



CORONA VIRUS RESPONSE PLAN MARCH 19, 2020

I. Introduction:

The Housing Authority of the Town of Greenwich (“HATG”) is monitoring the current viral outbreak formally known as the Coronavirus or COVID 19. This is a constantly changing situation. We are taking this very seriously and have developed a Response Plan should this health crisis impact our delivery of services to our residents and participants of our housing programs. There are many sources of factual information concerning the virus that can be found at these websites:

- The Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov
- The Connecticut State Department of Health: <https://portal.ct.gov/dph>
- The World Health Organization: www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus
- The National Institutes of Health: www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus
- **call 211.**

For the next two work weeks (then we will re-assess): HATG wants to be cautious and react in a manner we feel is justified to protect ourselves and our families. We are taking prudent measures to protect ourselves, our residents and those we work with every day. This plan provides guidance as to how HATG can continue our work while being cautious and respectful of this serious health issue facing our community. Our goal will be to limit our employee and resident exposure to the virus and to prevent the further spread of the virus.

II. Communication:

The best efforts to combat a serious health issue like COVID19 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, the HATG website, flyers, meetings and when possible, text messaging.

Employees:

When it is necessary to communicate with multiple staff members or departments, the preferred method will be to meet individually to go over information. If the situation calls for immediate notification, use of texting and emails will be used to get information to employees quickly. 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.

Areas that are being addressed:

- Controlled access to HATG offices
- Protocols for completing work orders in resident's homes
- Responding to emergency calls
- Inspections
- New lease ups
- Use of outside vendors

Residents/Participants:

The HATG currently serves over 1200 households and therefore communication with them may be limited to written letters, e-mails, use of the website and those participating in the Honeywell Emergency Notification service. It will be important to provide our residents with helpful information that is reliable and effective. Written communication will include basic information about the virus, how to protect themselves, prevent the viruses spread and where they can find more information. They will be encouraged to contact health officials if they believe they have contracted the virus or are showing signs of the symptoms. Residents will be asked to self-quarantine themselves to protect their neighbors and others for as long as may be required due to governmental action. If you ask them to remove themselves from common areas or HATG offices, they must comply. HATG staff are instructed to call GPD if a resident fails to remove themselves from the office when requested to do so by HATG staff. We must ask all of our residents and participants to continue to live their lives in a manner as normal as possible and to stay alert as the conditions change. We must all be prepared to respond in an appropriate manner and not panic or act in a frenzied manner that will not protect ourselves or others.

Congregate services are discouraged at this time and at some point, it may be impossible to provide services on site if we can't do so with minimum congregation of residents. If schools are closed, we may work with school departments to assist in food delivery as we are able. In the event that services are disrupted, we will work with state and local officials to make every effort to provide meals and services. All residents are encouraged to take appropriate measures to have sufficient food and supplies on hand in the event that a quarantine is instituted.

Vendors:

For our partners who work with us to provide goods and services, we will keep them informed via emails and/or phone calls in 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.

Deliveries should be limited to lobby or vestibule located in the main office. Packages may be disinfected or allowed to sit more than 24 hours before processing. No vendor should be allowed front office access unless their service requires it, invoices can be dropped off in a lock box or mailed to HATG.

Government Officials:

The HATG 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 cooperate fully 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 his/her designee of the HATG shall be the point of contact for all communication with public officials.

Incident Response:

In the event an employee or resident has contracted the virus, Executives and Managers shall immediately convene to develop a response. If contact with public health officials has not yet occurred, such contact will be made immediately by the Executive Director. We will coordinate our response with them and ensure that our efforts do not duplicate or in any way impede in their ability to respond to the incident. Managers, working with public officials, will help to determine the source of the virus, take steps to ensure that the spread of the virus is halted or limited and make recommendations on how to proceed with our daily operations. Managers shall familiarize themselves with the current issues, identify resources to assist and recommend next steps. The Executive Director shall keep the Board of Commissioners informed at all times. Decisions to cease or limit operations shall be at the direction of the Executive Director or Board of Commissioners.

If it is necessary to cease operations of the HATG, we will communicate this via our website, emails, the Honeywell System and the media. Our phone lines will continue to operate, and messages can be left which will be forwarded to staff who will monitor these messages.

