

**SPENCER HOUSING AUTHORITY
CORONA-19 VIRUS RESPONSE PLAN
MARCH 2020**

Effective March 20, 2020, at 4 p.m., we are encouraging Spencer Housing Authority residents to limit visits to the office to official emergency business only. Our office will continue to conduct business via telephone, fax, and e-mail.

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Introduction:

The Spencer Housing Authority is monitoring the current viral outbreak formally known as the Coronavirus or CoVid-19. This is a very fluid situation which we are taking very seriously. To this extent we have developed a Response Plan should this health crisis impact the delivery of services to our residents and staff. Additional sources of information concerning the virus may be found at the following websites:

The Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov

The West Virginia Dept. of Health and Human Resources:

<https://dhr.wv.gov/COVID-19>

The World Health Organization: www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus

The National Institutes of Health: www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus

During times such as these, it is better to be safe than sorry and to react in a way we feel is responsible and justified to protect residents, resident families and housing authority staff. The Spencer Housing Authority has a responsibility to be cautious and take prudent measures to protect our staff, our residents and the general public. This public health protection plan provides guidance as to how the Spencer Housing Authority can continue its mission of providing safe, sanitary, affordable housing to its residents while being cautious and respectful regarding the potentially serious health issue facing our community. The goal of the Spencer Housing Authority will be to limit the potential exposure of the virus to our employees and residents in an attempt to further prevent the spread of the virus.

Section 1

Communication:

The best efforts to combat a serious health issue like CoVid-19 is to communicate clearly and effectively with employees, residents, government officials, vendors and the public. Accurate and timely communication will be critical in order to provide a proactive response rather than reactive. Use of multiple forms of communication will be important to spread the message as widely as possible to those who will rely on us now and in the future. This will include letters, emails, flyers, meetings and when possible, text messaging.

Employees:

When it is necessary to communicate with staff the preferred method will be to notify either in person, telephone, text message or email to go over information and any course of action that may be required. In the event there are changes in policies and procedures or there are work stoppages, this information shall be done in writing to remove any confusion or to limit misinterpretations.

Employees of the Spencer Housing Authority are advised to monitor their health and report any symptoms to the office and to their health care provider and local public health officials as necessary. If an employee believes they may have been exposed or are experiencing symptoms, they are asked to stay home and monitor their situation while keeping the Spencer Housing Authority informed of their status.

Residents/Participants:

The Spencer Housing Authority currently serves 109 households and therefore communication with them may be limited to letters, telephone, email. It will be important to provide residents with helpful information that is reliable and effective. Written communication will include basic information about the specific health threat, how to protect themselves, how to prevent the spread of the health threat and where they can find more information. Residents will be encouraged to contact public health officials if they believe they are experiencing symptoms associated with the health threat. Residents will be asked to self-quarantine themselves to protect their neighbors and others for as long as may be required by government rule and/or policy. We ask all residents and

participants to continue to live their lives in a manner as normal as possible but to stay alert as conditions may change rapidly.

Service Provider:

The Spencer Housing Authority will keep service providers and others who provide goods and services informed via email or telephone regarding any changes in the work environment. If buildings or neighborhoods are quarantined, we will make service providers aware of the situation so that they may determine if they can or will provide services if needed. Emergency work items requiring immediate attention in an area of concern will be disclosed and a plan to deal with the emergency will be developed in a timely fashion subject to the nature of the emergency. For emergencies dealing with fire or police services, residents should continue to use 911 emergency services.

Government Officials:

The Spencer Housing Authority will work closely with federal, state and local officials to monitor the situation and report any known instances of public health issues that have affected our staff or residents. We will cooperate fully with any legal request for information following established privacy policies as health officials determine the status of the virus in our communities. If government decrees are issued, we will work to communicate these directives to our residents and staff.

Section 2

Incident Response:

In the event an employee or resident has notified the Spencer Housing Authority about their possible exposure to or symptoms related to the public health threat, the Spencer Housing Authority shall immediately develop a response plan. If contact with public health officials has not yet occurred, such contact will be made immediately. The Spencer Housing Authority will coordinate our response with public health officials and ensure that our efforts do not duplicate or impede in their ability to respond to the incident. The Spencer Housing Authority working together with public health officials, will help to determine the source of the health threat and take the necessary steps as prescribed by public health officials to ensure that the public health threat is halted or limited and make recommendations on how to proceed with the daily operations of the housing

authority. The Spencer Housing Authority shall familiarize themselves with the current issues, identify resources to assist and recommend the next steps.

If it is necessary to temporarily cease the operations of the Spencer Housing Authority, the authority will communicate this via written correspondence, emails, telephone and the media. Our telephone lines, fax and email will continue to operate, and messages will be forwarded to staff who will monitor correspondence.

