeeping will be a lease violation and you will be placed on biweekly housekeeping inspections. Three (3) violations within a calendar year could lead to the termination of your lease.

If you need assistance maintaining these standards, there are agencies and programs that may be able to help you. We strongly encourage you to inquire about eligibility for assistance. Any further questions, please contact our office and ask to speak with our Resource Manager, Jim.



REMINDERS!



- Rent is **DUE** on February 1st. *Late fees will be applied after 3:00pm on February 5th.*

If your rent is late, a \$10.00 late fee will be added to your account, along with an additional \$1.00 per day until payment is made.

- Cash payments will not be accepted. Acceptable forms of payment include a Personal Check, Cashier's Check, Money Order, or Online Payment.
- Our lobby doors are open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm. However, we are available for phone calls until 5:00pm.
- The office vestibule is open 24/7. You can pick up or drop off forms at any time.

Our office will be closed on February 17, 2025 for Presidents' Day.



SUBMIT YOUR RENTAL PAYMENT ONLINE BY SCANNING THE QR CODE BELOW!



STAFF DIRECTORY

Family Housing

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Senior Housing

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Section 8/Resource Manager

jim@saulthousing.com

Accounts Payable/Receivable & Collections

allison@saulthousing.com

Administrative Assistant

melissa@saulthousing.com

Receptionist

chrissy@saulthousing.com

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Donn J. Riley, President

Jennifer Dunton, Vice-President

Jennifer LaBonte, Treasurer

Michael B. Winnick, Commissioner

Ancilla Lee, Resident Commissioner

Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month at 12:00pm in our office, located on 608 Pine Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI.

Meeting dates may be subject to change

OFFICE INFORMATION

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