III. Prevention Efforts:

The HATG will make reasonable efforts to control the spread of the virus through commonly known personal practices and work practices. Information will be disseminated to staff and residents about coughing/sneezing etiquette, washing of hands and staying home if you are sick. We will make additional efforts to sanitize those areas frequented by staff and residents such as the lobbies, bathrooms, community rooms, meeting spaces and elevators. An emphasis will be made on those areas which come into frequent contact with hands. We will utilize appropriate disinfectants as identified by health officials and whenever possible use green cleaning products which serve as a qualified disinfectant.

The success of any prevention effort must rely upon the good judgement of individuals in our sphere of living. 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 apartments and seek assistance from family members or others to provide for their basic necessities. Residents displaying signs of illness may be asked to leave offices and common areas by staff. 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 in our lives.

HATG is locking its office doors. Notices will be posted giving phone numbers to call and there are drop boxes being provided. If access is allowed for limited purposes, HATG requests the resident/participant stay at least at minimum 6 feet from the front desk or the maximum length the office allows if under 6 feet. A HATG employee will ask you the nature of your visit to the office. If dropping off paperwork is nature of the visit, the resident/participant will be asked to drop it off in the box located in the vestibule of the Main Office. Resident/participants will be encouraged to use the telephone as a first option in interacting with HATG staff to arrange a limited visit if necessary. If a visit is necessary to accomplish a task, after phone call, they may be allowed as long as the above protocol is followed.

IV. Operational Protocols:

Leasing, Voucher Issuance and Applications: While service delivery is curtailed due to community health concerns, HATG will try to assist our clients to the extent feasible through electronic or written means (mail). Pre-applications are downloadable from the HATG website:

www.GreenwichHousing.org and mailed to the attention of the Waiting List. If an applicant does not appear to be ill or report having any exposure, units may be shown to no more than 1 person, using hygienic precautions and limited personal contact. If original documents must be seen and copied, limited entry into the building may be allowed (vestibule only), maintain distance, wear gloves. For all other documents dropped off in a box, allow them to sit more than 24 hours before processing.

Leases will be sent electronically or by mail followed up with phone conversations to review the lease and other pertinent documents. Showing of units will be done in person if possible. Move in/move outs inspections may be waived during any office closure or if staff is unavailable because of actions being taken. If a move out inspection cannot occur, security deposits shall be returned minus any unpaid rent. Lease enforcement will continue to the extent complaints can be followed up via emails, texts or phone calls. HATG shall continue to comply with state and federal regulations as it relates to the enforcement of lease provisions.

Voucher lease ups shall continue to the extent possible. Paperwork shall continue to be processed, subject to staff availability, via email or regular mail. Phone conversations shall be documented. Lease up inspections shall continue to the extent possible subject to the availability of staff as well as additional regulatory guidance from the U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development and The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. Voucher issuance may be suspended if a quarantine or discretion given staff in this protocol, if staffing is limited or unavailable and is subject to governmental action.

Program eligibility; Interim Recertifications: If the household has experienced a decrease in income since the last action, please call your Housing Manager to report this. HATG will make note of this report and do everything feasible to verify the decrease in income through third party sources, fax, email, or scanned documents. If these efforts fail, HATG will contact the household and ask them to drop off the necessary documents in a drop box at the office and will process the action.

Inspections: In order to comply with virus 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 and government restrictions. HATG will use outside inspectors if they are available. **Inspectors may delay annual inspections for the next two weeks or they may conduct them where people appear not to be ill**, if they can limit the number of people they come in contact with and maintain hygienic precautions and or use personal protective gear. **HATG staff may exercise discretion and prudent judgement for their own protection and to stop the virus spread.** HATG will not allow inspection of units where a known CoVid19 case exists.

Maintenance: HATG will use extreme caution when required to perform work in common areas and individual units. If sick, personnel will be asked to remain home and refrain from performing any work on behalf of HATG. If residents are infected by the virus or showing flu like symptoms, HATG staff may exercise discretion and prudent judgement for their own protection and to stop the virus spread. This includes use of proper protective clothing, respirators, gloves, face masks and other protective gear as needed. We are now on Emergency/Urgent, health and safety, vacant unit tum and increased hygienic cleanings only!

