



# COVID-19 Interaction Playbook for Housing Partners

This playbook offers promising practices for common interactions and new business situations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

HUD recognizes the short- and long-term effects of the virus on both housing authorities and residents. It is critical that public housing agencies (PHAs) and tribally designated housing entities (TDHEs) continue to operate—albeit differently.

This guidance seeks to create a safer environment through social distancing and to ensure the safe distribution of goods and services to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and to mitigate the health risks on staff, residents, service providers, and landlords.

To create this playbook, PIH interviewed PHAs, TDHEs, and industry groups and researched global promising practices. This information is meant to underscore the official guidance of the CDC. Thank you to the PHAs, TDHEs, and industry groups that participated.

View more HUD resources at [hud.gov/coronavirus](https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus).

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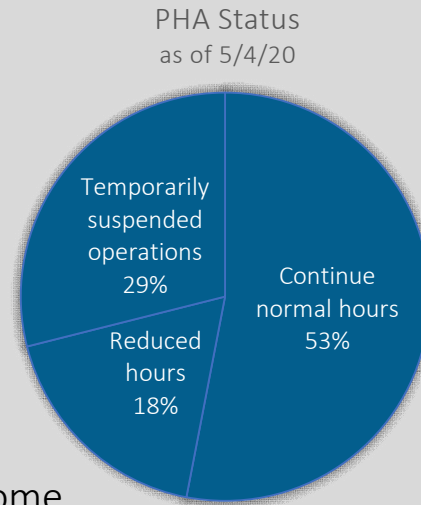
# Safe Distancing: Supporting Staff



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*The operating status of PHAs and TDHEs varies. The following information should be tailored accordingly.*

- Support staff to telework.
  - Procure laptops for employees that require system access.
  - Identify business requirements for future procurements.
- When staff are required to be in the office, institute every possible protection.
  - Staff who are sick should stay home.
  - Distribute masks and gloves. Train employees to use them per CDC guidelines.
  - Create shifts to limit the number of people in the office (e.g., half work morning and half afternoon).
  - Leave paperwork in the unit for a new tenant to return without contact. Alternatively, meet in a community room to lease vacant units to retain 6 feet of distance between staff and the household.
  - Ask for contactless deliveries.



- Limit on-site staff's in-person interactions as much as possible.
  - Encourage residents to call or email you.
  - Supply drop-off boxes at administrative and managers' offices to collect documents and rent.
  - Consider systems to collect rent electronically.
- Only perform emergency maintenance. Only inspect vacant units.
  - Ask about residents' health when logging orders.
  - Distribute flyers with troubleshooting tips to reduce the number of emergency work orders.
  - Ask residents to leave the room or maintain 6 feet of distance while workers are present.
  - Video chat or suspend annual inspections.
- Discontinue PHA and TDHE projects unless they can be completed maintaining social distancing.



