



COVID-19 Updates at MaineHousing

The health and safety of our employees, their families and friends, and our partners and colleagues is foremost in our minds as we all respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

MaineHousing is open for business and will remain open. Our building, however, is closed to the public.

Thousands of Maine households rely on our distribution of millions of dollars in assistance and we need to be here for them. The work we do is critical to helping people through this crisis, and will become more so as this pandemic continues. We continue to carefully monitor the recommendations issued by the Governor's office and Maine CDC and adjust our work accordingly.

We want you to know how these adjustments and changes might affect your work with us. Our business continuity plan is in place to ensure that all critical programs and services remain operational. Below you will find a synopsis of our plans by department. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.



Asset Management:

We are making monthly rental assistance payments. These are payments made for Section 8 rental assistance subsidy.

We are continuing with contract renewals. Every property that receives Section 8 rental assistance is under a Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract. HAP contracts have fixed terms, so when the contract nears the end of the term, it needs to be renewed.

We will continue rent increases as needed. Each HAP contract has a provision for annual rent increases, and most have an "operating cost adjustment factor" (OCAF) applied to the rents annually. We apply the OCAF to the rents to calculate new rent levels going forward.



Development:

Our Development Department continues to operate at typical capacity. Underwriters continue to move through the projects in our pipeline. Closings can be held virtually. Construction Analyst inspections may be scheduled after hours or on weekends when construction workers are not on site. Monthly requisition and progress meetings can also be held virtually.



EHS:

We are continuing to issue weekly HEAP payments. Partner agency audits and program inspections are currently cancelled, postponed, or done through a desk review.



Homeless Initiatives:

We will continue to issue quarterly shelter payments; current shelter monitoring procedures are suspended for the time being.

Meetings with business partners will continue and be conducted via teleconferencing, and call-in information will be provided prior to the meeting. Please be sure to check [the Maine Homeless Planning website](#) for Maine Continuum of Care (CoC) and Statewide Homeless Council meeting updates.

We will continue to staff the [HMIS Help Desk](#) and the [ESHAP Help Desk](#) to answer questions and provide technical assistance. There may be times when the Homeless Initiatives Department has limited staffing levels, but we are committed to responding as quickly as possible.

Housing Choice Vouchers:

Move-in inspections are conducted when a voucher recipient finds an apartment and a landlord willing to participate in our Housing Choice Voucher program. Those inspections will continue for units that are vacant.

Voucher expiration dates will be relaxed, recognizing the increased difficulty of finding housing. Please contact us if you need an extension on your voucher.

If you have a voucher through MaineHousing and have lost your job or have had a decrease in your income, please contact us at 207-624-5789 so we can discuss modifying your contribution to your rent.

Voucher briefings, which are held with voucher recipients when they receive a voucher, will continue over the phone.

Our Family Self-Sufficiency program, ReStart, will continue to operate remotely and will meet with clients over the phone.

It is important to keep people sheltered during this pandemic. We ask that landlords work with their tenants to resolve any lease violations so that people remain housed.



Homeownership:

Our Home Mortgage Purchase program remains operational. If you are a potential homebuyer seeking program information, please [visit our website](#) or [contact one of MaineHousing's lender partners from this list](#). Lender partners should contact their assigned Mortgage Lending Officer via email or visit the Lender Online bulletin board for further updates and any announcement of changes to our current operations.

If you have a MaineHousing First Home Loan and are experiencing a financial hardship and difficulties making your payment due to COVID-19 we are here to help. [Read about your options here](#).

As an immediate precaution, the Homeownership Department is suspending all in-person lender trainings, Realtor CEU classes and outside conference participation, and staff have been encouraged to work remotely. However, it is our goal to still provide any desired training services using tele-conferencing options.

Most live homebuyer education classes are being cancelled or rescheduled. Potential homebuyers should visit the [hoMEworks website](#) for a current schedule of classes, or look into a homebuyer education online course [offered by eHomeAmerica](#).

COVID Related Sites & Resources

Residents

- [State of Maine - COVID-19 Response](#) - Latest information on COVID-19 in Maine from the Office of the Governor.
- [Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) – For the latest updates on COVID-19 in Maine
- [Maine Helps](#) - How Mainer's can helping Mainers during the COVID-19 outbreak

Developers, Property Managers & Owners

- [The Institute of Real Estate Management](#) - Pandemic Guide for Real Estate Managers
- [The National Multifamily Housing Council](#) - COVID-19 Preparedness for Apartment Firms
- [The Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) – Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Retirement Communities and Independent Living Facilities
- [The Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) – Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Supportive Housing

The Department of Housing and Urban Development toolkits for Continuum of Care (COC) Agencies.

Preventing & Managing the Spread of Infectious Disease:

- [People Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Within Shelters](#)
- [Within Encampments](#)