



# Tuscaloosa Housing Authority

COVID-19

Action Plan

March 16, 2020

## **Introduction**

The *Tuscaloosa Housing Authority COVID-19 Action Plan* is intended to be a measured response based on three levels of community spread. A decision to elevate response levels will be based on information received from local authorities, public health officials, and the observations of Authority staff.

The intent of the Action Plan is to prevent the spread of disease among THA residents, staff and community partners. Please be aware that the Plan is likely to change, as additional information becomes available.

Below are the three levels of community spread and the measured actions the Authority will undertake to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### **Level I (No community spread evident)**

1. Authority staff will take all the precautions taken during Flu Season to include:
  - Washing hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water multiple times per day
  - Properly covering sneezes and coughs to avoid contamination
  - Discarding used tissues in wastebaskets
  - Frequent use of hand sanitizer
2. Authority staff who are experiencing cold or flu like symptoms will be required to stay at home to prevent infecting others (Examples include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue).
3. Procurement will be advised to order disinfectants and supplies and will closely monitor inventory and usage.
4. Authority staff will assist with other prevention measures such as appropriate cleaning of surfaces in high traffic areas (door knobs, stair rails, elevators, faucet handles, light switches, copy machines, keyboards, etc.)
5. Authority staff will monitor news and updates from the Tuscaloosa County Health Department, State Health Department, the City of Tuscaloosa, and the Center for Disease Control, etc.
6. Authority staff will be required to inform their supervisor regarding any recent travel or anticipated travel to countries, cities, or other locations identified with infected individuals.

## **Level II (Community spread is imminent)**

1. Authority staff will continue using the same precautions and protocols identified in Phase I.
2. Authority events and functions involving large groups will be postponed until further notice. This does not include essential functions such as Board Meetings, etc.
3. Business related travel will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis and will generally be confined to the State of Alabama.
4. Authority staff will be required to disclose whether or not they have been exposed through contact with an infected person. Staff members may be asked to remain at home rather than coming into the office under these circumstances.
5. The Authority's IT Department will begin preparing laptops and other equipment for remote access to work files.
6. Staff with compromised immune systems can elect to mask, if masks are available.
7. Authority staff will be encouraged to communicate via phone or email and face-to-face interaction will occur only when necessary.
8. If face-to-face interaction is unavoidable, Authority staff will be encouraged to minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and sit at least six feet from each other, if possible; person-to-person contact such as shaking hands should be avoided at all times.
9. Authority staff will be discouraged from congregating in areas such as break rooms, copy centers, or other areas where people socialize.
10. Authority staff most likely to interact with the public (receptionists, public housing managers, maintenance staff, and Section 8 case workers) can elect to mask when interacting with the public, if masks are available.
11. Authority staff will keep residents and clients informed of any significant changes to office hours, rent collection procedures, work order procedures, information gathering, etc. Residents will be encouraged to call or email THA staff to minimize face-to-face interaction.
12. Public housing managers will closely monitor community needs and work with the Authority's social services staff to ensure referrals are made.

13. If a visitor shows flu like symptoms, the receptionist will ask the visitor to verbally provide their name, phone number and reason for their visit. Receptionist will inform them that a staff member will contact them by phone to complete the service transaction. The receptionist will clean and sanitize any objects or surfaces that may have been touched.
14. Management staff will direct the work of the maintenance staff to limit exposures as much as possible. Maintenance staff will be advised to use all necessary precautions to avoid potential contamination when entering a unit.
15. Public housing managers and other THA staff will be advised to use the same precautions when entering a unit becomes necessary.
16. In general, staff will be advised to minimize direct interactions with tenants, clients, and the public, while completing their work duties. Management will work closely with staff to determine the necessary level of interaction.

### **Level III (Community spread is active)**

1. Authority staff will continue using the same precautions and protocols identified in Phase I & II.
2. Authority management may further minimize face-to-face interactions by limiting office hours open to the public.
3. Current residents, clients, etc., may be advised to consult with Authority staff by phone or email only.
4. Authority management will follow the guidance of the city and local and state health officials in determining further actions.
5. Authority management and staff will continue on-call duties to address emergencies only.

Authority staff should continue to monitor the following websites for additional guidance and information:

<http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/2019-coronavirus.html>

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

<https://www.tuscaloosa.com/covid19>