Section 3

Prevention Efforts:

The Spencer Housing Authority will make reasonable efforts to control the spread of the public health threat through commonly known personal and work practices. Information will be disseminated to staff and residents about proper etiquette regarding the transmission of the health threat such as the regular washing of hands and staying home if you are sick. As a part of our normal custodial services, we will make additional efforts to sanitize those areas frequented by staff and residents such as the lobbies, bathrooms, waiting room, and meeting spaces. An emphasis will be placed on those areas with which individuals come into frequent contact. The housing authority will utilize appropriate disinfectants as recommended by public health officials.

The success of any prevention effort must rely upon the good judgement of individuals in our sphere of living. If an individual has expressed symptoms or is known to be sick, they should stay home in an attempt to prevent the spread of the sickness to others. Employees will be asked to stay at home, and residents will be asked to remain in their apartments and seek assistance from family members or others to provide for their basic needs. If a State of Emergency is declared by an official act of the government, the housing authority will follow the instructions provided by the government.

Section 4

Operational Protocols:

Leasing: In the event that services are curtailed due to community health concerns, the Spencer Housing Authority shall endeavor to assist our clients to the extent possible by telephone or through electronic or written means (mail).

- A. **Occupancy Issues:** Program Eligibility and Recertifications: The Spencer Housing Authority shall continue to process program eligibility and recertifications subject to staffing and further regulatory guidance. Whereas income verifications are subject to third party review, processing of eligibility/recertifications may be delayed and or suspended until such time as conditions will allow.
- B. **Inspections:** In order to comply with public health threat containment protocols, inspections may continue if conditions allow. Conditions which may affect inspections include but are not limited to availability of staff; additional regulatory guidance; known conditions of occupants of the units to be inspected (the Lyons Housing Authority will not allow inspection of units where known CoVid-19 cases exist) and government restrictions. The Spencer Housing Authority will use outside inspectors if necessary.
- C. **Maintenance:** The Spencer Housing Authority will use extreme caution when required to perform work in common areas and individual units. Maintenance personnel will be required to wear disposable gloves and dispose of the gloves and wash their hands after each apartment visit. If sick, personnel will be asked to remain home and refrain from performing any work on behalf of the Spencer Housing Authority. If residents are seriously ill, work will be limited to emergency work orders only and housing authority staff will take additional measures to protect themselves from exposure.
- a. Effective immediately, the Spencer Housing Authority will limit maintenance of inhabited apartments to emergency work orders only. Such work orders include but may not be limited to:
- Water leaks or No Water
 - Natural gas leaks
 - Electrical issues
 - Furnace/heating problems (including malfunctioning thermostat)
 - Broken windows

- Doors/windows that will not close or cannot be locked
- Malfunctioning smoke detectors
- Malfunctioning fire extinguishers
- Issues with the function of Ranges/Stoves or Refrigerators

Increased attention will be made to cleaning and disinfecting areas with heavy pedestrian traffic and surfaces which come into frequent contact with humans. Doors, doorknobs, light switches, handrails, and lavatory equipment shall be sanitized at least once per day, subject to staffing availability.

Maintenance personnel shall take stock of inventory to ensure adequate supplies are in place should there be a disruption of the supply chain. This should include adequate cleaning supplies as well as any material or equipment necessary for the safe operation and upkeep of our facilities.

D. Financial: Our objective during this crisis shall be to continue to receive rents and make payments for goods and services provided and or delivered. Residents are expected to continue to make rent payments in a timely fashion. We request that during a public health crisis, payments be made via regular mail with checks or money orders. The housing authority will continue to accept payments in person at the office until such time as the Spencer Housing Authority is required to temporarily cease operations or determines that it is best to discontinue direct payments. Residents should take proper precautions when mailing payments and should refrain from mailing cash.

Revenue: Staff, to the extent possible, shall make every effort to record revenues received and process regular deposits. Until such time as mail delivery is suspended, we will regularly check our mailbox to receive and record payments.

Accounts Payable expenses will be processed regularly as staff is available and revenues are on hand to cover expenses. Every effort will be made to reach out to service providers and keep them informed as to when payments can be expected if we are unable to

process them when they are due. If the Spencer Housing Authority's ability to process payments is impeded due to government action or the lack of staff due to a public health crisis, it is understood that all accrued payments shall be made at the earliest possible time.

Section 6

Telework:

Working from home shall be encouraged for those employees who are sick or have been in contact with someone who has a communicable illness. Whereas not all tasks required to perform the duties can be done at home, every effort will be made between employer and employee to identify work that can be done electronically from home. In the event proper access cannot be granted due to security concerns or connectivity issues, other means such as emails and phones shall be utilized to the greatest extent feasible.

As maintenance work obviously cannot be performed at home, maintenance staff shall be designated as standby if it is necessary to close the office for any period of time. Residents will continue to be asked to call in emergency work orders to report any issues requiring immediate attention. If the desired maintenance request does not require immediate attention (such as a bad light bulb), a work order will be created as soon as staff is available to address the work order. Any staff required to perform work at any of our properties shall wear proper protective clothing/safety equipment provided by the housing authority and utilize safe work practices at all times. The housing authority will communicate to our residents the need for patience as we work to continue to provide safe housing while protecting our staff.

Wallace J. Board,
Executive Director

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