

Theta Phi Alpha

NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION

OPERATIONS & POLICIES



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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is to introduce members to the Theta Phi Alpha National Housing Corporation, explain the procedures to be followed regarding chapter facilities, and explain the facility policies.

Housing History

At the founding of Theta Phi Alpha in 1912, two collegiate members, Otilia Leuchtweis and Eva Regina Stroh rented and furnished the first chapter house. The purpose of this house was to provide a place where members could live their Catholic faith. In the early years of the fraternity, Universities were not required to provide housing to women; therefore, women had to find boarding houses to live in. Women's fraternities provided housing for their members. Before 1929, in order for a chapter to be considered for expansion, they had to have either a chapter room or a house. The fraternity recognized that chapter members needed assistance from alumnae members in order to provide housing; this was accomplished through local housing corporations. In 1964, a National Housing Fund (Growth & Development Fund) was established to assist chapters who were struggling because of housing concerns. Today, Theta Phi Alpha has one active local housing corporation, Epsilon Corporation of Theta Phi Alpha, which owns the Epsilon Chapter house. Several of our chapters rent facilities from houses to apartments and storage units. To help support our chapters and the local housing corporation, the Theta Phi Alpha National Housing Corporation was established in 2014.

Definitions

NHC: Theta Phi Alpha National Housing Corporation

RHA: Regional Housing Advisor

CHA: Chapter Housing Advisor

Facility: A facility is any building (including exterior property and parking area), room, apartment, residence hall floor, suite, storage closet, storage locker, storage unit, or office space which is commonly known as Theta Phi Alpha property; discussed at chapter meetings; Theta Phi Alpha is mentioned in any facility agreements; or chapter funds are used to pay for, decorate, or furnish. Facilities may be residential or non-residential, owned, leased, or rented.



Organizational Structure



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Theta Phi Alpha National Housing Corporation (NHC) is a 501(c)7 non-profit organization which works with Theta Phi Alpha and the Theta Phi Alpha Foundation to support Theta Phi Alpha chapters and Epsilon Corporation of Theta Phi Alpha. Members of the NHC try to keep abreast of fraternity/sorority housing industry trends and standards by attending seminars and working with other NPC organizations. The knowledge gained by the NHC is transmitted through services and policies.

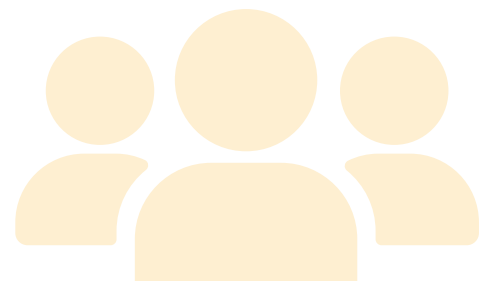
The NHC consists of a corporation board, regional housing advisors, and chapter housing advisors.

NHC Corporation Board

The board reviews lease agreements, member housing agreements, insurance requirements, sets housing policies and procedures, and provides approval for chapter facilities.

The board consists of:

- NHC Chairman - oversees the operations of the board and runs board meetings.
- NHC Vice Chairman - a board director who serves as the DEIA officer and is responsible for NHC communications such as social media.
- NHC Director of Finance - a board director who oversees the finances of the NHC using accounting best practices, assists chapters with housing budgets, and performs a financial controls review of the local housing corporation.
- Theta Phi Alpha National President
- Theta Phi Alpha National Treasurer - oversees the Growth & Development Fund
- Theta Phi Alpha Executive Director - non-voting member who ensures policies and procedures are being followed and assists with staffing needs when necessary.



Regional Housing Advisor (RHA)

The RHA reports to the NHC corporation board.

The purpose of this position is to oversee facility/housing matters for chapters, within a region as defined by the national fraternity chapter operations structure, depending on the chapters' needs. The RHA should have an understanding of any leases or local housing corporations within their region.

