

Bethlehem Housing Authority

6-28-2021

645 Main Street
Bethlehem, Pa. 18018

As we continue to prioritize the health and safety of our staff, clients, and community, BHA will be implementing the following operational decisions in keeping with the changes adopted by PHA's in the Commonwealth, HUD guidelines, as well as directives from both the Governor of Pa. and our President:

- Effective March 16, 2020 at 8:00 am, ALL BHA offices will be closed to the public. Our offices will remain closed until further notice, based upon the Coronavirus outbreak in our community and/or government decrees. The public will be informed when a re-opening date is possible.
- Applications, leasing, grievances, hearings and public meetings are continuing in a remote setting or by video/tele conferencing. A drop-box is available at our 645 Main Street location, 4th floor entrance for communications.
- BHA's website, @ bha.645.homestead.com is available for access to a wealth of resources to applicants, residents and landlords.
- Effective Wednesday March 18, 2020, all non-essential/non-emergency employees should remain home. Employees should contact their department heads/supervisor to determine if they are considered an essential and/or emergency employee. You may also contact your Executive Director if necessary.
- Employees who are exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (running nose, cough, fever, headaches, diarrhea etc.) should NOT report to work regardless of their status as an essential or emergency employee.
- The Corona Virus COVID-19 outbreak has made it necessary to reduce the operations at BHA to key functions and services. Essential and/or Emergency employees are expected to report to work as normal or work remotely if so advised by the Director.
- Effective Wednesday March 18, 2020, BHA will only be conducting emergency service repairs and plans to resume to normal operations as soon as possible. However, residents with maintenance related issues should continue to call BHA's Call Center at 610-865-8319.
- Effective Wednesday March 18, 2020, BHA's Leased Housing Department will postpone all HCV HQS inspections, and plans to resume to normal operations on June 15, 2020. Clients and landlords can reach the HCV Inspections Department via email at info@betha.com or by phone at (484)-239-1368, to schedule, reschedule or request an inspection. BHA will be reaching out to every landlord to communicate and answer any questions that have arisen during this critical time in our administration of the HCV-Section 8 program.

While exposure and risk levels are changing daily, it is important to exercise precautionary measures to limit the spread of this virus. Wearing a mask, if unvaccinated, in our buildings is mandatory for BHA staff, (Effective 6-28-2021), Wearing a mask by public and vendors entering our buildings is mandatory. We understand that this is a challenging and dynamic time. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, using resources from HUD the CDC, the World Health Organization, and the City of Bethlehem.

We remain open to modifying our plans as things develop or change and appreciate your continued partnership, support, and understanding as we all work to adapt to this unprecedented situation.

HUD has granted all Public Housing Authorities the ability to implement waivers governing operations of both the HCV and PH programs. Said waivers, can be found in HUD PIH Notices located at the following website address: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/covid_19_resources.

Below are the waivers that the Bethlehem Housing Authority has adopted that affect the residents living in our communities:

PH and HCV – Until 12-31-2021

1. Delay of annual re-examination of income and family composition.
2. Requirement to use the income hierarchy, including EIV, and allow use of self-certification for the highest form of income verification.
3. Requirement to use income verification requirements, including EIV for interim re-examinations.
4. Mandatory EIV monitoring requirements have also been waived.

HQS –

1. Initial inspection requirements, allowing owner certification of non-life threatening deficiencies. This applies to both initial inspections, and Pre-HAP contract inspections.
2. Non-life threatening initial unit inspections, allowing for extension up to 30 days for owner repairs.
3. The requirement for Quality Control sampling inspections has been waived.

HCV –

1. The requirement for an oral briefing, with an alternate method being permitted.
2. The PHA may provide voucher extensions regardless of the PHA policy.
3. The PHA may extend the period of time after the last HAP payment is made before the HAP contract terminates.
4. Requirement to adopt revisions to the Administrative Plan have been waived.
5. Prior SEMAP scores will be retained until 1-1-2022.

PH –

1. Changes to the approval process of the ACOP have been waived.
2. Temporarily suspension of the Community Service Requirements.
3. PIH Notice 2012-13, waives the requirement of self-inspections of each project during CY 2020.

ADMIN and ACOP -

1. Unit offers in Public Housing have been changed to one-offer only.
2. Public Housing Applications have been changed to on-line only.
3. Annual Re-examinations for PH and HCV have been amended, in order that in-person appointments are changed to telephonic or video conferences.

Be advised that any adopted waivers have availability end dates as established by HUD. In addition, please direct any question that you may have regarding the adoption of HUD waivers by the Bethlehem Housing Authority to Mr. J. D. Schuster, Executive Director, @ 610-865-8357.

Sincerely,

Jay D. Schuster

Executive Director