



**ATHENS HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
**700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Building J Athens, AL 35611**  
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**CORONAVIRUS BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN - MARCH 17, 2020**

**Chain of Command:**

In the event the Executive Director is incapacitated or unavailable to perform their duties the Housing Operations Manager is hereby designated to act in their capacity during their absence. The Executive Director shall immediately contact the Chair and/or Vice Chair of the AHA Board of Commissioners to inform them of the circumstances necessitating this change and maintain communication with the Board.

**Communication:**

AHA is committed to communicating accurately and timely with residents, employees, government officials, vendors and the public. Use of multiple forms of communication may be employed, website, letters, emails, text messages etc.

**STAFF:**

Employees are advised to monitor their health and report any symptoms to their local 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 AHA informed of their status. AHA will work with employees to ensure they are paid while we manage this epidemic.

**RESIDENTS/PARTICIPANTS:**

AHA currently serves approximately 240 households and therefore communication may be limited to letters, use of the website, phone and emails or text messages. Residents may be asked to self-quarantine themselves to protect their neighbors and others for as long as may be required due to governmental action. We ask all of our residents to continue their lives in a manner as normal as possible and to stay alert as the conditions change. Updates will be posted at [www.athensha.org](http://www.athensha.org)

**VENDORS:**

For our partners that work with us to provide goods and services, we will keep them informed via emails and/or phone calls of any changes to our work environment. If buildings or neighborhoods are quarantined, we will make them 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 shall continue to use 911 services.

**GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS:**

AHA will work closely with state and local officials to monitor the situation and report any known instances of the virus that have affected our staff or residents. We will fully co-operate with any request for information as health officials determine the status of the virus in our communities. If and when government decrees are issued, we will work to communicate these directives to our residents and staff.

The Executive Director or her designee shall be the point of contact for all communications with public officials.

#### **INCIDENT RESPONSE:**

In the event an employee or resident has contracted the virus, the Executive Director or his/her designee shall immediately develop a response. If contact with public health officials has not yet occurred, such contact will be made immediately. We will advise the AHA Board of Commissioners also. If it is recommended that the office be closed, the Executive Director shall provide a plan as to how to continue to provide services under such circumstances. If it is necessary to cease operations of the AHA, we will communicate this via our website, emails and local media outlets. The main office number will still operate and will be forwarded to a designated staff members cell phone to be answered. Callers are encouraged to leave voicemails and messages will be returned.

#### **PREVENTION EFFORTS:**

AHA will make reasonable efforts to control the spread of the virus through commonly known personal hygiene and work practices. As part of our normal sanitizing procedures, we will utilize appropriate disinfectants as identified by health officials and provide staff with appropriate equipment and supplies. If an individual is sick, has symptoms or is known to have the virus, they must stay home and prevent the spread to others, Employees will be asked to stay at home, residents are asked to remain in their units and seek assistance from family members or others to provide for their basic necessities. If a State of Emergency is declared by an act of the government, we must all follow the instructions provided regardless of any inconveniences it may cause to our lives.

#### **OPERATIONAL PROTOCOLS:**

In the event that service delivery is curtailed due to community health concerns, AHA will strive to assist our clients to the extent feasible through electronic or written means (mail). Applications can be downloaded and printed from the website: [www.athensha.org](http://www.athensha.org) Applications can be submitted via email at [ebingham@athensha.org](mailto:ebingham@athensha.org) or by fax at (256) 232-5391 or left in the drop box located on the front of the office.

- A. Property Management.** Lease enforcement will continue to the extent complaints can be followed up via emails, texts or phone calls. AHA shall continue to comply with state and federal regulations as it relates to the enforcement of lease provisions. Staff will use alternative methods of communication in order to complete regular property management tasks such as annual-re-examinations, lease signings etc. Rent changes and voucher processing shall continue to the extent possible, subject to staff availability, via email or regular mail. Phone conversations will be documented. Lease up inspections shall continue to the extent possible subject to additional regulatory guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and staff availability. AHA staff shall continue to process program eligibility and recerts as possible however these may be delayed and or suspended until such time conditions will allow.
- B. Inspections.** In order to comply with virus containment protocols, inspections will be conducted inline with regulatory guidance.
- C. Maintenance.** AHA will use extreme caution when required to perform work in common areas and individual units. It may be necessary to invoke performing Emergency Only Work Orders. Maintenance staff must account for their time and complete hand taken work orders to be entered into the system at such time that full services are restored.
- D. Financial.** Our objective during this crisis shall be to continue to receive and make payments for good and services provided and/or delivered. Residents are expected to continue to make rent payments in a timely fashion.

Please utilize the drop box on the exterior of the front of the leasing office located at 700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Building J Athens, AL 35611 for payments or if preferred, mail payments to PO Box 650 Athens, AL 35612. Receipts will be mailed to tenants. The drop box is monitored by 24 hour video surveillance. Late fees may be waived depending on the circumstance and you will be notified of such. Should the AHA be unable to record payments in its software due to internet outage or software problem, no action will be made against tenants for non-payment of rent. Accounts payables will be processed if staff is available and proceeds are on hand to cover expenses. Every effort will be made to contact vendors and keep them informed of when payments can be expected if we are unable to process them when they are due. If the AHA's ability to process payments to vendors is impeded due to government action or the lack of staff due to the crisis, it is understood that all accrued payments shall be made when possible to process payments. Tenant refund checks from move outs are subject to availability of staff etc. Executive Director has company issued credit card privileges for emergency purchasing for AHA during said emergency.

**E: Telework:**

Working from home shall be encouraged for those employees who are sick or have been in contact with someone who has the virus. Whereas not all duties can be completed from home, every effort will be made between employer and employee to identify work that can be done electronically from home. In the event that secure access or connectivity issues should impede an employee's ability to perform such tasks, other means such as emails and cell phones shall be utilized to the greatest extent feasible. Athens Housing Authority invested in online training through HAI Group that can be accessed by all employees with internet access. This online training can be completed as part of staff duties during times where the office is closed due to the virus. All staff members are equipped with company issued cell phones with unlimited call and data services for this purpose. If the office is closed down, all active desk phone lines in the office will be forwarded to the main line 256-232-5300. This phone line will then be forwarded through to a designated staff member to answer all phone calls. This will ensure business continuity and that our residents receive services.

**F: Travel and Training:**

AHA shall rely upon the decisions made by government officials and or sponsors of the training to determine whether or not travel will continue. Should a ban be enacted that restricts travel and gatherings of large groups, we shall follow these bans accordingly. In the event that trainings are not cancelled but staff have decided it is in their best interest to forgo travel, AHA shall respect their wishes and seek reimbursement of any fees paid. If travel and training has been scheduled in an area which is quarantined or restricted, AHA shall prohibit travel to these areas.

**G: Social Gatherings/Board Meetings/Other Tenant Meetings or planned events:**

All AHA social functions and/or gatherings listed above shall be suspended or cancelled should CoVid19 cases expand causing concern for public health or the government issues limits on social gatherings. This would include all resident meetings or social gatherings on all AHA properties. It is our intent to co-operate with containment efforts and not expose our residents and guests.