Time Commitment & Requirements

- 1 to 3 hours per week, varies based on time of year
- Phone, computer, internet access
- Travel may be required for MJ Housing Forum (annually in Feb.) and visiting chapters
- Be in good financial standing with Theta Phi Alpha

Skills/Competencies

- Ability to learn independently
- Communication skills
- Confidentiality
- Conflict/Confrontation Management
- Cultural Awareness/Sensitivity

Regional Housing Advisor Responsibilities:

- Be knowledgeable of housing policies.
- Oversee Local Housing Corporations, Chapter Housing/Facility Advisors, and/or Chapter House Managers (or equivalent) within the region.
- Communicate with the Chapter Advisory Board Chairman regarding any housing concerns with membership for chapters within the region.
- Assist in the review of leases and member housing agreements.
- Maintain a list of assets such as furniture for chapters.
- Read all incident reports relating to housing.
- Recruit and train Chapter Housing/Facility Advisors as needed.
- Assist in the identification and recommendation of chapter housing needs.
- Attend Quarterly RHA meetings to interface with other Theta Phi Alpha RHAs.
- Report to the National Housing Corporation Board.
- Attend Theta Phi Alpha events and training as needed.
- Submit reports as requested.
- Perform other duties as reasonably requested.

Chapter Housing Advisor (CHA)

The CHA reports to their RHA and works with only one chapter to whom the CHA lives locally so that they may visit the facility. Each chapter with a facility should have an officer or chair who will work with the local chapter housing advisor. This member will work with chapter officers/members to make sure rents/fees are paid, provide room assignments where necessary, participate in house move in/out inspections, and is the manager of the facility.

The purpose of this position is to oversee facility/housing matters for a chapter depending on the chapters' needs. The CHA should have an understanding of the lease(s) or contracts, and member agreements.

Time Commitment & Requirements

- 1 to 3 hours per week, varies based on time of year
- Phone, computer, internet access
- Be in good financial standing with Theta Phi Alpha

Skills/Competencies

- Communication skills
- Conflict/Confrontation Management
- Cooperation
- Decision Making
- Organization

Chapter Housing Advisor Responsibilities:

- Head a facility committee which will provide recommendations to the RHA and NHC board regarding chapter facility needs.
- Be knowledgeable of housing policies.
- Serve as the designee for the National Housing Corporation (NHC) Chairman on the Chapter Advisory Board.
- Advise the chapter on housing matters such as house rules and enforcement, members required to live in the house, establishing live out fees, etc.
- Communicate regularly with the NHC with updates regarding housing matters.
- Contact the NHC with any housing questions and concerns.
- Attend check-in/check-out--Report any damages to the chapter house manager.
- Review chapter and member housing agreements with chapter members.
- Communicates regularly with the House Director (as applicable).
- Help the chapter determine housing needs.
- Communicates regularly with the chapter house manager.
- Works with Chapter treasurer and financial advisor to ensure that all rent is collected on a timeline that is congruent with the signed lease.
- Attend Theta Phi Alpha events and training as needed.
- Submit reports as requested.
- Perform other duties as reasonably assigned.
- Be knowledgeable of university/college fraternity and sorority life housing policies
- Be knowledgeable of local ordinances, fire codes, safety codes, and other laws and codes pertaining to chapter facilities



Facility Types



FACILITY TYPES

There are multiple types of facility or locations that meet the definition of a facility. Facility types are broken into two groups – residential and non-residential.

Non-Residential

Non-residential facilities are those in which members do not reside in the location, but rather the location is a place to store chapter items or convene for chapter activities.

- Meeting Rooms: Meeting rooms may be on or off-campus and are provided to the chapter for use at their discretion. This room should be private from other university personnel.
- Suites: Suites are on-campus lounge areas for the use of the chapter and its members. Suite locations are not typically designed to host chapter operations such as meetings; however, this facility would be used for informal gathering by members of the chapter.
- Storage: Storage facilities may be on or off-campus and should be a private location secured by the chapter to store chapter items.
- Office Spaces: Office spaces may be on or off-campus and are designed to be a collaborative space to hold meetings and small chapter events.