Increased attention will be made to cleaning and disinfecting areas with heavy pedestrian traffic and surfaces which come into frequent contact of humans. Doors, handrails, elevator buttons, intercom panels for example should be cleaned at least once per day, subject to staffing availability. Areas at the other developments requiring priority attention shall be Agnes Morley Heights and McKinney Terrace II. This includes all community rooms and common areas. The Main Office will be cleaned regularly by maintenance and at the end of each business day by office staff.

Maintenance 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 of our facilities.

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. HATG will work with our software vendor and our bank to determine if we can expand direct deposit payments.

Revenue: Staff, to the extent possible, shall make every effort to record revenues received and process deposits as needed. Should the HATG be hampered in its ability to collect and record payments, no action will be made upon any household for non-payment of rent. Until such time as mail delivery is suspended, we will regularly check our mailbox to receive and record payments. Staff will continue to verify direct deposits through online banking systems.

Accounts Payables will be processed if staff are available and proceeds are on hand to cover expenses. Every effort will be made to reach out to vendors and keep them informed of when payments can be expected if we are unable to process them when they are due. Payments to landlords shall be processed provided funds are made available from the federal government. Priority will be given to direct deposits. Those requiring a check to be processed shall be completed subject to availability of staff and funds. If the HATG's ability to process payments to its landlord and vendors is impeded due to government action or the lack of staff due to this crisis, it is understood that all accrued payments shall be made upon the earliest possible ability to process said payments. As per HAP agreements, HATG is requesting patience and understanding during this difficult time.

Communication will be made with all our landlords to keep them informed of our situation and to ask that they not take any adverse action against participants in the Housing Choice Voucher should payments be delayed. This shall be done through written communication.

Telework: HATG intends to follow CDC guidance in respect to our response to the COVID-19 outbreak. CDC recommends that persons at heightened risk of serious illness should work from home if possible. Those health conditions that CDC describes are found at Appendix A on the following PDF: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf>. HATG Staff with these conditions or with a household member with these conditions, should work from home.

If you fall into any of these categories, please know that if you want to work from home, HATG will support you and help make this happen. Affected staff, please make arrangements with your supervisor who will help coordinate your schedule and work with IT to set it up. All department heads are instructed to work to accommodate such requests within the regulatory restrictions placed on the agency.

Additional work at home arrangements may be allowed by Department Heads on a schedule which will allow for greater social distancing at our offices, after considering relief caused by work at home by vulnerable staff members (see above). 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. HATG shall provide computer access through a VPN connection and accordance with prescribed protocols established by our IT partners. All management staff are to confirm connections with IT. 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.

Maintenance obviously cannot be performed at home therefore 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 into our emergency call line to report any issues requiring immediate attention. Any staff required to perform work at any of our properties shall wear proper protection provided by HATG and utilize safe work practices at all times. No unauthorized or non-HATG approved Personal Protective Gear is allowed. Employees are advised to monitor their health and report any symptoms 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 HATG informed of their status.

Testing is available arranged by your primary care physician.

V. Travel & Training:

HATG directs all training and travel be discontinued. HATG will process cancellations.

VI. Social Gatherings:

HATG will not conduct or authorize gatherings of residents of more than 10, including the Community Rooms, if they can be avoided and will discourage gatherings organized by residents



Appendix A: Underlying medical conditions that may increase the risk of serious COV ID-19 for individuals of any age.

- **Blood disorders** (e.g., sickle cell disease or on blood thinners)
- **Chronic kidney disease** as defined *by* your doctor. Patient has been told to avoid or reduce the dose of medications because kidney disease, or is under treatment for kidney disease, including receiving dialysis
- **Chronic liver disease** as defined by your doctor. (e.g., cirrhosis, chronic hepatitis) Patient has been told to avoid or reduce the dose of medications because liver disease or is under treatment for liver disease.
- **Compromised immune system (immunosuppression)** (e.g., seeing a doctor for cancer and treatment such as chemotherapy or radiation, received an organ or bone marrow transplant, taking high doses of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressant medications, HIV or AIDS)
- **Current or recent pregnancy** in the last two weeks
- **Endocrine disorders** (e.g., diabetes mellitus)
- **Metabolic disorders** (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
- **Heart disease** (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)
- **Lung disease** including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (chronic bronchitis or emphysema) or other chronic conditions associated with impaired lung function or that require home oxygen
- **Neurological and neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions** [including disorders of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve, and muscle such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy (seizure disorders), stroke, intellectual disability, moderate to severe developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, or spinal cord injury).