

To: All Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) Residents

Fm: Brookline Housing Authority

Re: Information & Resources for BHA Residents – Update #4

Dt: May 15, 2020

Please read this whole memo and the attachments very carefully.

The BHA appreciates all that you are doing to help keep our community safe and healthy during the coronavirus outbreak. The safety precautions that you are taking are extremely important. So too is the BHA's increased focus on cleaning and disinfecting your buildings and promoting social distancing. ***We need your continued help. Together, we can make a difference.***

BROOKLINE HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS HELPING TO STOP THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

The state of Massachusetts notifies the Brookline Health Department (B.H.D) when any resident of Brookline tests positive for COVID-19. The B.H.D then contacts the resident who has tested positive and places them in isolation/quarantine. The B.H.D requires the resident who tests positive to not leave their home or apartment for any reason until healthy, and they check in on the resident daily to ensure compliance with the isolation/quarantine, and to make sure that the resident in isolation/quarantine has their needs taken care of (food, medicine, etc.).

The B.H.D also conducts "contact tracing" (contacting all those who may have had direct exposure to the resident in isolation/quarantine). If the B.H.D confirms that a resident of Brookline has had direct contact with a person who is sick with COVID-19, even if they have no symptoms of the disease, they will be placed in quarantine and monitored for fourteen days. The state of Massachusetts is also assisting in the contact tracing effort (see attached flyer).

Because of strict privacy laws, the B.H.D conducts all quarantines behind the scenes and cannot share this information with the BHA. However, we can take great comfort in knowing that the B.H.D. has been protecting the Brookline community from the spread of serious infectious diseases for over a century through these tried and true quarantine methods.

The B.H.D advises us to assume that there are neighbors in your building that are being isolated/quarantined, even if there are none. The B.H.D. also reminds us that if a BHA maintenance worker or contractor is called to your apartment for an urgent maintenance need, you should either leave your apartment while the work is being completed or move to a

different room and close the door while the work is being done. Once the worker leaves your apartment, you should disinfect any surfaces the worker may have touched.

By taking steps to protect yourselves from the coronavirus such as practicing social distancing, wearing a mask, and washing your hands frequently, you can help to keep yourself and your neighbors safe and healthy.

RESOURCES AND SERVICES THAT CAN HELP YOU

Resident Services. Support services continue to be available to residents. Please look at the attached list of resources, including economic stimulus payments, low-cost internet, domestic violence hotline, and more. You can find these and others on our website at <https://www.brooklinehousing.org/community-resources>.

FREE Meal Sites for Children. The Public Schools of Brookline are now operating two new “Grab and Go” meal sites at the BHA. Free breakfast and lunch are provided. No registration is required. ALL children and youth age 21 and younger are eligible.

High St. Veterans @ 30 New Terrace (parking lot): Monday/Wednesday/Friday 12:15-12:45pm
Egmont/Trustman @ 55R Egmont St. (in front of community room): Monday/Friday 1-1:30pm

For pre-orders, call/text **617-821-1293** or visit publicschoolsofbrooklineschoolnutrition.com.
(Click “Out of School Ordering” on the left side of the page).

OUR SERVICE PARTNERS CAN HELP

The BHA and our resident community have a special relationship with two of our partner agencies, Brookline Center for Community Mental Health, and Springwell. These agencies offer a range of services to residents that can include home delivered meals, help with daily activities, guidance with difficult financial issues, and counseling. Representatives from both of these agencies are checking in by telephone to many of you during these difficult times, so if you receive a phone call from either the Brookline Center or Springwell, please know that it is not a scam.

IRS SCAM ALERT

The IRS urges taxpayers to be on the lookout for scam artists trying to use the \$1,200 economic impact payments as cover for schemes to steal personal information and money. Remember, the IRS will not call, text you, email you or contact you on social media asking for personal or bank account information – even related to the economic impact payments. For more information, please visit www.irs.gov/coronavirus-tax-relief-and-economic-impact-payments.

REQUIRED USE OF FACE COVERINGS & BHA EFFORTS TO SUPPLY RESIDENTS WITH FACEMASKS

In Massachusetts, facemasks are now required when you leave your apartment (in public places where social distancing is not possible). Please see the attached facemask memo for further details on how to comply with this new requirement.

