



SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

30 Memorial Road, Somerville, Massachusetts 02145
Telephone (617) 625-1152 Fax (617) 628-7057 TDD (617) 628-8889

March 25, 2020

Dear Participant:

The Somerville Housing Authority would like to update you on measures we are taking in response to the recent news regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19). ***This is an important message, so please take the time to read it in its entirety.***

The SHA's goal is to provide you with information, resources, and tips to ensure that you are taking proper safety precautions to protect yourself and those around you from exposure to this virus. We would like to inform you of specific changes that the SHA is making to assist in those precautions.

Administrative staff will be taking additional precautions while providing services to tenants. Maintenance staff will be taking additional precautions while responding to work orders and moving from one unit to another.

However, we need your help to keep everyone as healthy and well as possible.

WHAT SHA STAFF ARE DOING

- To try and reduce risk and opportunities of exposure, effective immediately, we will modify our onsite workforce and permit staff to work remotely as able. We are taking steps to severely limit person to person contact. We will remain available to tenants and applicants by **phone** and **email** within our adjusted business hours of Monday-Thursday 8:00am-2:00pm and Friday 8:00am-12:00pm.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick and maintaining a minimum 6-foot distance from everyone.
- Practicing basic hygiene – washing hands frequently, coughing into elbow. Cover your nose & mouth with a tissue; throw out tissue immediately after use.
- Staying updated with information coming from state and national agencies.

Translation and interpretation services are available upon request by appointment only
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WHAT PARTICIPANTS NEED TO DO

- Stay home if you're not feeling well (sore throat, cough, fever, aches, chills, or respiratory symptoms).
- Wipe down or spray frequently touched surfaces in your unit (handles, knobs, doors, phones, etc.) with antibacterial wipes or Lysol disinfectant spray.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick or socializing in groups.
- Minimize any non-essential trips outside your home.
- Practice basic hygiene – wash your hands frequently, cough into your elbow.
- Cover your nose & mouth with a tissue; throw out tissue immediately after use.
- Strongly consider a flu shot, it's not too late (it may not prevent you from getting the flu but might minimize the symptoms).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay updated with information coming from state and national agencies.

RENT REDETERMINATION

- We understand that many of our employed participants will face significant loss of income during the pandemic. We remind you that you can redetermine your income **downward** at any time for purposes of rent calculation – please reach out immediately to your Section 8 Coordinator by phone or email if you have lost work hours and we will work with you on verification.

VOUCHER STATUS

- Due to the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 we understand there may be a delay in your housing search, therefore a 60-day extension will be added to the expiration date of all actively searching vouchers. Any further extensions beyond the additional 60 days will be determined based upon circumstance.

INSPECTIONS

- We will continue to conduct inspections for initial units and emergency requests but will cease all annual and quality control inspections.

TERMINATIONS

- All terminations, other than those with exigent circumstances, will be delayed until business resumes as normal.

INFORMAL HEARINGS

- All requested informal hearings will be delayed until further notice and scheduled after the pandemic has subsided.

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SOCIAL DISTANCING

- In order to practice the strongly recommended social distancing, the Somerville Housing Authorities will be closed to the public. A drop box for any correspondence has been installed at the Main Office located at 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, 02145.

Thank you for your cooperation in these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Macaluso
Executive Director

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