# Safe Distancing: Supporting Residents



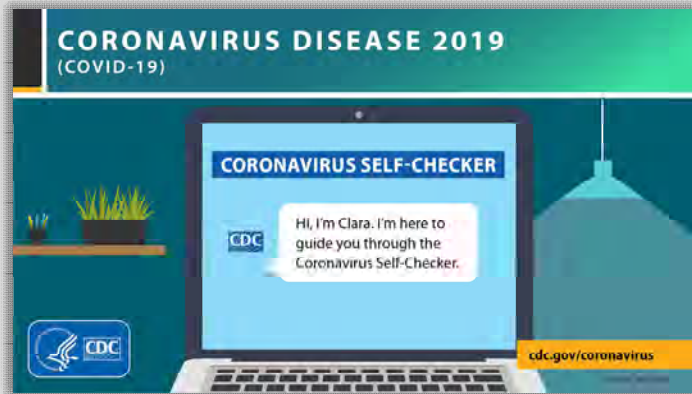
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- Overcommunicate COVID-19 guidance and changes to your operations.
  - Distribute flyers door-to-door and in common areas. Contact resident board leadership. Post to your website and social media. Create telephone hotlines. Drive through areas using loudspeakers.
  - Use local radio to reach large audiences (i.e., tribe).
- Tribes should consider limiting travel to and from reservations of non-tribal members.
- Discourage visitors except personal care providers, caseworkers, and emergencies, particularly in high-rise and senior buildings.
- Restrict use of common areas when possible.
  - Remove lobby furniture to discourage congregating. Close community rooms and computer labs. Block off playgrounds.
  - Sanitize high-touch areas daily (e.g., doorknobs, elevator buttons, and handrails).
  - Rather than asking residents to come to the lobby, take food or other deliveries to their door wearing gloves and a mask. (Mail and parcels can continue as normal.)
  - Create a sign-up sheet to limit the number of people in the laundry room. Provide gloves and sanitizing wipes.
  - Hire temporary security to discourage gathering and monitor property at stalled construction sites.
- If residents must leave their units, encourage following CDC guidelines, such as staying home if you are sick, wearing a mask, avoiding contact, and washing your hands often for a full 20 seconds.

# Responding to Confirmed Cases



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- Track residents with confirmed cases of COVID-19 to monitor trends.
  - Ask residents to self-report if they test positive or are exposed to someone who tests positive. Share the list of symptoms and local healthcare options.
  - Share the addresses, but not the unit numbers or names of residents, of multifamily buildings with local public health agencies. Ask them to notify you if a resident tests positive.
  - Notify residents that a neighbor tested positive in the building but do not provide names.
  - TDHEs should participate in tribal emergency management response teams.

- Increase cleaning and safe distancing when a resident or staff member tests positive.
  - Follow CDC, local public health agency, and doctor's guidance.
  - The household should wash "high-touch" surfaces daily, including phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, and bathroom fixtures.
  - Advise a staff member to follow the latest CDC guidelines, such as staying home until they are fever-free for 72 hours without medication, their symptoms have improved, and 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.
  - Advise the resident to stay in a specific room away from other household members and pets, use a separate bathroom if possible, and wash their hands often, including immediately after coughing or sneezing. Recommend they not share bedding, towels, or dishes.
  - If the resident must be around other people, they should wear a face covering and try to maintain at least 6 feet of distance.

# Other Findings

- Residents' decreased income will cause both short- and long-term increases in need.
- Many residents do not have access to transportation or the Internet at home.
- Reduced and limited PHA operations have adversely impacted service delivery.

- COVID-19 has disrupted the social nature of families, especially in native communities.
- The highest costs related to COVID-19 for PHAs and TDHEs are loss of rent, loss of staff hours, additional supplies, and temporary contracts, such as security.
  - Tenant revenue is a wide range of public housing programs' total revenue. Nonetheless, a sharp drop in rent revenue causes immediate effects.
  - Residents may be receiving stimulus and unemployment compensation.
- The highest procurement costs are cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment.
  - It is difficult to get disinfectants, masks, and gloves.
  - Limited supplies are reserved for staff interacting with residents or the public.



# Safe Distribution



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- Strengthen existing relationships to address unmet needs, e.g., public health agencies and food banks.
  - Invite partners to distribute goods or provide services using personal protective equipment and social distancing.
  - If social distancing cannot be maintained, distribute goods outdoors, offer drive-thru, or deliver door-to-door.



*The Hawaii PHA made reusable masks for elderly and disabled residents.*

- Distribute hard-to-find items like sanitizer.
- Include a flyer in packages to promote COVID-19 guidance and changes to your operations.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces used for goods and services before and after use.
- Develop a parcel, goods, and services delivery response plan.
  - Establish secure drop-off locations for maintenance deliveries. Monitor for packages using video cameras.
  - Practice contactless, no knock delivery. If not possible, maintain 6 feet of distance.
  - Use personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves. Supply these items for all staff, residents, and partners making deliveries.
  - Wash hands before and after delivering or receiving a delivery.



