



News Release
North Carolina Alliance for Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY REQUIRES SMOKE-FREE POLICY FOR LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS

RALEIGH – The North Carolina Housing Finance Agency updated the guidelines in its 2015 Qualified Allocation Plan to require affordable housing properties to be smoke-free in order to qualify for low-income housing tax credits. The guideline change was made at the suggestion of the North Carolina Alliance for Health.

According to the new guideline, property owners must prohibit smoking in all indoor common areas, individual living areas (including patios and balconies), and within 25 feet of doorways or ventilation intakes. A non-smoking clause must also be included in the lease for each household.

“In places where people must share the air, such as multi-unit apartment buildings, it makes sense to guarantee safe, smoke-free air for everyone,” said Pam Seamans, Executive Director of the North Carolina Alliance for Health. “We know that reducing exposure to second-hand smoke can reduce the incidence of heart disease, cancer and a variety of lung and pulmonary conditions. We are very pleased that the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency decided to take this important step for health,” she said.

As of 2014, eight other states gave incentives in their Qualified Allocations Plans to promote smoke-free housing. North Carolina follows Maine as the second state in the nation to include smoke-free policies as a threshold requirement for properties to receive tax credits.

The North Carolina Division of Public Health estimates that at least 28 percent of the state’s affordable housing properties currently provide a smoke-free environment for their residents and employees. The new change in the guidelines will not impact current housing stock, but will apply to housing built or renovated in the future using tax credits.

Virtually all affordable housing apartment complexes are built using low-income housing tax credits. Tax credit rental properties are generally privately owned and managed. In exchange for the financing provided through the tax credit, owners agree to keep rents affordable for a period between 15 and 30 years for low income families and individuals. The North Carolina Housing Finance Agency monitors rent levels and sees that the properties are well-maintained.

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About the North Carolina Alliance for Health:

The North Carolina Alliance for Health is an independent, statewide coalition of public, private, professional and nonprofit organizations advocating for obesity and tobacco use prevention policies before North Carolina's legislative and executive branches. Alliance members and partners include the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Lung Association, NC Pediatric Society, Prevention Partners, NC Association of Local Health Directors, NC Public Health Association, March of Dimes,, NC Child, AARP, Active Living By Design, the Council of Churches, Youth Empowered Solutions and many others.

For further information about the North Carolina Alliance for Health and its policy priorities, contact Pam Seamans at (919) 949-5992 or pam@ncallianceforhealth.org . You may also visit their Web site at www.ncallianceforhealth.org Learn more about the health effects of secondhand smoke by visiting www.smokefreenc.org.