

Housing Authority of Billings

COVID-19 Action Plan

03/18/2020

The Housing Authority of Billings' office is open to the public. We have enacted limited visits with staff. Forms can be obtained and turned in at our main office, 2415 1st Avenue North during our regular office hours. Forms and rent payments can be dropped off at our night drop box also located at our main office but accessible from outside of our office. We would like to communicate via phone, email, etc. as much as possible.

We will continue to meet with clients, if requested, following HAB and the government guidelines for meetings at this time.

We want those we serve, our staff and community partners to be successful during this time of uncertainty. Having said that – we will be as flexible as we can with federal rules, regulations, guidelines and our local policies. Talk to us. Let's work together as a community.

1. PHA-Owned and Managed Affordable Housing (Public Housing, Scattered Sites, Project Based Section 8)

Applicant Interviews:

- All in-person intake appointments are cancelled and all applicants with interviews already scheduled will be mailed an intake packet and be given a phone interview.

Approving/Denying Files:

- Applications recommended for approval or denial will be submitted electronically by eligibility technicians to asset managers for review.

Informal Reviews, Informal Settlements and Informal Hearings:

- All *hearings* will be held via telephone
- Applicants may appeal their denial by submitting request for *informal review* via fax, email or US mail, with a written explanation of why their denial should be overturned along with any supporting documentation.

Lease Signings for New Tenants:

- Lease signings and initial unit assignments will continue as usual. All leasing activities will be conducted over the phone as much as possible.

Inspections and Accessing of Units:

- All routine annual inspections will be postponed until further notice.
- Life and Safety inspections will be conducted by staff as needed.
- HAB staff will have gloves, masks and shoe covers if available.

Transfers:

- Reasonable Accommodations/Emergency and VAWA Transfers will continue as usual.

Rent Calculations/Certifications:

- Staff will continue work on completing income changes – regardless of normal deadlines. Income changes reported by the resident will now be done by email, fax, US Postal Service or hand delivery to main office and or night drop box.
- Please provide supporting documentation to the change form. Change forms are available on our website or in the foyer inside our main office front door. A change form can also be emailed to you if requested.
- With supporting documentation, a resident may request a financial hardship exemption (Minimum Rent Emergency Waivers) ***for the Public Housing, Section 8 and Project Based Section 8 programs only.***

Resident Work Orders:

- Maintenance Staff will only process emergency work orders until further notice.
- Maintenance requests will only be accepted by calling our main office at (406) 245-6391.

Communal/Shared Areas:

- All Communal and Shared areas owned and or managed by HAB are closed until further notice.
- Any outside groups utilizing our Communal or Shared areas have been notified that all activities are to cease until further notice.

Repayment Agreement:

- All repayment agreements will be given a “month off” for the month of April 2020. This means that the entire amount is still owed, it will add a month to the repayment agreement.

2. Housing Choice Voucher Program

Applicants and New Participants:

- Applications will be accepted Online Only. You can apply online at www.billingsha.org

- Intake/Eligibility Appointments are postponed until further notice.
- All Eligibility and Voucher Issuance Briefings are being conducted via email, mail and phone.
- Participants may request an in-person appointment if needed.
- Staff will contact existing appointments to cancel in-person appointment and to request return of documents by mail, fax or email.

Inspections of Assisted Units:

- Inspections for participants moving to a new unit and/or entering our program will continue. These are needed in order to begin housing assistance.
- Annual Inspections will continue until the federal government provides a waiver or gives us other options.
- All re-inspections for annuals (unless health and safety) will be completed via self-certifications. All failed move-in inspections must be re-inspected.

Repayment Agreement:

- All repayment agreements will be given a “month off” for the month of April, 2020. This means that the entire amount is still owed, it will add a month to the repayment agreement.

Resources:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt>

<https://riverstonehealth.org/public-health-preventing-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://governor.mt.gov/>

<https://ci.billings.mt.us/110/Fire>

<https://covid19.mt.gov/>

This PHA COVID-19 Action Plan will be updated on a regular basis. Please visit the PHAs website at www.billingsha.org and our Facebook page – Housing Authority of Billings