

MEMO

To: Program Participants – Public Housing/Housing Choice Voucher/AHP
From: Derek Antoine, Executive Director 
CC:
Date: Tuesday, November 03, 2020
Re: COVID-19 – Increased mitigations and ongoing agency clarifications

On Sunday, November 1, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker announced enhanced coronavirus mitigations for Region 2, which includes Knox County. This was done as Illinois' reported positivity rate was above 8.0% for three consecutive days. Positivity rate is exactly what it sounds like – it refers to the amount of positive COVID-19 tests as a percent of total tests conducted. The positivity rate helps public health officials understand the current level of COVID-19 transmission in a community. A higher positivity rate suggests higher transmission and that there are likely more people with coronavirus in the community who have not been tested yet.

To state it very simply, COVID-19 cases are rising at an alarming rate, and the State of Illinois is taking increased action to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 in our region.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following precautions be taken to protect your family, yourself, and others from transmission:

- Wash your hands often using soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol – cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with others – put at least six (6) feet (approximately two arms' length) of distance between yourself and others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask or face covering when others are around.

As such, the Knox County Housing Authority is taking the following actions to comply with the Governor's ordered mitigations:

- All KCHA offices remain closed to general traffic until further notice.

- All essential leasing and occupancy functions shall be conducted remotely, utilizing phone, email, and video conferencing.
- Maintenance activities are restricted to emergency and urgent service requests, vacant unit turnaround, and preventive maintenance only.
- All indoor community spaces shall be closed until further notice - all scheduled events have been cancelled unless otherwise notified.

A few reminders for our residents and participants:

- **Rent is still due each month.**
 - **Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)** participants will still pay their landlords as usual.
 - **Brentwood and Prairieland** residents may still pay by mail or at the program office.
 - Online payment of rent - the KCHA has partnered with Zego to provide online payment options, which may be accessed at <https://knoxcountyhousing.org/pay-your-rent>.
 - A drop box has been installed at our management office – 301 Huston St. #45, Galesburg, IL 61401.
 - **Public housing (PH)** – We have made paying your rent safe and easy! We accept rent at the following locations:
 - Online payment of rent - the KCHA has partnered with Zego to provide online payment options, which may be accessed at <https://knoxcountyhousing.org/pay-your-rent>.
 - A drop box has been installed at our Central Office location – 216 W. Simmons St., Galesburg, IL 61401 – just outside the WEST entrance to the building.
 - Rent is also accepted by mail to our Central Office location
 - Payment at First Midwest Bank.
- If you have experienced a hardship directly attributable to COVID-19, please contact your program manager or occupancy specialist. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOUR RENT IS LATE TO CALL.**
- All tenant updates (family composition, income changes) must still be reported within 10 calendar days of the change.
- Tenants may report family and income changes, request allowable maintenance service, and pay towards their account balances at www.knoxcountyhousing.org.

The safety of our residents and staff continues to be our primary concern. **This memo and its contents are in effect until further notice.** Together, and through responsible action, we will get through this.

Respectfully,



Derek B. Antoine
Executive Director
Knox County Housing Authority