

# AMENITIES GUIDEBOOK

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The purpose of this guidebook is to outline minimum standards for the site amenities required by the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and HOME funding programs. Requirements for unit amenities can be found in the Architectural Manual.

## **ALL AMENITIES**

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All amenities must meet the requirements for accessibility as defined in the DCA Accessibility Manual. Accessible amenities are required for all rehabilitated properties as well as new construction as is indicated in the DCA Accessibility Guide contained in the DCA Application Manual. For safety and security, all exterior amenities should be within view of at least one apartment building and careful consideration should be given to exterior lighting. Rules posted at all amenities must be in accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Amendments Act. Amenities should be made available beyond leasing office hours and on weekends. This may require key card access.

The amenities outlined below correspond with those listed in the Threshold and Scoring sections of the 2011 Qualified Allocation Plan. Substitutions for the amenities described below may be submitted for approval prior to Application submission. This guidebook establishes a baseline for the quality of construction and financial investment in amenities. Similar standards will be required of all amenity substitutions.

## **REQUIRED AMENITIES**

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### **Community Room / Community Building**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** The community gathering room/building should provide a space for tenants to gather for lounging as well as special events such as meetings, parties, classes, and workshops.
- B. Size Requirements:** The space should comfortably accommodate the tenants in the community, and be designed to meet all applicable code requirements for occupant loads and means of egress.
- C. Signage Requirements:** Optional
- D. Equipment:**
- a. The room or building should be appropriately furnished for tenant base. Furnishing must include, but are not limited to:
    - 1. Seating Area
    - 2. Coffee Table
    - 3. Task Lighting
  - b. Suggested furnishings include:
    - 1. Television
    - 2. Sound System
    - 3. Musical Instruments
    - 4. Game / Card Table
- E. Maintenance:** No maintenance plan required.
- F. Additional Requirements for this category:** Kitchen and bath facilities intended for community-wide use (versus for leasing office personnel only) must be accessible.

### **Exterior Gathering Area**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** The exterior gathering area provides a pleasant shelter from the elements and is reserved exclusively for the social interaction of the tenants.
- B. Size Requirements:** None
- C. Signage Requirements:** None
- D. Equipment:** None

**E. Maintenance:** No maintenance plan required. However, all porches and gazebos should be weatherproof.

**F. Additional Requirements for this category:**

- a. The gathering area must be covered by a roof.
- b. Porches may not be used for other purposes, such as a driveway or parking space.
- c. Some examples of Exterior Areas that do NOT meet the requirements for this amenity:
  - i. Porte-cocheres
  - ii. Carports
  - iii. Small awnings that can only shelter one person
  - iv. Pergolas

**On-site Laundry Facility or Washers/Dryers installed in each unit**

**A. Purpose or Definition:** All communities must provide washer/dryer facilities on site. If washers and dryers are installed and maintained in every unit at no additional cost to tenants, an on-site laundry is not required.

**B. Size Requirements:** Laundry facility shall be large enough to accommodate the required number of washers and dryers in addition to the required handicap accessibility clear space for maneuvering.

**C. Signage Requirements:** Post signage that addresses machine operation, safety guidelines, and hours of operation.

**D. Equipment:** 1 washer and dryer per every 25 units OR installed and maintained a no cost in each unit. All washers must be Energy Star rated.

**E. Maintenance:** Provide DCA a copy of a brief plan for maintenance of the equipment and facility.

**F. Additional Requirements for this category:**

- a. Free-standing laundry buildings must be within a reasonable walking distance of the residential units.
- b. The facility must be accessible to those with mobility impairments. Each separate laundry facility must include at least one accessible washer and dryer, including the required clear space to these machines for maneuverability.

- c. All laundry facilities, including those within units, must have adequate exterior ventilation to control humidity levels in order to prevent mold and mildew growth, dust mite infestations, and bacteria.
- d. Access must be provided to this area beyond leasing office business hours.

**Interior Furnished Gathering Areas (for Senior tenancy projects more than two stories)**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** Interior gathering areas should be located throughout the complex including but not limited to areas near elevators. These areas provide a space for rest as well as small gathering spaces for conversation.
- A. Size Requirement:** None
- B. Signage Requirement:** None
- C. Equipment:** table, chairs/sofa, task lighting
- D. Maintenance:** None
- E. Additional Requirements for this category:** None

## **OPTIONAL AMENITIES**

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### **Fenced Community Garden**

**A. Purpose or Definition:** A community garden is any piece of land gardened by a group of people. A successful community garden improves the quality of life for residents, provides a catalyst for community development, stimulates social interaction, encourages self-reliance, beautifies the complex, creates opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education, preserves green space, and reduces city heat from streets and parking lots.

