



Participation Guide & FAQ for PH Apartments Micro-Communities



****Updated for COVID-19 pandemic safety****

Micro-Communities at Pres House Apartments earn a rent scholarship for holding monthly meetings and activities—mostly internally, with some engagement of the broader community—around their specific topic or theme. The Coordinator of Residential programs (CRP) monitors groups’ standing, offers logistical and personal support, and holds periodic check-in meetings.

This document hopefully answers most of your questions about what you can do with your Micro-Community!

Activity Requirements: How Many? What Kinds?

Each Micro-Community is expected to meet 7-8 times during the lease year: once per month in Sep., Oct., Nov., Dec. *and/or* Jan.*, Feb., March, and April. **Groups can choose to meet once or twice during December—January.*

Meetings should be at least 1-3 hours in commitment, include all members of the Micro-Community whenever possible, and **must focus on some aspect of your group’s topic** (as opposed to a regular group meal or study session).

Of these 7-8 meetings, 1-2 must be an activity or initiative that engages the broader PH Apartments community with your topic. If you only do one community activity, it should be particularly substantial. **You are welcome, but not required, to spend more than 2 of your meetings on community engagement, and fewer on internal activities.** Hosting an event with a time and date is most common, but other options include: creating a passive display on bulletin boards; delivering care packages to other apartments; creating a video or article on your topic to be shared asynchronously on the PHA website, and more.

Logging Activities:

The CRP provides a Google Form, the Micro-Community Activity Log, to log your monthly meetings. One member of your group submits a description and photo of your meeting—rotating monthly, so each member submits the Log at least once. **Activities must be logged by the end of the month in which they occur to earn scholarship credit.**

Stories:

Once per year, each member of the Micro-Community is required to write and submit a blog story about some aspect of your experience so far. These should be staggered through the year, each on a different topic, so it’s recommended to write your blog story around the same time you submit the Activity Log. Unlike the Activity Log, these blog stories should be written for a public audience—readers who don’t already know the Micro-Community program or your topic. Some stories will be shared on the PHA website, in newsletters or reports to donors. A good blog story should be **500-1000 words** and include some context on your group and your theme, as well as detailed personal narrative and reflections. **Please email blog stories to the CRP. Some suggested prompts include:**

- 1.** Write about an activity that went really well. What stood out about it?
- 2.** How have you gotten to know your roommates better through your Micro-Community?
- 3.** What’s something new that you’ve learned or done within your topic, that has affected your life or beliefs? How & why?
- 4.** How has being in a Micro-Community helped connect you to the broader community (both PH Apts and beyond)?
- 5.** Another topic of your choosing!

What if Someone is not living at Pres House?

In 2020-21, many Micro-Communities have members living elsewhere while still earning a scholarship, due to COVID-19, travel restrictions, and more. Or, one of your members might temporarily be out of town. When a Micro-Community member cannot be physically present for a group activity, **try to include them via technology** (video call, etc.), and/or host the activity in a format in which those missing can participate.

What if Someone Misses our Meeting?

If a member does miss a group meeting, your group has two choices: **1.** Hold an extra make-up activity including the missing member(s) and at least half of the rest of the group, or **2.** That member forfeits their own scholarship for the following month. Either way, this should be indicated on the Activity Log submission.

Partial and Full Scholarship Suspensions

One or more members may lose their scholarship temporarily due to a missed meeting, as indicated above. In those instances, it is that member's responsibility to pay their full rent, while the other members pay their usual scholarship-reduced amount.

It may also occur that the entire Micro-Community falls behind on holding monthly activities, skipping a month or more. If so, the CRP may notify the group of their scholarship being suspended for one month—or indefinitely until the group resumes monthly activities. In this case, every member will be responsible for paying full rent. This can almost always be avoided entirely by logging one group activity per month, by the end of the month.

Withdrawing from the Micro-Community Program

If at any point during the year, one or more members wish to withdraw from the program and forfeit their scholarships, please contact the CRP, after first discussing this as a group. Sometimes, schedules don't allow someone to participate fully. It is always better to be on the same page as a group than to hold resentment towards someone who is seen as under-contributing.

Planning Community-Wide Initiatives — Recommended Timeline:

For your Micro-Community's one or more community engagement initiatives during the year, please keep in mind that you will need some support from Pres House staff to advertise and execute your idea well! Below is a recommended timeline for communication and planning—especially relevant for events with a fixed time and place, but applicable to any community-wide activity.

- **2 weeks before your event:** The CRP should know your activity **plan, time, date,** and **room reservation** (if any). If you are requesting additional funding for supplies (food, craft supplies, etc.), also submit a **proposed budget** to the CRP. Lastly, send an **event graphic and flyer** to be used in weekly emails and on bulletin boards.
- In the 2 weeks leading up to the event: Help put up flyers through building, if requested by CRP. Spread the word to your friends and neighbors!
- **1-2 days before your event:** If needed, meet with the CRP to get any necessary technical or setup guidance about using the reserved room (for example, sound system or furniture setup in the Main Lounge).
- **Within one week after the event:** if funding was requested, **provide all receipts** to the CRP. You should receive a physical reimbursement check within a few weeks.