

HARRISBURG HOUSING AUTHORITY

UPDATED SHUT DOWN NOTICE & Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Consistent with Governor's Wolf's recently announced COVID-19 Restrictions, the Harrisburg Housing Authority (HHA) in anticipation of the statistical projections made by professionals indicating a rise in positivity rates, hospitalization and death rates due to the spread of COVID-19 will shut down starting **December 21, 2020** through **January 10, 2021**. We understand that this will cause a significant amount of disruption to the services that our residents, participants and partners have come to expect from us. During the shut down, we will continue to monitor our social media outlets, website, emails, message boards and letters sent to our attention. However, for a more immediate response (especially in the event of an emergency), we have included new Department specific email addresses below.

We realize that there are many questions that people have. Below are answers to a number of commonly asked questions. As always, we strongly encourage everyone to continue being vigilant about their safety, including but not limited to **practicing social distancing, wearing a mask in public, washing your hands, staying home as much as possible, limiting your in-person contact with others, and sequestering yourself if you feel sick or have flu-like symptoms.**

QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS

1. How can I pay my rent if the office is closed?

A: Each office has an outdoor drop box or has installed a mail slot (Hall Manor and William Howard Day apartments) in the front door for rent payments and other important documents that need to be dropped off.

2. I lost my job due to Coronavirus and can't pay my rent, what should I do?

A: Changes in income should be reported as soon as possible. This can be done via mail, dropping off a letter at your communities drop box and calling or emailing your community office at the number or email listed below. Once your change is reported, an office staffer will contact you with information regarding the current procedures.

HHA will be granting hardship exemptions **INCLUDING REPAYMENT AGREEMENTS** consistent with applicable regulations and HHA policies, and will not be adding fees nor penalties for late or non-payments for the moratorium put in place by the CDC and extended by the City of Harrisburg up until **January 31, 2021**. Please note, this **DOES NOT** mean that rent is not due or waived. It is encouraged to pay your rent on time and report all income changes as soon as possible.

For Help Paying Rent:

The City of Harrisburg's Department of Building & Housing Development (DBHD) has committed \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-CV) funds to assist residents facing eviction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Through this program, Harrisburg residents may qualify for assistance with rental payments, mortgage payments, and past utility bills.**

Applicants may be eligible for up to \$5,000 in total awards. Once approved for assistance, payment will be made from the City directly to the landlord, mortgage company, and/or utility company.

The application is available on the City website at harrisburgpa.gov/office-of-building-housing/. Priority will be given to completed applications, submitted with all requested documents, on a first-come, first-serve basis. **The application period will end on December 22nd.**

- 3. I missed my annual recertification because the office was closed on the date of my appointment, what should I do?**

A: All Annual Recertifications can be scheduled with your office manager. Please see the contact information for your office below.

- 4. How should I report a work order?**

A: All non-emergency work orders are not being taken at this time. Only Emergency work orders are being completed at this time. If you have an emergency work order, please call your community's emergency work order number found in the chart below. If you are unsure if your issue is an emergency please call your community office or email the Public Housing email address and someone will return your message.

5. Due to Governor Wolf's "stay at home" order is HHA suspending its Smoke Free Policy?

A: HUD has issued a notice stating that it is NOT considering flexibilities to this regulation as a part of the COVID-19 response. So the policy remains in effect.

6. If I am experiencing distress is there a place that I can call?

A: The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster.

7. Can I request a temporary relocation during the shut down?

A: Residents may experience significant stress as a result of concerns over the transmission of COVID-19. Any temporary relocation request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. HHA will request additional information from the resident to verify the need for relocation. HHA is not required to grant these requests in advance of a specific health department directive. Healthcare professionals/officials often recommend that residents self-isolate within their current home, if they believe that they may have COVID-19. HHA may allow current residents to vacate units for temporary relocation if separation is recommended by the health department or a medical health professional.

8. I live in one of the senior-only communities, can I still have any visitors visit me at my apartment?

A: No; During this period of shutdown, HHA has restricted visitors in our senior-only buildings to healthcare providers and only 2 necessary adult family members per household. The resident is required to provide the names of the healthcare providers and the 2 necessary adult family members. If a person visits a resident and is not on the list they will not be able to come into the building.

9. Can I use the Community Room in my Senior Site Building?

A: In line with Governor Wolf's restrictions all inside gatherings are limited to 10 people and everyone must use 6 feet social distancing guidelines and be properly wearing a mask over their nose and face.

10. What are the safety procedures for maintenance workers

doing work in my unit?

A: All workers and tenants must be masked when the maintenance staff is in the unit. The tenant should be in a separate room while work is being performed and where possible windows should be open to allow ventilation. If a tenant refuses to follow any of these safety protocols, our maintenance staff will not enter the unit.