**B. Size Requirements:** Minimum plantable area of 200 square feet.

**C. Signage Requirements:** Post rules and safety guidelines at garden entrance.

**D. Equipment:**

**a. Check-out equipment:** The following tools recommended by the ACGA must be provided for the tenants to check out at no cost to maintain the community garden:

- Trowel
- Hand Fork / Claw / Cultivator
- Hoe
- Hand Pruners
- Watering Cans
- Fork
- Shovel and Spade
- Wheelbarrow
- Hose

**b. Water Source:** Provide a source nearby for watering the garden. The water source should take into consideration best practices for water conservation. Rain barrels are recommended.

**c. Seeds:** Provide tenants enough seeds for the first year at no cost.

**E. Maintenance:**

**a. Provide DCA a copy of a brief plan for plant/seed selection, plot assignments, and maintenance.**

- b. Maintain a log of equipment checked out and efforts to advertise for participation in the community garden. This documentation must be submitted as part of the DCA Compliance inspection.

**F. Additional Requirements for this category:**

- a. Soil preparation: The soil must be properly prepared for the intended plantings, including tilling, drainage, testing pH levels, and providing soil amendments.
- b. Fence: Gardens shall be surrounded on all sides with a minimum 2' high fence of weatherproof construction to discourage small children and animals from accessing the garden and discourage the trampling of plants. Note: If pressurized wood is used for fencing or for raised-bed walls and edible plants will be grown, ensure the manufacturer verifies that it is safe to grow edible plants in soil surrounded by their wood product.
- c. The effects of all contaminants discovered in the Phase I Environmental Assessment must be considered before choosing to build the garden.
- d. Accessibility: A portion of these plots must be accessible to those with mobility impairments including an accessible route and a planting surface within the accessible reach ranges.

**G. Reference:** American Community Gardening Association (ACGA)

<http://www.communitygarden.org/>

<http://www.walterreeves.com/landscaping/article.phtml?cat=19&id=298>

**Equipped walking path with exercise stations or sitting areas**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** The intent of the walking path is to provide a safe and accessible path for fitness and leisure.
- B. Size Requirement:** Width must be at least 5 feet.
- C. Signage Requirement:** Post rules and safety guidelines along entry points to the path.
- D. Equipment (either benches OR fitness stations):**
  - a. Benches:
    - 1. Benches must have backrests to provide support when resting, and at least one armrest to provide support as the user resumes a standing position.

2. At least 36 inches of level, cleared space should be provided to the side of benches for wheelchairs.
3. Benches must be secured to the ground or walking path and protected against ground subsidence.
4. Benches shall be made of a weatherproof material.
5. There must be at least one bench for every 100 feet of walking path.

**b. Fitness Stations**

1. Provide 1 piece of equipment per every 100 feet of walking trail. Equipment may be grouped together or spread out along the trail.
2. All equipment must be intended for outdoor use and made of a durable and weatherproof material working strength, cardiovascular, flexibility, or balance/coordination(for example, see <http://www.triactiveamerica.com/>).

**E. Maintenance:** Provide DCA a copy of a brief plan for path maintenance.

**F. Additional Requirements for this category:**

- a. Surface: Walking surface should provide proper firmness, stability, and slip resistance. Providing a firm and stable surface does not mean that only paved trails are acceptable. Crushed stone or fines, packed soil, and other natural materials can provide surfaces that are firm and stable. To provide a firm and stable surface, the base material should be laid over a geotextile fabric to prevent vegetation growth. The base material must be compacted with the correct moisture content similar to the preparation of a roadbed. Finally, the proper trail surfacing material should be used. A surface stabilizer may be needed to create a firm and stable surface. Many soil stabilization products that are mixed with natural surfacing materials will also create a surface that is slip resistant under typical weather conditions. Concrete paths shall have a brushed finish.
- b. Maximum slope: at least 50% of the linear footage of the path must have a slope less than 5%
- c. Walking path must be separate from the sidewalks that access parking and buildings.
- d. Walking paths must not disturb more than 1/10th of an acre of wetland.

## **G. References:**

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/naturalresources/DD6371.html#trail4> and <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sidewalk2/sidewalks215.htm> US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration “Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access; Part II of II: Best Practices Design Guide”

## **Equipped Playground**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** The playground should provide a safe, accessible play area for children. The design of the playground should take into consideration equipment for different ages and skill levels.
- B. Size Requirement:** None
- C. Signage Requirement:** Post rules and safety guidelines that include guidance as to the age appropriateness of the equipment
- D. Equipment:**
  - a.** Provide 3 or more separate pieces of equipment that meet or exceed the guidelines set forth in Publication Number 325, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s (CPSC) Handbook for Public Playground Safety.
  - b.** For further information on equipment specifically recommended for younger children (ages 2 to 5), consult the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s Handbook for Public Playground Safety.
- E. Maintenance:** Provide DCA a copy of a brief plan for playground maintenance.
- F. Additional Requirements for this category:**
  - a.** In playgrounds intended to serve children of all ages, the layout of pathways and the landscaping of the playground should show the distinct areas for the different age groups.
  - b.** Equipment intended for younger children (ages 2 -5) must be separated at least by a buffer zone, which could be an area with shrubs or benches. Short fencing is preferable.
  - c.** Groundcover must be provided as specified in Publication Number 325, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s (CPSC) Handbook for Public Playground Safety.