The BHA is pleased to provide BHA residents with facemasks that meet the requirements of the Town of Brookline and the state of Massachusetts. If you have not received your facemask, you will soon. Please see the attached memo for important information about these reusable cloth facemasks.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF EVICTIONS FOR NONPAYMENT OF RENT

The state and federal government have temporarily suspended evictions for nonpayment of rent (see attached flyer) during the coronavirus health emergency.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMELY MONTHLY RENT PAYMENTS

Your rent is still due during this temporary suspension of evictions and will accumulate if unpaid, so we encourage you to continue to pay your rent in a timely manner. Even though our central office is closed to the public, you can drop off rent payments at the BHA central office drop-box at 90 Longwood Avenue.

RENT ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO LOSS OF INCOME

If you have lost your job or have had a significant loss of income, your monthly rent can be adjusted downward. If you find yourself in this situation, you should contact your Property Manager now. We will work with you to complete rent changes as fast as possible.

If your rent is lowered because of loss of income, you must notify us right away if you gain new income, such as unemployment benefits or a return to work.

FEDERAL STIMULUS PAYMENTS NOT COUNTED AS INCOME IN CALCULATING YOUR RENT

The \$1,200 federal stimulus payments that most BHA residents are receiving will not be counted as income when calculating your monthly rent payment.

Regular unemployment benefits will be counted as income when calculating rent, although there may be an exception for the extra \$600 per week CARES Act unemployment benefits.

BHA STAFF ARE CONTINUING OUR EFFORTS TO KEEP YOUR BUILDINGS SAFE

While we are severely limiting person to person contact during this health emergency, we remain available to residents and applicants by phone and email. Our staff priorities continue to include: practicing safe distancing; the use of masks and gloves at all times while working in BHA buildings; disinfecting frequently touched surfaces in building common areas; and the completion of emergency health and safety work orders while routine work orders are deferred until after the emergency.

WHAT RESIDENTS SHOULD DO TO STAY SAFE

We ask that you continue to follow important rules and guidelines to help protect yourselves and your neighbors from the coronavirus, including: following the facemask wearing order when outside of your apartment; staying home if not feeling well, telling your Property Manager if you are under quarantine; washing your hands frequently and coughing into your elbow; avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth; wiping down frequently touched surfaces in your apartment with disinfectant; staying six feet apart from everyone and avoiding groups of people.

SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES UPDATE

To reduce the spread of the coronavirus and until further notice, we remind you of the critical importance of following these social distancing rules:

- **Residents should restrict all visitors from entering their buildings unless they are a health care professional, a vendor or service provider approved by the BHA, or an immediate family member with no symptoms of COVID-19.**
- **All BHA playgrounds are closed.** In order to prevent the spread of this virus, do not allow your children on play equipment.
- **No cookouts or outside gatherings are allowed on BHA property.**
- **Dogs are not allowed on BHA property unless prior approval is given by Management.** Approved pets must be on a leash at all times and owners must pick up after their pets.
- **All BHA community rooms are closed.**
- **Other than immediate family members, no more than two people are allowed on an elevator at one time.**
- **Proper social distancing and wearing of facemasks must take place at all times while on BHA property.** Access to laundry facilities will continue. Cleaning and drying your laundry at hot temperatures kills viruses. **Help to keep the laundry machines clean by wiping down areas you have touched and then washing your hands.**

Please note that all meal service programs affiliated with the Brookline Food Pantry and Springwell will continue, but are modified to follow social distancing.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR BHA STAFF AND SERVICES

To reduce risk, the BHA office staff is working off-site as much as possible. As you know, we have closed our offices to the public until further notice. We are available by phone and email during normal business hours. **You can contact the BHA central office by phone (617) 277-2022 or email brhainfo@brooklinehousing.org. You can visit our website www.brooklinehousing.org for updates and staff contacts. If you would like to receive updates by email or text, fill out the contact form on our website or email brhainfo@brooklinehousing.org with your contact information.**

BHA Property Managers can be contacted through BHA cell phones. Property Manager information is at the end of this letter.

