

1 State of Arkansas
2 94th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2023
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1196

5 By: Representative Underwood
6 By: Senator Gilmore
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO MODIFY THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING;
10 TO CREATE THE HOUSING WELFARE REFORM ACT OF 2023; AND
11 FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
12
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Subtitle

14 TO MODIFY THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC
15 HOUSING; AND TO CREATE THE HOUSING
16 WELFARE REFORM ACT OF 2023.
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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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22 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Title.

23 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Housing Welfare Reform
24 Act of 2023".
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26 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 14, Chapter 169, Subchapter 1, is
27 amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

28 14-169-109. Public housing authority work requirement – Legislative
29 intent – Definitions.

30 (a) This section is intended to ensure that an individual who is able
31 to work is required to work, train, or volunteer to qualify for and receive
32 public housing benefits and is intended to preserve limited resources for
33 truly needy Arkansans.

34 (b) As used in this section:

35 (1) "Able-bodied adult" means an individual who is not:

36 (A) Under nineteen (19) years of age;



1 (B) Over sixty-four (64) years of age;

2 (C) Medically certified as physically or mentally unfit
 3 for employment;

4 (D) Pregnant;

5 (E) A parent or caretaker who is responsible for the care
 6 of a dependent child under four (4) months of age;

7 (F) A parent or caretaker who is personally providing the
 8 care for a dependent child with a serious medical condition or disability;

9 (G) Receiving unemployment compensation and in compliance
 10 with work requirements that are part of the unemployment compensation benefit
 11 program; or

12 (H) Participating in a drug addiction or alcoholic
 13 treatment and rehabilitation program;

14 (2) "Public housing authority" means a housing authority created
 15 under § 14-169-207; and

16 (3) "Work requirement" means a requirement that able-bodied
 17 adults are required to do at least one (1) of the following as a condition of
 18 eligibility:

19 (A) Work an average of twenty (20) hours or more per week;

20 (B) Participate in and comply with the requirements of a
 21 work program for twenty (20) hours or more per week;

22 (C) Volunteer at least twenty (20) hours per week;

23 (D) Meet any combination of working and participating in a
 24 work program for a total of twenty (20) hours or more per week; or

25 (E) Participate in and comply with the requirements of a
 26 workfare program.

27 (c)(1) As a condition of being chartered and operating in this state,
 28 a public housing authority shall implement a work requirement for able-bodied
 29 adults in households that receive housing assistance.

30 (2) To ensure the requirement under subdivision (c)(1) of this
 31 section is met, a public housing authority shall:

32 (A) Conduct a screening to determine whether each
 33 applicant or tenant in public housing administered by the housing authority
 34 is an able-bodied adult who is compliant with the work requirement;

35 (B) Create an employability plan for each able-bodied
 36 adult in a household that receives housing assistance consistent with the

1 work requirement; and

2 (C) Terminate assistance for any household with an able-
 3 bodied adult who fails to comply with the work requirement within sixty (60)
 4 days of noncompliance with the work requirement.

5 (d)(1) As a condition of being chartered and operating in this state,
 6 a public housing authority shall operate, among eligible households on a
 7 waiting list for benefits, a housing-authority-wide local preference
 8 prioritizing the admission of a household in which all able-bodied adults in
 9 the household are compliant with the work requirement, whether or not the
 10 able-bodied adult is compliant with a work requirement in another public
 11 assistance program.

12 (2) Notwithstanding subdivision (d)(1) of this section, a public
 13 housing authority is not required to give priority to a household in which
 14 there are able-bodied adults compliant with a work requirement over a
 15 household in which there are no able-bodied adults subject to a work
 16 requirement.

17 (e)(1) To the extent necessary to carry out this section under federal
 18 law, each public housing authority shall request federal approval from the
 19 United States Department of Housing and Urban development by January 1, 2025.

20 (2) If federal approval is denied, each public housing authority
 21 shall resubmit a request for approval within twenty-four (24) months of each
 22 denial.

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 24 SECTION 3. DO NOT CODIFY. EFFECTIVE DATE. This act is effective on
 25 and after January 1, 2024.