QUESTIONS FOR SECTION 8 RESIDENTS/LANDLORDS

- 1. For new applicants and current residents who need to move into new residences, can we enter into a HAP contract for the new unit without having inspected the unit?**

A: Uniform Physical Condition Standards for Vouchers (UPCS-V) and/or Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections aims to enhance the accuracy, consistency, and objectivity of the inspection process, and provide more information about the condition of individual housing units. However, during the nation's battle against COVID-19, HHA is permitting owners and participants, on a temporary basis, to "self-certify" that the unit meets the minimum requirements of safe and sanitary standards.

HHA will be accepting alternative inspections for periodic inspections and accepting alternative methods for validating the correction of a deficiency (for example a photo or owner self-certification)

HHA will also be adopting the HOTMA Alternative Inspection provision allowing families to move in before an HQS inspection has been completed, as long as it has passed an acceptable alternative inspection. (Acceptable Alternatives will be determined on a case by case basis).

Furthermore, HHA will adopt the HOTMA Non-Life Threatening provision to allow families to move into units before a unit has passed HQS, if the initial deficiency was non-life threatening.

A self-certification form has been developed for these purposes and will be provided to landlords and tenants before accepting these alternatives.

- 2. What do I do if my income has changed due to being laid off in connection to the COVID-19 business shut downs?**

A: All changes of income should be reported to the Section 8 office either by email or by first-class mail. Our offices will be processing the change requests as soon as possible with our limited workforce. It is encouraged that all participants continue to pay rent at an amount that they can afford, and then adjustments will be made as expeditiously as possible.

3. My landlord is not renewing my lease and I am facing eviction, is this permissible in light of the eviction moratorium?

A: Under the regular tenant-based voucher program, there is no requirement for a Landlord to renew the lease. Eviction after nonrenewal of a lease is a state and local law matter. The City of Harrisburg has placed a temporary moratorium on evictions, until **January 31, 2021** any landlord who initiates an eviction during this time should be reported to HHA. We expect the courts will issue additional guidance.

In addition, some states and localities may provide additional protections to tenants with respect to lease renewals. An owner's ability not to renew the lease under the tenant-based voucher program does not override additional protections provided to tenants under federal, state and local law.

HHA encourages tenants faced with Landlord issues to seek guidance from a private attorney or to contact MidPenn Legal at:

MidPenn Legal Services
213-A North Front Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101
Phone: 717.232.0581
<http://midpenn.org>

4. How should I report an income change to your office if they are closed?

A: You may submit any income change requests to Section8@harrisburghousing.org or mail the information via first class mail.

5. Will Section 8 still be processing HAP & UAP payments?

A: Yes

6. I have a voucher that expired during COVID-19, can I request an extension?

A: Yes, extensions will be given accordingly. Please contact the office via the Section8@harrisburghousing.org email address.

7. Is HHA conducting any initial inspections?

A: Due to COVID-19 response protocols put in place by Governor Wolf, our offices are doing self-certifications for the initial inspections. A form has been created for Landlords and Tenants to self-certify.

8. Is HHA billing or absorbing payments and at what rates?

A: Harrisburg Housing Authority is currently ABSORBING.

Your current Housing Authority will need to mail, email or fax your portability packet to the attention of:

Sandraliz Rivera

Harrisburg Housing Authority

Housing Choice Voucher Program

916 S. 14th Street Suite 100

Harrisburg, PA 17104

Phone # (717) 234-9664

Direct Fax# (717) 963-2611

Email: sandralizr@harrisburghousing.org

Please note Harrisburg Housing Authority cover just the inner city part of Harrisburg, Therefore, anything within the Harrisburg School District in the following zip codes 17101, 17102, 17104, 17103 and 17110 we cover under our jurisdiction. (Zip codes 17103 and 17110 we cover some areas)

Once all portability paperwork has been received, a letter will be mailed with all required documents from you to complete and provide back to our office. At that time, we will require the following documents for EACH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY:

BANK STATEMENTS

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS

PHOTO ID FOR ALL MEMBERS OVER 18

PROOF OF ALL INCOME FOR THE HOUSEHOLD-WAGES, CHILD SUPPORT, SOCIAL SECURITY, SSI, CASH ASSISTANCE, ETC.

Below is the payment standard if you are porting to Harrisburg City

Bedroom Size	2020's Payment Standard
Efficiency	\$650
1 Bedroom	\$813
2 Bedroom	\$1,012
3 Bedroom	\$1,296
4 Bedroom	\$1,368
5 Bedroom	\$1,573
6 Bedroom	\$1,778

QUESTIONS FOR RESIDENT RELATIONS STAFF

- 1. Are the Food Bank deliveries at the various communities going to continue during the shut down?**

A: Yes, the Food Bank will continue to deliver to our communities. HHA, however, is changing the process in order to encourage social distancing and safely receiving the food.

QUESTIONS FOR HHA'S PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT

- 1. Is HHA still processing payments?**

A: Yes, we are still processing payments.