Residential

Residential facilities are those in which members live on-site at the location throughout the academic year. These facilities may be owned, leased, or part of a residence hall or apartment building.

- Owned facilities are owned and operated by the National Housing Corporation of Theta Phi Alpha or a Theta Phi Alpha local housing corporation with oversight from the National Housing Corporation of Theta Phi Alpha. Housing agreements may be between the corporation and the chapter as a whole with the chapter having separate agreements with each member or between the corporation and each member separately. The local Theta Phi Alpha chapter has the right to reside in this property each academic year. If there is no local Theta Phi Alpha chapter or the chapter will no longer reside in the facility, the property may be leased to another sorority/fraternity or sold.
- Leased facilities are University owned or leased through a third party.
 - University Owned: These facilities are stand-alone structures owned by the college or University to which the chapter belongs. Chapter members sign individual agreements with the University to reside in a University Owned property. The University primarily controls the terms of these facilities.

- Third Party: These facilities are owned by third-parties, whether a private landlord or another sorority/fraternity. Leases of a third-party facility should be signed by the chapter as a whole (with the current Chapter President as the authorized signer on behalf of the chapter).
- Residence Hall: These facilities are a part of existing University housing structures – a certain floor/area is designated for the chapter members to reside. Chapter members sign individual agreements with the University as if they were normally living on campus. The University controls the terms of these facilities.
- Apartment: These facilities are either individual apartments or part of an apartment building. The apartment complex has leases with individual members, but will have an agreement with the chapter regarding rent or number of residents.





Facilities Committee



FACILITIES COMMITTEE

The facilities committee is a chapter level committee which would handle the day-to-day operations of the facility and make recommendations/requests to the NHC through the chapter's RHA. This committee would not handle any funds. Some responsibilities of this committee might include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining a list including the condition of furniture and decor and recommending when items need replacing.
- Suggesting facility rules to the chapter advisory board.
- Assisting with room assignments and/or room assignment disputes.
- Searching for facilities.
- Ensuring fraternity and NHC policies are being followed.
- Ensuring facilities are maintained both inside and out. This may include working with a property manager, landlord, or university facilities/housing representative.
- Operate in any additional capacity the NHC deems necessary.

The committee should be made up of a minimum of three (3) members: two (2) alumnae, and one (1) chapter member (either the president or house/facility manager). The CHA (appointed by the NHC) chairs this committee and should work with the chapter advisor to find members willing to serve on the committee. The alumnae members of the committee should serve for two year terms. The committee may determine when and where their meetings are held depending on the needs of the chapter. The committee chair or representative shall meet regularly (at a minimum monthly) with their RHA.

Any chapter with a residential facility or one where the chapter is responsible for maintaining furniture or decor should have a facility committee. When a chapter who does not already have a facility is interested in a facility, this committee should be formed. If a chapter does not have an NHC appointed chapter housing advisor, their regional housing advisor shall chair the committee.





Financial Considerations



FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

A facility can be a large financial burden for a chapter; therefore, any decision to enter into a housing agreement must be made in conjunction with the NHC. There are some financial considerations which should be taken into consideration including but not limited to:

- Health of the chapter: The chapter should have enough members to sustain the chapter and should be collecting dues regularly from their members so they are financially stable.
- Health of Fraternity & Sorority Life at college/university: The chapter should consider whether the college/university is able to sustain existing organizations and if the college/university has supportive policies and resources for housed chapters.
- Facility fees: Fees should be collected by the chapter in order to cover the cost of supplies in the facility that are used by all chapter members, regardless if the member lives in the facility or not.
- Facility budget: The chapter should have a robust budget to cover rent and all related expenses. The chapter can use multiple resources to aid in the creation of this budget including but not limited to: their CHA, RHA, and Facility Committee.