The Maintenance Department can be reached at (617) 277-1884 during work hours or (617) 277-2022 for after-hours emergencies or by the BHA website.

Property Manager Contact Information:

- *Nereida Otero-Torres* notero@brooklinehousing.org (cell: 857-225-8082)
Walnut Street Apartments (617-734-6348)/High Street Veterans Apartments (617-232-2283)
- *Kelley Chambliss* kchambliss@brooklinehousing.org (cell: 857-225-7434)
Morse Apartments (617-277-2022 X 321)/Egmont Street Veterans Apartments (617-713-0486)
- *Carol Porcari* cporcari@brooklinehousing.org (cell: 617-694-7504)
Sussman House (617-734-6349)/O'Shea House (617-566-4666)
- *Ana De La Puente* adelapuate@brooklinehousing.org (cell: 617-735-7218)
Kickham & Col. Floyd Apartments (617-277-1382)/Trustman Apartments (617-232-2265)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you need help accessing these or other resources, please reach out to:

BHA Seniors Buildings

Contact your property manager or Brookline Center for Community Mental Health or Springwell Care Coordinator below:

90 Longwood/190 Harvard St./Colonel Floyd: Cici 617-972-5627 (speaks Mandarin)

61 Park St. LLC: Natisha 617-607-1114

50 Pleasant: Reyan (617) 972-5680

Springwell Case Manager Line: (617) 926-4100

Trustman/Egmont St./86 Dummer St. Residents:

Julia Blencowe 617-735-6870, JuliaBlencowe@brooklinecenter.org

22 High St./High St Veterans Residents

Lolita Gonsalves-Alston or Mitra Tummino at (617) 277-8107

To: BHA Residents

Fm: BHA Response Team

Re: Masks for BHA Residents

Dt: May 4, 2020

Effective Wednesday, May 6, 2020, anyone over the age of two in Massachusetts is required to wear a face mask or cloth face covering over their nose and mouth when out in public where social distancing is not possible, per an Executive Order by Governor Baker. This Executive Order is similar to an order adopted by the Town of Brookline, effective April 17, 2020, that requires the use of face mask or cloth face covering in all public places in Town.

Please note the following guidance about the use of masks derived from the Brookline Department of Public Health:

- Masks should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face. They should allow for breathing without restriction.
- Masks should be used when leaving your apartment, such as when getting mail, taking out trash, and using the laundry room.
- Masks should be washed with warm soapy water daily.
- You can also make your own mask. Please go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/DIY-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf> for instructions provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- Cloth face coverings or masks should not be placed on children younger than two years of age, or on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove the mask themselves.
- Please do not call 911 or the regular Police Department phone number to report someone not wearing a face covering.
- Please continue to practice social distancing and good hygiene:
 - Maintain six feet of distance from others
 - Clean your hands frequently with soap or 60%+ alcohol-based sanitizer
 - Healthy outdoor exercise is still allowed with these precautions.

Persons with medical conditions that limit the use of face masks, or persons requiring a reasonable accommodation as a result of a disability, are encouraged to contact the state Department of Public Health or the Brookline Health Department if they have questions about the applicability of these orders to them. Please visit <https://www.mass.gov/news/wear-a-mask-in-public> and <https://www.mass.gov/news/wear-a-mask-in-public> for the full Governor's Executive Order and information on face mask usage from the Town of Brookline.

For our residents who do not otherwise have access to masks or cloth face coverings, the Brookline Housing Authority is pleased to give you the enclosed, reusable mask(s) to assist in meeting this requirement.

Disclaimer: The BHA is providing these masks in order assist residents in their own efforts to remain safe and healthy. The BHA does not make any warranties, guarantees or representations about the suitability or effectiveness of these masks. The BHA does not bear responsibility or liability related to these masks for any individuals, including BHA residents and others. By requesting and accepting a mask through the BHA, the end user accepts all responsibility for use of these masks. For questions/comments, please contact brhainfo@brooklinehousing.org.

Thanks to Got Masks Brookline, the Boston Area Masks Initiative, the Brookline Kids Clothes Club, the Brookline Safety Net Fund, and many neighbors who provided masks to the BHA.



