



Essentials for Commissioners

A Guide for Board Commissioners
of Public Housing Agencies



This is one of a series of publications available from Nan McKay & Associates. NMA is recognized nation-wide as a leader in providing training, consulting and publications for the assisted housing industry.

For more information about NMA
products and services:

Phone 800.783.3100
www.nanmckay.com

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	i
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Why Do Boards Exist?	2
History of Public Housing	3
Learning about Housing Programs	6
Terminology	12
CHAPTER 2 HOW DO BOARDS GOVERN?	13
The Board and Its Challenges	13
What Should Board Service Emphasize?	14
A Board Philosophy	15
Focusing on Objectives	16
The Buck Stops Here	16
CHAPTER 3 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARDS	17
Advocacy	18
Policy vs. Administration	19
Laws, Rules, and Documents	21
CHAPTER 4 THE KEY PLAYERS	25
Congress	26
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) ..	26
Local Government	28
Public Housing Agencies	28
Participating Families	29
The Board–Executive Director Relationship	30

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 5	THE BOARD’S TOOLS	35
	The Board as Monitor	35
	Executive Communication and Counsel to the Board	46
	How Do We Monitor Finances?	46
	Tools for Monitoring PHA Performance	51
CHAPTER 6	MECHANICS OF BOARD PERFORMANCE	57
	The Roles of Board Officers	58
	Do We Need Committees?	60
	Meeting of the Minds	61
	Profile of an Effective Board	63
	Profile of an Ineffective Board	65
	A Final Note	66
CHAPTER 7	GLOSSARY	69
	Acronyms and Abbreviations	69
	Housing and Related Terms	71
CHAPTER 8	PROGRAM COMPLIANCE REFERENCES	79
	Guide to Web Sites	79
	Guide to Housing Regulations (24 CFR)	81

This Nan McKay handbook provides a quick but thorough introduction to the important role played by boards of commissioners in overseeing government-funded housing assistance programs. While the handbook is an excellent tool for orienting new board members, it may also be used to encourage professional development among seasoned commissioners. We hope that the ideas and suggestions on effective governance that it contains will inspire as well as instruct.