If the chapter should have financial difficulties due to their facility, the Fraternity has a Growth and Development fund to aid them. This fund is maintained by Theta Phi Alpha Fraternity. Chapters are able to apply for a loan from these funds for housing related matters. Housing related matters include but are not limited to: the purchase of an owned residential facility, a remodel of an existing owned residential facility, new furnishings for a leased facility (whether university owned or owned by a third-party), and legal expenses related to lease negotiations. Applications for a Growth and Development Fund loan are located on the [Officer Portal](#) and are to be completed by the Chapter President and/or Treasurer and approved by the Chapter Advisor prior to review by Theta Phi Alpha Fraternity and the National Housing Corporation of Theta Phi Alpha.



Processes

PROCESSES

This section describes the processes which should be followed when a chapter is interested in a facility. If a chapter has an existing facility these processes should be reviewed with their regional housing advisor to ensure that facilities follow NHC recommendations.

NPC Global Housing Agreement

NPC members desire to work transparently and in collaboration with their counterparts when it comes to making decisions about housing/facilities.

- An organization that decides to change its housing/facility offering on a particular campus will make its best effort to provide one year's notice to the other organizations with a chapter on that campus.
- Organizations will support the decision of an organization to no longer have a house/facility on a particular campus.
- Organizations establishing new chapters commit to communicating their housing/facility plan with other organizations on campus, and those already on campus commit to supporting the housing/facility decision made, whether or not it matches the typical arrangement on that campus.
- Above all, organizations agree to communicate and collaborate for the financial health and membership experience of all chapters on a particular campus.

Residential Facility

The following process should be followed when the chapter is interested in a residential facility, as described above in the "Facility Types" section. This process is to try to ensure all considerations are made and the decision is well thought out. The chapter should work with their regional housing advisor throughout this process.

- At a chapter meeting, the chapter shall discuss and vote if they would like to pursue a facility.
- The chapter president shall contact their RHA or NHC chairman, if their RHA is unknown, stating they are interested in a facility. Minutes from the aforementioned meeting should be provided.
- A meeting will be held with the RHA, chapter advisor, and chapter president to discuss the chapter's interest, all expectations, and next steps.
- The RHA will contact the Executive Director at Theta Phi Alpha National Office who will contact the university's fraternity/sorority life advisor regarding any university requirements such as if the university has a residency requirement. The Executive Director will also find out if there are any NPC concerns.

- The NHC with recommendations from the chapter advisor will appoint a chapter housing advisor who will form a facility committee.
- The facility committee shall hold a meeting to discuss the wants and needs of the chapter.
- The facility committee will work with their RHA and NHC director of finance to determine a possible budget and/or budget needs.
- The facility committee and chapter advisory board will determine an occupancy plan. This occupancy plan should include residency requirements such as which members must reside in the facility and how rooms will be assigned.
- The facility committee will determine a maintenance plan which should include both interior and exterior maintenance and housekeeping.
- The facility committee will determine what furniture/decor is wanted/necessary along with how these items will be acquired, and provide that information to the NHC.
- Insurance must be obtained through the fraternity's insurance provider; therefore, the NHC will contact the provider to obtain a potential estimate which will be sent to the facility committee.
- At a chapter meeting the facility will give a present to the chapter a potential budget, occupancy plan, maintenance plan, and furnishing plan. The chapter will discuss and vote to proceed with the minutes submitted to the NHC.
- The NHC will determine if they will approve the chapter to proceed with the facility.
- If the facility will have a lease with the chapter:
 - The RHA will review the first draft of the lease agreement and provide the lease to the NHC.
 - The NHC will work with the landlord to discuss the lease and will have the lease undergo an insurance and legal review. After an agreement has been reached, the NHC will approve the lease to be submitted to the chapter for a final vote and signing.
- If the facility will be purchased by the chapter:
 - The NHC must approve the facility and financial plan.
 - The NHC will own the facility in the chapter's name.
- The chapter will hold a final facility vote which must be passed by a three fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority vote.
- Housing agreements for both resident and non-resident members must be created and signed.