- 2. What changes have been made to the Procurement Process?**

A: In the event of an emergency, HHA has implemented an emergency plan allowing foremen and/or AMP Directors to contact businesses directly with a confirming Purchase Order and a copy to the Procurement Department.

QUESTIONS FOR HHA'S CONTRACTORS/CAPITAL FUNDS PROGRAM

- 1. I recently submitted a bid to contract, how can I check my status?**

A: Please be mindful that we are currently operating with a reduction in staff. All submitted bids are currently undergoing our review process. Notification of status will be sent in accordance with established procedures but will be delayed.

- 2. I recently did some contract work for HHA, when can I expect payment?**

A: Our Accounting Department is currently operating on a reduced work schedule and is working diligently to process all payment request submissions as expeditiously as possible. Most payments will not be delayed for any significant period.

3. A current project with HHA has been halted, when can I expect to resume work?

A: Resumption of work on halted projects should have resumed at this point, but as things change we will update you accordingly.

4. I have an on-going project with HHA, how will I be paid for work completed thus far?

A: HHA continues to operate on a reduced work schedule. Payment requests continue to be processed as usual. However, to expedite the payment process and offset postal office delays, HHA encourages vendors/contractors to utilize our ACH payment process like many partners do with HHA. Should you wish to opt for the ACH payment method please send an email request to our Procurement Department Procurement@harrisburghousing.org

5. Will I receive an extension on work halted due to the COVID-19?

A: Yes, once the work resumes, you will be given an extension which will be equal to the number of missed work days.

6. My project with HHA has been shut-down due to the COVID-19. Do I continue to submit weekly payroll statements?

A: Yes, until HHA receives additional guidance from HUD, it is a HUD requirement that throughout the duration of a project, weekly payroll certifications must be submitted regardless of whether work was performed or not.

7. Due to the COVID-19 shut-down, am I required to continue submitting the Minority, Section 3 & WBE Monthly Utilization Reports?

A: Yes, you must continue to submit the Minority, Section 3 and WBE Monthly Utilization Reports in order to maintain HUD compliance.

8. **With this shutdown have all site visits and job meetings been canceled/suspended?**

A: Governor Wolf's current closing order does not include construction, therefore, work, Site Visits and Job Conference's will continue as scheduled.

QUESTIONS FOR HHA'S LEASING AND OCCUPANCY OFFICE

1. **Are you still taking applications at this time?**

A: HHA is accepting applications by mail or email and processing new applicants.

2. **I have paperwork to drop off at the office, where should I be sending it?**

A: HHA will be mailing updated letters to every single person that has a pending file. You can continue to mail any documents you have and we will respond accordingly. Please be aware that the offices will be closed at least until January 10, 2021. **Also, please note the office has moved locations. The new address can be found below.**

3. **I went to the office for a scheduled interview and it was closed, what should I do?**

A: Our offices will be closed until January 10, 2021. We will be re-scheduling any missed appointments with no penalty to the applicant. HHA will update all pending applicants of their status, and HHA will reschedule appointments with phone interviews.

For any questions not answered above, please submit your question(s) to the following email address or community numbers: daisyp@harrisburghousing.org

4. **I was offered a unit and accepted it but still have not been provided information on a date that I will be Leased. What steps should I take next?**

A: If you have been offered a unit from Leasing & Occupancy and you have responded, you will be called to schedule a lease up appointment as soon as the unit is available.

Community	Office Phone Number	Emergency/After Hours Phone Number
William Howard Day 1300 Community Dr. Harrisburg, PA 17103	717-233-8593	1-888-512-5045
Hoverter Homes 1260 Oyler Road Harrisburg, PA 17104	717-234-2036	1-800-258-1084
Hillside Village 1300 Community Dr. Harrisburg, PA 17103	717-233-8593	1-888-512-5045
M.W. Smith Homes 1300 Community Dr. Harrisburg, PA 17103	717-233-8593	1-888-512-5045
Hall Manor 100 Hall Manor Harrisburg, PA 17104	717-238-6724	1-877-485-5843
Lick Towers 1301 North 6 th St Harrisburg, PA 17102	717-257-5421	1-888-512-5097
Morrison Towers 351 Chestnut St Harrisburg, PA 17101	717-232-6781	1-888-512-5091
Scattered Sites 1301 North 6 th St. Harrisburg, PA 17102	717-257-5421	1-888-512-5097
Jackson Towers 1315 North 6 th St Harrisburg, PA 17102	717-678-7001	1-888-512-5097
Leasing Office and Housing Choice Voucher Program 916 S. 14th Street Suite 100 Harrisburg, PA 17104	HCV: (717) 234-9664	Leasing Office: 717-257-5420

DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC EMAIL ADDRESSES:

Public Housing: Publichousing@harrisburghousing.org
Section 8: Section8@harrisburghousing.org
Procurement: Procurement@harrisburghousing.org
Accounting: Accounting@harrisburghousing.org
Resident Relations: Residentrelations@harrisburghousing.org
Leasing Office: Daisyp@harrisburghousing.org