

COVID-19 POLICY

EFFECTIVE MARCH 16,2020

Updated APRIL 22, 2020 and UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

The Pittsfield Housing Authority (PHA) would like to update the tenants, voucher holders and staff on the measures we need to take in response to the recent and most updated news regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The PHA's goal is to provide information, resources and to ensure that everyone is taking proper safety precautions to protect themselves and everyone around them from exposure to this virus. This policy is to inform on specific changes that the PHA has made to assist in taking these precautions. We have relied on DHCD and HUD to comply with these changes.

Administrative staff and Maintenance staff will be taking additional precautions while providing services to the tenants.

Due to the Covid-19 virus that has taken effect on the City of Pittsfield and all governing states, the Pittsfield Housing Authority has adopted the following policy:

Office procedures

1. Office closed to the public-staff will be available to residents by phone/email or fax.
2. No new lease ups, no hearings, no briefings, or evictions.
3. Community Rooms will be closed for socializing and events; bathrooms will also be closed.
4. A drop box will be provided in the main lobby for paperwork and rent payments.
5. Minimal staff and/or staggering shifts may happen at later time.
6. Maintenance will be handling only emergency work orders, groundskeeping and vacant units.
7. Daily cleaning will be done of high-traffic areas and high-touch areas, including building entrance doors, elevator controls, mailboxes, main door handles and trash chutes.
8. Daily notices will go out to tenants updating them on procedures-update on loss/deduction of income.
9. No inspections for Annuals Federal or State at this time.
10. Generate notice to keep tenants (Public Housing and HCVP) up to date on procedures. (See attached)
11. Notices regarding safe contact and daily cleaning. (see attached)
12. All notices sent per updates on COVID-19 per regulations (see attached)

Administrative Procedures

1. Modify hours for Admin and Main. staff per COVID-19- 6 staff Monday/Wednesday on 2 1/2 days and 6 staff Tuesday/Thursday on 2 1/2 days. All departments covered at all times. See attached.
2. FMLA offered to 65 and over staff and staff with children with no day care per COVID-19.
3. Meetings with staff regarding procedures on income changes- no Annuals for State waived for 2020.
4. Meeting regarding COVID-19 to meet again on April 10, 2020 to review on extension or back to full staff.

Protocol for tenant with COVID-19

Establish Protocols for Expedited Resident Communication:

PHA will check in-with and communicate frequently with the residents.

Posted signage in common areas about hygiene, social distancing (limiting unnecessary guests and in-person socializing with our residents), and directions on what to do if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Implemented a (robocall) to quickly get out important messages and send regular reminders.

Waivers implemented under HUD PIH Notice 2020-05 for COVID -19

Public Housing

1. The Pittsfield Housing will carry forward the PHAS score for 2019 and SEMAP scores for 2019 for the year 2020. They will resume scoring on 6/30/2021 under the Waiver.
2. The Pittsfield Housing has submitted their 5-year and Annual Plan on March 14, 2020 before the Covid-19 happened. This should have been accepted and reviewed. The information was accepted in EPIC for draw down on the CFP 2020. NO Waiver
3. HUD has accepted and received Audit submission for FYE 6/30/19. Letter was received by HUD office. No Waiver
4. The Pittsfield Housing will be requesting a waiver EIV monitoring until July 31, 2020. At this time tenants are submitting income changes due to Covid-19 and Annuals are a problem.
5. Annual Recertification have been delayed. They will all be contacted and updated by 12/31/2020.
6. The Pittsfield Housing is adjusting income on tenants that have sent in change of income due to COVID-19. This has been done through email or drop box at main office.
7. The Pittsfield Housing has been obligating and expending the Grants under the CFP, but understands there is an extension if needed.
8. The Pittsfield Housing will be requesting a waiver the closure of any closed CFP Grants at this time and will submit the proper AMCC by September 30, 2020.
9. The Pittsfield Housing will be requesting a waiver for Public Housing Inspections, notification will be sent to tenants to allow them to notify the inspector of any Health and Safety issues that need to be addressed.

Housing Choice Voucher Program

1. The Pittsfield Housing is Waiving all Bi Annual Inspections but is sending notice to tenants to notify the inspector of any Health and Safety conditions. Letters are also being sent to Landlords to self-certify units. These will still be inspected no later than October 31, 2020.
2. Vouchers will be extended up to 120 days that have been issued before July 31, 2020.
3. Families HAP contract will not be affected if they are absent from unit for more than 180 days due to extenuating circumstances through 12/31/20. This does not excuse them from paying landlord rent or making arrangements with landlord of absence from unit. This can still constitute the start of eviction if no contact or communication has been made after 60 days.

Phase 1- Opening of on June 1, 2020

Following the protocol of the mandate under the State-Ben Stone and Governor Baker the Pittsfield Housing has chosen to do the following:

1. Administrative staff will still be limited in the office for distancing. Essential employees will report Monday-Wednesday and Friday. Employees that are not as essential will report on Monday, Wednesday and others on Tuesday and Thursday. FMLA is still offered as well as the COVID-19 for all employees under the "Employees Rights" established by Governor Baker. (posted at all essential working sites)
2. Employees have been given list of guidelines that the Employer has to meet to open and provide a safe environment. The Employees have been given a guideline that explains what they need to do to stay safe.
3. Pittsfield Housing Authority will now be taking appointments for leasing units in safes areas as agreed upon by the Pittsfield Housing and approved by HUD and DHCD. This will include but are not limited to Dower Square, Jubilee Apartments, Wilson Park.
4. There will be no leasing up at this time for high rise or common area (spaces where tenants share doorways) such as but not limited to Providence Court, Providence Court Annex, Columbia Arms. This is to limit activity of the possible moving of out of state applicants into apartments and risking our tenant's safety.
5. This will be review again at a later time.