**G. Reference:** <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/playpubs.html> Consumer Product Safety Commission's Handbook for Public Playground Safety

### **Covered pavilion with picnic/barbecue facilities**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** The pavilion encourages residents to hold community or family reunion type functions.
- B. Size Requirement:** None
- C. Signage Requirement:** Post rules and safety guidelines for grill use.
- D. Equipment:**
  - a. Picnic tables: 1 for every 50 units. At least one picnic table shall have an extension that allows clear knee space for handicap access.
  - b. Permanent barbecue grills (gas or charcoal): 1 for every 50 units. At least one grill shall be on accessible an accessible path and have permanent anchorage to the ground or a structure.
- E. Maintenance:** Provide DCA a copy of a brief plan for pavilion area maintenance.
- F. Additional Requirements for this category:**
  - a. Shelter should be a permanent structure made of weatherproof material.
  - b. Pavilion area shall have a durable surface with defined edges such as concrete or pebbles with edge guard.

### **Furnished Arts & Craft /Activity Center**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** The activity center will provide either children or seniors, as appropriate to tenant base, with an indoor gathering space for games and craft activities.
- B. Size Requirement:** Minimum 200 square feet
- C. Signage Requirement:** Optional
- D. Equipment:**
  - a. Handicap accessible sink
  - b. storage for games
  - c. work tables and seating
  - d. TV with capability to broadcast instructional videos
  - e. one corkboard or dry-erase board

- f. games and other age appropriate activities/supplies
- E. Maintenance:** Provide DCA a copy of a brief plan for center operation including hours of operation and activities planned, games and videos to be stocked, etc.
- F. Additional Requirements:** Access must be provided to this area beyond leasing office business hours.

### **Equipped Computer Center**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** The computer center should provide tenants high-speed access for educational or leisurely web-surfing as well as basic software applications to help facilitate personal, educational and career development.
- B. Size Requirement:** minimum of 150 square feet
- C. Signage Requirement:** Post rules and guidelines for computer use.
- D. Equipment:**
  - a. Computer desk or desk area; folding tables are not allowed
  - b. Seating: chairs specifically designed for computer use
  - c. one computer for every 25 units
  - d. one printer, at a minimum
  - e. one fax machine, at a minimum
  - f. high speed internet access
  - g. basic word processing and spreadsheet software
- E. Maintenance:** Provide DCA a copy of a brief plan for maintenance of the area including the hours of operation, who will service the computers, budget for printing supplies, etc.
- F. Additional Requirements for this category:**
  - a. Appropriate controls to restrict internet surfing must be installed.
  - b. Access must be provided to this area beyond leasing office business hours.

### **Furnished Exercise / Fitness Center**

- A. Purpose or Definition:** The exercise/fitness center should provide tenants with access to equipment that will improve the fitness and well-being of residents.
- B. Size Requirement:** Minimum 200 square feet

**C. Signage Requirement:** Post rules for operating each piece of equipment in addition to general exercise and safety guidelines.

**D. Equipment:**

a. Permanent Equipment

- i. a selection of free weights and weight rack
- ii. Provide at least 1 piece of equipment per 25 units. Equipment should be commercial quality or better and checked weekly for maintenance and safety concerns. A balance of cardio-vascular and strength equipment is optimal. An example of affordable, durable, quality, and space-conscious equipment is Life Fitness Strength's Fit Series and Life Fitness Cardio series.

b. Optional Equipment: small library with information on exercise, nutrition, and exercise videos.

**E. Maintenance:** Provide DCA a copy of a brief plan for maintenance for the area including hours of operation.

**F. Additional Requirements for this category:**

- a. One wall must have mirrors covering 70% of the wall area.
- b. Access must be provided to this area beyond leasing office business hours.

**G. References:** Life Fitness <http://us.commercial.lifefitness.com/>

**Wellness Center**

**A. Purpose or Definition:** The wellness center provides tenants with on-site access to professional medical screenings and health education.

**B. Size Requirement:** Minimum 150 square feet

**C. Signage Requirement:** Optional

**D. Equipment:**

- a. Prep sink
- b. Exam Table
- c. Task Lighting
- d. Library with wellness information appropriate to tenancy
- e. A separate private restroom adjacent to the exam room is highly recommended.

**E. Maintenance:** Provide DCA a copy of brief outline of the type, frequency, and provide of the exam services, including efforts to publicize the services and hours of operation.