

Important Information for Applicants/Tenants and/or Program Participants

Nondiscrimination

If an applicant or participant believes that any family member has been discriminated against by Bristol Housing or a landlord participating in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, the family should advise Bristol Housing. HUD requires Bristol Housing to make every reasonable attempt to determine whether the applicant's or participant's assertions have merit and take any warranted corrective action. In addition, Bristol Housing is required to provide the applicant or participant with information about how to file a discrimination complaint (24 CFR 982.304).

Applicants or participant families who believe they have been subject to unlawful discrimination may notify Bristol Housing either orally or in writing. Bristol Housing will attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against Bristol Housing or a landlord participating in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Bristol Housing will provide a copy of a discrimination complaint form to the complainant and provide them with information on how to complete and submit the form to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). Bristol Housing will provide assistance in completing the form if requested by the applicant or participant family. The applicant or participant family may choose to contact HUD directly with their claim of discrimination or may call the Fair Housing Complaint Hotline at 1-800-440-8091.

Reasonable Accommodation

If you or anyone in your family is a person with disabilities, and you require a specific accommodation in order to fully utilize our programs and services, please contact/notify Bristol Housing. A reasonable accommodation is a change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service that may be necessary for a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, including public and common use spaces. Since rules, policies, practices and services may have a different effect on persons with disabilities than on other persons, treating persons with disabilities exactly the same as others will sometimes deny them an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling (Joint Statement of the Department of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act).

Federal regulations stipulate that requests for accommodations will be considered reasonable if they do not create an "undue financial and administrative burden" for Bristol Housing, or result in a "fundamental alteration" in the nature of the program or service offered. A fundamental alteration is a modification that alters the essential nature of a provider's operations.

Persons requesting a reasonable accommodation may do so by contacting Bristol Housing office personnel at 423-274-8150. A request may also be made by contacting Steve Scyphers, Section 504 Coordinator, by calling 423-274-8160 or in writing to 204 Bluff City Hwy., Bristol, TN 37620-4215.

VAWA - Violence Against Women Act

VAWA's primary objective is to reduce violence against women (or men) and to protect, or increase the protection of, the safety and confidentiality of women (or men) who are victims of abuse. VAWA prohibits public housing agencies (PHAs) from denying public housing or housing choice voucher assistance because an applicant has been a victim of sexual assault, domestic violence or stalking, provided that such person is otherwise qualified for admission/participation. VAWA also prohibits private landlords from refusing to rent to an individual because the person is a victim. VAWA ensures that victims of abuse in public housing or subsidized housing will not risk homelessness when they seek assistance to end a violent relationship. Bristol Housing or subsidized landlords can request proof that the applicant/tenant is a victim. The victim has 14 business days to provide such documentation or proof. If you are a victim of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking and are seeking housing assistance please notify our office. HUD requires Bristol Housing to comply with VAWA and to maintain confidentiality of tenant records relating to victims of abuse.

Informal Review and Informal Hearing Rights

Certain Bristol Housing actions or decisions require an offer of an informal review or informal hearing. Following these actions or decisions, Bristol Housing must give an applicant or participant prompt written notice of the family's right to ask for an informal review or an informal hearing to determine whether Bristol Housing's decision is in accordance with the law, HUD regulations, and Bristol Housing policies. Should you desire an informal review or a hearing, you must notify Bristol Housing in writing within 10 calendar days of notification of the adverse action or decision. Individuals may also contact Legal Aid of East Tennessee at 311 W. Walnut Street, Johnson City, TN 37605-0360 or at 1-800-821-1312.