

Housing Trust Fund and Bridges Rental Assistance Updates: Additional Inspection Guidance

Thank you for your continued work to assist participants in locating and securing new units during this challenging time. We want to provide additional clarification regarding the [initial physical inspection information that we sent to you on May 18, 2020](#).

In order for a new unit (either a new admission or a unit transfer) to qualify for Housing Trust Fund or Bridges rental assistance, Minnesota Housing must have documentation that the unit complies with the local maintenance code, or if no local maintenance code, then the housing quality standards (HQS) adopted by HUD. **This means that if an initial physical inspection is not conducted, a virtual physical inspection or landlord self-certification document must be completed for each unit prior to the date of move-in and sent to Minnesota Housing staff for approval before rental assistance subsidy payments can begin.** Physical inspections are still required and must be completed no later than 30 days after the Peacetime Emergency ends.

When applying for an exception to the initial physical inspection, submit the following to mhfa.grants@state.mn.us:

- Request the exception to the initial physical inspection, and state the hardship that is preventing the initial physical inspection from taking place.
- Indicate the unit and the participant (initials only) for whom the exception is being requested.
- Include documentation that supports that the unit is safe and habitable and meets the local housing maintenance code or HQS, as applicable (e.g. copy of the virtual physical inspection; self-certification form from the landlord).

Minnesota Housing will respond to these exception requests within two business days in order to assist with the move-in process; please plan accordingly for the approval step, as subsidy payments cannot be dated retroactively. **Rental assistance subsidy payments can begin either the day that Minnesota Housing staff approves the documentation or the effective date of the lease, whichever is later.** In addition to the required inspection documentation and approval, all other mandatory paperwork must be completed and placed in the participant file before rental assistance can begin.

Following this process will maintain compliance with state statute and the terms of your Grant Contract. Again, thank you for your continued flexibility and work through these difficult times. Please reach out to [Ellie Miller](#) or [Merideth Mayrand](#) with any questions.

COVID-19 and Minnesota Housing

Minnesota Housing has a [COVID-19 webpage](#) on our website that includes previous eNews publications sent to our partners as well as other useful information.

Prioritizing the health and safety of staff and participants and maintaining housing stability, are very important to Minnesota Housing. Thank you for all you are doing to provide continued services and rental assistance to participants during this challenging time.



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