

Town of Islip Housing Authority COVID-19 Operations Plan update June 2020

The Town of Islip Housing Authority has remained open during the pandemic as an essential business in order to continue to serve the needs of more than 1,300 low income families residing in subsidized housing. The HA operations, although altered, have resulted in continued and uninterrupted services by insuring re-certification of familial incomes to insure affordable rental payments, maintaining units under management by performing routine and emergency repairs and turning over units so new eligible families can move in.

The HA has used an initial plan since early March to provide a combination of in office and remote access systems for employees to insure seamless operations and adherence to HUD regulations and guidelines as may be amended by specific federal acts or other applicable orders. The HA has maintained a process of internal and external distancing, personal protective equipment as required for specific staff, frequent communications with staff, local union representative interaction, tenants and participants as well as posting information to the general public.

As of this writing, the order from the State allowing reopening in accordance with Phase 2 is about to occur, the HA is planning for such time as the order allows the HA to open if feasible and as practicable with an emphasis in providing the required services in a safe manner for participants and the HA employees.

1-To the greatest extent possible the HA will continue no contact services similar to the method of operations during the NY Pause. The HA has been able to provide the same level of services and has been able to do it more efficiently and complete tasks sooner as a result of working partially in the office, partially remotely and requiring the participants to engage in business services by phone, by electronic means or by dropping documents in available drop boxes at three locations. In the past program participants frequented the office with information and documentation that could have been dropped, mailed or handled electronically, however, a perception that this method of operation could not work existed, which has proven very effective when forced to do so under the pandemic circumstances. The HA will pursue continuation of these procedures even when the pause is lifted and requiring more targeted appointments using various means to alleviate the unnecessary “drop in.” The goal will be to maintain high service levels while maintaining the safety and security of all affected persons.

- A. The HA will install sneeze guards in the office spaces as may be necessary to further enhance in-office distancing and face covering utilizing and space limitations already established and will continue to utilize rolling and alternating remote working staff in the office to minimize the occupancy and allow for less mitigation should any employees become ill. The HA staff are practicing social distancing to the extent possible by following simple guidelines allowing for one person in small confined workspace offices, maintaining six feet within conference room areas, maintaining desk separation of a minimum of 8 feet, wearing a face covering when traversing (whenever leaving a desk) within the office,

limiting the break room to one person at a time and not using the area for breaks or eating, following general health protocols of hand washing, sanitizing and face coverings. The HA does have a no touch thermometer should the need arise.

- B. The HA is in the process of establishing a document transmission system and electronic signature software creation to enhance present electronic document attachments systems in use.
- C. The HA will establish the Allyn Dr community room facility as an interview or small meeting space and create a safe distancing protocol area and install clear glass office barrier walls in the Allyn Drive facility Community room, along with video stations, if needed, to allow for a move in interview and document signing to protect the staff and participants. The facility has multiple accessible entrances, a large open space and provides for ample distancing. The space will also add an air filtration system. The HA will utilize a combination of prerecorded video and audio instructions to augment the process in order to afford higher risk participants more opportunities to perform required functions prior to taking possession of the unit. The community rooms will be closed to gatherings until further notice, but likely will remain closed to public gatherings through 12/31/2020.
- D. The HA has added two additional phone lines to handle volume. The HA full time staff all have remote access capabilities. The HA internal systems have the capacity and security measures in place, along with use procedures, to safeguard data.
- E. The HA has provided washable face coverings for every tenant and will provide face coverings to every new tenant. The HA has installed signs throughout every facility and has mandated a face covering for staff when in contact with each other and the public as well as for tenants when the HA has to enter a unit for a repair. The HA maintenance staff have appropriate PPE for general entry and for emergencies if/when a tenant is Covid positive, i.e., full coverage protective PPE.
- F. The HA will continue to maintain frequent cleaning protocols and disinfection. The HA is procuring a fogger type of sanitizing device to further these efforts. The HA uses an air scrubber daily in the office space. Every desk has sanitizers, cleaning pads, face coverings and internal no touch sanitizers & towel dispensers, no touch faucet's & trash receptacles to augment twice daily cleaning by the staff.
- G. The HA maintains focus on requirements of Fair Housing and reasonable accommodation's considerations and will continue to review such requests

appropriately.

- H. The HA will continue to contact every tenant and participant by phone to check in on their needs and also to inquire if any unit conditions require attention. The HA has suspended annual inspections using the biennial process allowed by HUD, but will continue move ins and special inspections as required and as may be practicable, safe for all parties and unable to be resolved through video confirmations. The HA will also institute exterior only inspections viewed from an HA vehicle and utilize photography to check on site and neighborhood conditions during the biennial time period.
 - I. Video conferences, audio meetings and the like will be conducted via an as needed basis. The HA is installing web cams at each work station and is installing Microsoft teams to foster a better staff interactive collaborative process when remote working.
- 2- The HA plans for continued management and oversight have been altered to utilize a combination of electronic records reflecting computer remote access, the HA is installing remote employee management time keeping software for tracking and oversight. The HA uses automobile GPS tracking and site security cameras to augment oversight as quality control and real time oversight. The HA is implementing an online time management system to better track and record employee time management and attendance.
 - 3- All other management tracking and procedural aspects remain the same, including scheduling the Exec. Dir. or Asst. Dir. in the office space and not working remotely on the same day. The Executive Dir. will maintain a live feed video presence to a monitor and be able to interact with staff real time during any remote work participation to augment staffing level's reductions.
 - 4- The HA Board has continued to meet regularly utilizing the allowable open meeting laws mechanisms established by NYS.
 - 5- Tenant education, notices and communications will continue as required to help insure the tenants are aware of issues related to Covid-19 and any changes to operations, safety requirements and HA rules pertaining to continued occupancy. The HA is establishing an online document submission format, all electronic document signing format and is revamping and creating a new website to further the ability of program participants to access program requirements. The HA recognizes that even with these offerings, the ability of some program participants to participate still requires the use of mailing documents. The HA goal will be to create recorded information for general HA operations, such as move-in tours, unit conditions, instructional information and enhance printed materials for

program participants and those interested in participating. The HA has added two additional phone lines to allow for increased volume. The HA anticipates that programs interest will increase as the crisis looms and the economy is slowed, however, the priority will remain for the families already participating first and will be informational for the general public second. The HA does not anticipate additional funding for new program participants and the waiting list will remain closed to new participants through at least 2020.

- 6- The HA will continue to procure appropriate cleaning and PPE supplies routinely and monitor supplies in order to insure available resources when needed, including longer term needs in advance of Hurricane Season.
- 7- The HA will continue to inquire with tenants whether they have been or currently are experiencing any illness, fever or Covid diagnosis.
- 8- The HA will continue to require employees to report any such illnesses or circumstances that may require isolation or strict remote working alternatives in order to prevent wide spread infection within the HA confines.
- 9- The HA will remain ready and flexible to adjust any operational aspects to comply with effective orders or present circumstances related to the health, safety and well being of the public, staff or tenants.
- 10- Maintenance unit turnovers are left for three days after a move out and the HA is adding an ozone generator to use in the units prior to the staff performing an occupancy turnover. Applicable disinfection, cleaning and appropriate protocols are in place.