

Housing Trust Fund and Bridges Rental Assistance Updates

While we are certain that you have been receiving guidance and staying informed about COVID-19, we want to communicate how specific program requirements are being impacted and share helpful resources.

Housing Trust Fund and Bridges Rental Assistance Program Requirements

Annual and Interim Certifications

Please follow your internal guidance about working with participants and social distancing. We encourage you to use alternative modes of connection such as phone calls, e-mails, Skype, and video calling to engage with participants who may be at a higher risk of exposure or have increased needs during this time. Whenever possible, make arrangements to gather information and receive required verifications electronically or by mail. We understand that some annual and interim certifications may be delayed, so we ask that you thoroughly document all delays in the “Notes” section of the monthly log, and reflect subsequent adjustments to rental assistance amounts as appropriate on your monthly draw requests. Minnesota Housing supports changes that you may implement to expedite processing interim certifications for participants experiencing a loss in income due to current circumstances.

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections

In order to protect your staff and participants, annual HQS inspections required by Minnesota Housing can be suspended until recommendations by the [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\)](#) allow for unit inspections to resume. You will need to track which inspections are being postponed, and complete those inspections once restrictions have been lifted. Please continue to complete initial inspections, as these are conducted in vacant units. We will provide guidance about completing delayed inspections at a later time. We are only temporarily suspending Minnesota Housing requirements; reach out to other entities or funders about their particular requirements.

If you have more questions as you navigate interactions with participants and assess program requirements, reach out to [Ellie Miller](#) or [Merideth Mayrand](#).

Resources that may be useful to you and your organization as you respond to COVID-19

1. The Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness have added a page to the [Heading Home Alliance website](#) for resources and updates specific to homeless service providers.
2. The [Minnesota Department of Health website](#) has up-to-date information about how COVID-19 is unfolding in Minnesota, the state’s response and additional guidance.
3. Continue to check the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#) for current information, resources and guidance.
4. [Corporation for Supportive Housing has pulled together a summary](#) of what supportive housing providers need to know to prepare and respond to COVID-19.
5. HUD posted CDC guidance and technical assistance (TA) materials on the [HUD Exchange Disease Risks and Homelessness webpage](#), which hosts a number of resources, including but not limited to:
 - [Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to COVID](#)
 - [Infectious Disease Preparedness for Homeless Assistance Providers and Their Partners Training](#)
 - [COVID 19 Client Support and Care](#)

Prioritizing the health and safety of program 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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