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# PRESS RELEASE

**\*\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*\***

**To Whom It May Concern:**

**March 20, 2020**

In light of the New York State and national state of emergency centered around the coronavirus pandemic, the Ithaca Housing Authority (IHA) has implemented a Hazard Mitigation Plan to assist the authority in dealing with the impact of the virus. In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the IHA is adjusting its services and operations to protect staff and the individuals and families it serves from further spread of COVID-19.

Effective immediately the **IHA administrative offices will be temporarily closed** to tenants, Section 8 participants, applicants and the general public with no face-to-face interaction between staff and the tenants, Section 8 program participants, applicants, their families or the general public. We will follow guidance and best practices about when to re-open. As much business as possible will be conducted by telephone and other electronic means. Closing our offices does not mean the IHA is closed. IHA staff are still available to provide the emergency services and essential duties that arise in managing IHA-owned properties and meeting statutory requirements.

1. All meetings rooms and community rooms will be closed until further notice for tenant group activities and outside agency meetings.
2. Foodnet has eliminated their congregate meal program and has instituted home deliveries for tenants living at Titus Towers who participate with Foodnet.
3. All annual and interim recertification activities will be conducted by phone, email and US mail.
4. A drop box is available in the Main Office/Receptionist vestibule for those dropping off rent checks, required paperwork or any other required correspondence.
5. All non-essential property/unit inspections will be delayed until further notice; only special and new admission inspections will be allowed.
6. Health and safety inspections will be conducted by staff as needed.
7. All grievance and informal hearings will be postponed.

8. Lease signings and initial unit assignments must continue.
9. Public Housing non-emergency work orders will be delayed as primary duties of Maintenance will be to respond to emergency work orders and continually clean and disinfect IHA common areas as often as possible.
10. Third party contractors will continue to provide critical services such as extermination services and renovations; however, IHA will limit interactions between tenants and any third-party contractors as much as possible.
11. IHA will continue communications and postings to tenants about all governmental notices centered on COVID 19 virus updates as well as any relevant IHA notices.
12. IHA will continue to post at all facilities notices to tenants encouraging the reduction of interaction with family members and the general public to limit potential exposure to themselves and other tenants.
13. As tenant and program participants see a reduction in their income due to lost wages, the IHA occupancy staff is prepared to conduct interim rent adjustments as quickly as possible, lowering the tenant or Section 8 participant's required rent and increasing the government subsidies. Reminder - all paperwork will be transmitted via the drop box at the IHA Main Office, U.S. mail or email.
14. The IHA team will continue to assist food banks in distributing food to our tenants.
15. The IHA will continue to follow new guidelines issued by NYS and the federal government regarding the COVID-19 emergency.

Please understand that there may be some inconveniences to tenants and Section 8 participants; these changes are necessary to protect the health of all tenants, Section 8 participants, staff and the general public.

NOTE: Public housing authorities are considered an essential business; therefore, essential staff may continue to report to work while practicing social distancing and following guidelines set forth by the CDC. Where possible, essential staff may work remotely or, when necessary, a reduction in staff hours may occur.