Non-Residential Facility

A Non-Residential Facility refers to facility types defined in the "Facility Types" section above. The facilities may be used for meetings, events, or storage but should not house members of the organization. They should be leased or reserved by the chapter Theta Phi Alpha.

Types of Facilities

Storage Facility:

- Any storage facility should be in the chapter's name and not an individual member.
- All storage agreements must be reviewed & approved by the RHA. The facility may not be rented without the RHA's approval.
- Storage units are to be insured through the Theta Phi Alpha national insurance provider, unless explicitly stated otherwise in rental agreement by the facility. In that case, the unit should be insured through the facility or their insurance company.
- A CHA shall be appointed and involved in the process of storing items. They will assist and advise the chapter on best practices in storing, such as what items should be stored in units.
- An inventory list of all chapters belongings being stored should be created including, but not limited to
 - Item Description
 - Item Location (if in box or container)
 - Where Item goes when not in storage (i.e. kitchen, bathroom)
 - In the instances that an individual has items in the unit, such as furniture, they should be labeled accordingly, on item, and listed in a separate category

Suite/Meeting Room:

- Any agreement with the University should be with the chapter itself and not an individual member and must be approved by the Regional Housing Advisor.
- Chapter Housing Advisor should be appointed by the NHC and a Facility Committee formed.
- Facility Committee Meeting held to establish an agreement between the chapter/university/individual members. This will outline the use of the facility with the chapter and any regulations that need to be followed according to the university and/or the chapter itself.
- Agreement is to be reviewed and approved by the Regional Housing Advisor and Chapter Housing Advisor. The Regional Housing Advisor will have the final say.
- A Furniture and Decor plan should be established if the facility is not furnished by the university. The chapter should create a log of all furnishings in the facility and their condition.

Commercial Office Space:

- The chapter would contact their Regional Housing Advisor with interest in an office space.
- A Chapter Housing Advisor is appointed by the NHC and a Facility Committee should be formed.
- Once a space has been found, it must be approved by the NHC. The NHC must approve any rental agreement before it is signed by the chapter.

- If on campus, an agreement with the university should be created and adhered to.
- Upon possession of the property if the office space is furnished, the chapter should review all furnishings and make note of their conditions. A copy of this documentation should be sent to the Regional Housing Advisor.





Policies

POLICIES

This section describes the policies which must be followed for all facilities.

Enforcement

Unless otherwise stated in the policy, these policies will be enforced either directly by the Grand Council of Theta Phi Alpha (Grand Council) or a recommendation by the NHC to the Grand Council. This may include but is not limited to increased insurance costs, loss of the facility, or other such disciplinary actions as the Grand Council deems appropriate.

Fraternity Policies

In addition to facility specific policies, all Theta Phi Alpha policies must be followed in facilities.

Policy on Alcohol

The possession, use, and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages while in or on Fraternity facilities or property adjacent to facilities is prohibited.

Policy on Animals

Animals are not permitted in any Theta Phi Alpha facility or on Theta Phi Alpha property (collectively, "Theta Phi Alpha grounds") unless specifically exempted by this policy.

In the event a reasonable accommodation is requested to allow an animal on Theta Phi Alpha grounds, Theta Phi Alpha will engage in an interactive process with the requesting member(s), which may include exemption from a residency requirement.

Exceptions:

The following animals are permitted on Theta Phi Alpha grounds:

1. Animals permitted by an existing lease agreement;
2. Service Animals, provided the member demonstrates both (a) a disability requiring the animal, and (b) the function the animal serves, if such information is not apparent; and
3. Emotional Support Animals (ESAs), provided the member provides adequate documentation, from a certified medical professional, explaining the need for the animal.
 - a. Requests for ESAs will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If an exception applies, the member with the animal is solely responsible for the animal's behavior, care and feeding, and any/all damages/injuries which may be caused by the animal. Vaccination records and, if applicable, licensing records for the animal must also be provided upon request.

