



## **Seasonal Employee Housing Assistance Policy**

(Approved 02/12/2026)

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to support the recruitment and retention of qualified seasonal employees in positions that are difficult to fill due to limited housing availability within the District's service area. Adequate staffing is essential to the District's ability to safely and effectively provide parks and recreation services to the public. This policy establishes a uniform, position-based framework for providing temporary housing assistance as a component of employee compensation and is intended to ensure compliance with Washington State law, including the constitutional prohibition on gifts of public funds.

### **Policy Statement**

The District may provide limited housing assistance to eligible seasonal employees when such assistance is necessary to meet operational staffing needs. Housing assistance provided under this policy is a form of compensation earned through employment and is not intended to confer a private benefit or gratuity.

### **Eligibility**

Eligibility is determined based on the position and objective criteria, not on individual hardship or personal circumstances. Housing assistance may be offered only to employees who meet all of the following criteria:

- The employee occupies a designated seasonal position approved by the Board as eligible for housing assistance.
- The position has been identified as difficult to recruit or retain due to housing availability, geographic isolation, or seasonal labor market conditions.
- The employee's permanent residence is located outside the reasonable commuting distance from the District, as determined by the District.
- The employee is actively employed by the District and in good standing.

### **Form of Housing Assistance**

Housing assistance may be provided in one or more of the following forms, as determined by the District:

- A temporary housing stipend
- Reimbursement of documented housing costs, up to a maximum amount
- Employer-leased or employer-provided housing or RV site at Wapato Lake Campground if available

The specific form, duration, and maximum value of housing assistance shall be established by the Board or its designee and documented in the employee's offer letter or employment agreement.

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### **Duration and Limitations**

- Housing assistance is limited to the term of seasonal employment and shall not extend beyond the employee's final date of employment.
- Assistance shall begin no earlier than the employee's official start date.
- Assistance shall immediately cease upon separation from employment, whether voluntary or involuntary.
- Housing assistance shall not be paid retroactively.

### **Tax Treatment**

Housing assistance provided under this policy may constitute taxable income under federal or state law. The District shall administer housing assistance in accordance with applicable payroll and tax reporting requirements. Employees are responsible for any personal tax obligations associated with the benefit.

### **Administration**

- The District Administrator (or designee) is authorized to administer this policy and determine eligibility consistent with Board-approved criteria.
- The Board shall approve eligible positions, maximum assistance amounts, and any material changes to this policy.
- All housing assistance arrangements shall be documented and retained in accordance with the District's records retention schedule.

### **Compliance with Law**

This policy is intended to comply with Article VIII, Section 7 of the Washington State Constitution and applicable guidance from the Washington State Auditor's Office. Housing assistance provided under this policy serves a fundamental public purpose by enabling the District to recruit and retain staff necessary to deliver public services.

### **No Entitlement**

Nothing in this policy creates a right or entitlement to housing assistance. The District reserves the right to modify, suspend, or discontinue housing assistance based on operational needs, funding availability, or changes in law.