# Case Studies



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## *New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)*

- **Operations:** NYCHA manages 178,895 public housing units in 2,553 residential buildings. Operations are currently closed to the public. Only essential staff are on-site while others telework. A vendor sanitizes common spaces 3 times a week in family buildings and 5 times a week in senior buildings.
- **Strategy:** Developed in collaboration with the mayor's office.
- **Controlling Spread:** NYCHA provided masks to all staff and residents. Residents are screened for COVID-19 prior to emergency maintenance.
- **Safe Distancing:** Playgrounds, meeting rooms, and training rooms are closed. No official gatherings or programming are currently permitted. Although the city has a \$500 fine for not complying with social distancing, NYCHA prioritizes provision of services over enforcement.
- **Safe Distribution:** Protocols were developed to support distributing food and other goods to designated locations in 328 developments. Meals, medication, and other supplies are delivered directly to senior and disabled units.
- **Resource Coordination:** The Office of Residential Economic Opportunity and Sustainability coordinates 100 service providers providing:
  - 3 meals per day to sites and senior units (no ID required)
  - T-Mobile tablets and Internet to 10,000 households
  - Free or low-cost medical care to all residents: <https://www.nyccare.nyc>
- **Resident and Public Communication:** An online portal supports rent payment and remote communication. Also distributing information door-to-door.

## *Tulsa Housing Authority (THA)*

- **Operations:** Tulsa manages 2,600 public housing and PBRA units, including elderly and disabled high rises, garden apartments, townhomes, duplexes, and scattered sites. Operations are currently closed to the public. Only essential staff are on-site while others telework.
- **Strategy:** Developed using materials from a Washington State Housing Authority.
- **Controlling Spread:** THA established a Maintenance Emergency Response Team of 7-8 people to manage maintenance for its entire portfolio. The team only responds to emergency work orders and move-in inspections. These workers were certified in the use of PPE and sanitation. Residents are screened for COVID-19 before workers enter unit.
- **Safe Distancing:** High rises are closed to the public except essential visitors. Residents are encouraged not to congregate and limit to 1 or 2 "critical" visitors, generally caseworkers, caregivers, or close family bringing critical supplies. Visitors must sign-in at night as standard procedure. Common areas are closed except laundry on each floor, which are cleaned several times a week.
- **Safe Distribution:** Social distancing was too difficult at centralized pickup locations, THA now delivers meals and medication door-to-door, brought to the site by service providers. Private deliveries, such as FedEx and USPS, are delivered to the mailroom, then THA staff delivers them to residents.
- **Resource Coordination:** THA's nonprofit, Housing Partners of Tulsa, is taking the lead to address resident needs and coordinating resources from the Oklahoma Food Bank, local groceries, nonprofits, and philanthropy.
- **Resident and Public Communication:** Changes in operations, new protocols, and safety precautions were delivered to each unit and posted in lobbies. Information is also announced on THA's website and via building intercoms.

# Additional Resources



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- [HUD: Resources for PHAs](#)
  - [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act Notices](#)
  - [FAQs](#)
- [HUD: Resources for Native Americans](#)
  - [FAQs](#)
  - [Conference Calls with TDHEs](#)
  - [CARES Act Notices](#)
- Industry Group Resources
  - [Public Housing Authorities Directors Association](#)
  - [Council for Large Public Housing Authorities](#)
  - [National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials](#)
  - [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)
  - [EveryoneOn](#)
- [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- [CDC: Communication Resources](#)
  - Consider posting or distributing CDC guidance, such as:*
    - [How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
    - [Living in Shared Housing](#)
    - [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home](#)
    - [People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions](#)
    - [Use of Cloth Face Coverings](#)
    - [Running Errands](#)
    - [Stress & Coping](#)
    - [Caring for Someone Sick at Home](#)
- [CDC: Tribal Communities](#)
- [CDC: Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
- [USDA: Food Nutrition Services](#)