Policy on Facility Usage

Theta Phi Alpha facilities are for the use and benefit of Theta Phi Alpha members. Facilities will not be used to run businesses; rented to; sublet to; loaned to; or used to house (other than as a short term guest) non-members of Theta Phi Alpha without the permission of the NHC and Grand Council of Theta Phi Alpha.

Policy on Guests

Each chapter with a facility should establish guidelines regarding guests. These guidelines must be approved by the NHC.

- Members are responsible for their guests' conduct and any damages caused by their guests.
- Guests should only be permitted in common areas.
- No overnight guests should be permitted with the exception of Theta Phi Alpha members, unless approved by the member's roommates and the Chapter Advisory Board.

Policy on Health and Safety

Each Chapter with a facility shall submit and have approved a Health & Safety program which shall include:

1. Hold regular safety inspections; safety, severe weather, and fire drills;
2. Follow all applicable laws and regulations of the state, county/parish, city and institute of higher learning in regard to housing;
3. Implement rules for safe and equitable lodging of all residents, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Each member either residing in a facility or utilizing a non residential facility will be responsible for cleaning a portion of the common areas as necessary in order to keep the facility clean;
 - b. Each member will be responsible for keeping their private room reasonably clean and accessible;
 - c. Establish and enforce quiet hours in residential facilities.
 - d. No smoking, vaping, e-cigarettes, or such devices shall be permitted on Theta Phi Alpha property.

4. Establish procedures for the locking of common area doors/windows.
5. The NHC recommends, where possible, bedroom doors have locks and/or doors separating bedroom areas from common areas have locks.
6. Work with the NHC, Theta Phi Alpha National Officers and staff, and campus officials to ensure compliance with all state, county/parish, city, and university laws and regulations.

Policy on Illegal Drugs

Use or possession of illegal drugs/controlled substances, marijuana, medications not prescribed to the individual, or the misuse of other medications is strictly prohibited.

Policy on Insurance

All chapters with facilities are required to have contents insurance through the Theta Phi Alpha national insurance provider. The contents to be covered by this insurance are limited to Theta Phi Alpha chapter property.

Chapters with leased facilities are required to obtain coverage specified in the lease from the Theta Phi Alpha national insurance provider.

Chapters with Theta Phi Alpha owned facilities are required to obtain Property/Building coverage and Loss of income/Extra coverage, as determined by the NHC, through the Theta Phi Alpha national insurance provider.

Members are recommended to have renter's insurance for their personal belongings.

Policy on Personal Belongings

The NHC and Theta Phi Alpha and their representatives are not responsible for any theft, loss, or damage to members' personal belongings.

Member personal belongings when not being used, should remain in their personal rooms.

Members shall be required to remove any personal items not being used from any common areas.

Any personal items left in common areas after a time determined by the chapter facility committee or chapter, shall be placed in a lost and found location. The lost and found location shall be made known to all members and may either be readily available or in the possession of the chapter house (facility) manager. The chapter may determine after a reasonable amount of time to dispose of any lost and found items in a suitable manner (donation, trash, recycle).

Policy on Residency

Chapters with residential facilities must submit and have approved a residency plan. This plan shall:

- Be non-discriminatory in determination of who will reside in the facility;
- Explain how members will be selected to reside in the facility when there are more members than beds available;
- State which members are required to reside in the facility;
- Explain how room assignments are made.

Policy on Weapons

The use, possession, or storage of weapons, including firearms, is prohibited in Theta Phi Alpha facilities.

Policy on Financial Controls

Except where there is a Local Housing Corporation already in existence, all facility funds shall be handled by the NHC.

The NHC will use compulsory controls/accounting best practices and will provide chapters with statements regarding their specific funds.

Local Housing Corporations are required to utilize compulsory controls/accounting best practices including using a third party professional accounting service.

To learn more about the policies and procedures of Theta Phi Alpha, you can find the National Policies & Procedures linked below:

[National Policies & Procedures](#)