TOWN OF BROOKLINE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER *Brookline, Massachusetts*

Use of Face Coverings in Public

New Guidelines

- The Town of Brookline now asks that all residents wear a face covering in all public spaces
- Continue social distancing and hand hygiene
 - Maintain 6 feet of distance from others
 - Wash your hands frequently
 - Use at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - Clean surfaces regularly



Information compiled from:



Cloth face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

Face coverings should not be used on:

- Children younger than 2 years of age
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These must be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders.

For More Information

General Information and Additional Guidance for Non-English Speakers: [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Medical Questions

Brookline Dept. of Public Health

617-730-2300

COVIDmedical@brooklinema.gov

Non-Medical Questions

Brookline COVID-19 Call Center

617-879-5636

COVID19Info@brooklinema.gov

brooklinecovid19.com

The solution starts with all of us. Answer the call.

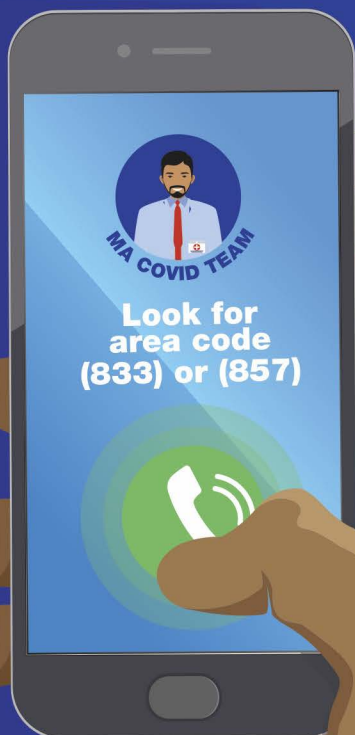
The greatest act of love is answering the call. If you've tested positive for COVID-19, the MA COVID Team will be reaching out via phone to connect you with the support you need through quarantine and to identify your close contacts to stop the spread.

Your caller ID will show the call is coming from

MA COVID TEAM
(833) or (857)

Answer the call.
Stop the virus.

#COVID19MA



Community Tracing Collaborative



Partners
In Health

Your name will
not be released.





Addressing Tenant Concerns Regarding Rent and the Temporary Suspension of Evictions for Nonpayment of Rent

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developed this flyer to provide Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), Public Housing, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation (Mod Rehab) participants with important information and resources about paying rent during the national emergency concerning the coronavirus pandemic.

What is the suspension of evictions about?

Evictions for nonpayment of rent, and charges/fees for nonpayment of rent, have been temporarily suspended. This applies to all HUD-assisted participants from March 27, 2020 to July 24, 2020¹. Although your Public Housing Authority's (PHA) Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policies (ACOP) and/or Administrative Plan may not be updated, please be aware that the suspension of evictions for nonpayment of rent is in place.

Having trouble making rent?

- Voucher and public housing participants: If you lost your job or had a significant loss of income, **request an interim reexamination** with the housing authority as soon as possible. Your rent can be adjusted to reflect the change in income or you may be eligible for a financial hardship exemption. Your housing authority may also know about other local resources.
- Voucher participants only: **Contact your landlord right away**. Reach out early to discuss potential payment plans or accommodations. Due to loss in income and the resulting interim reexamination, your rent adjustment may be retroactive. Confirm with the PHA and your landlord whether you will receive a credit for the previous month.

What else should you know?

- **Rent is still due** during this time period and will accumulate if unpaid.
- Your landlord and the PHA cannot initiate a new eviction action for nonpayment of rent and you should not receive a notice to vacate for nonpayment of rent from March 27, 2020 – July 24, 2020.
- Your landlord and the PHA cannot charge any late fees, or accrue charges/fees, and your assistance cannot be terminated for past due rent in April, May, June and July 2020.
- If you are behind on rent after the suspension of evictions expire: **Voucher participants** need to negotiate directly with your landlord to determine requirements to repay unpaid rent. Otherwise, your landlord could file an eviction. **Public housing participants** need to work with the PHA to pay unpaid rent in a lump sum or set up a repayment agreement. Otherwise, your assistance could be terminated and/or the PHA could file an eviction.
- Evictions for nonpayment of rent filed with the court before March 27, 2020 can proceed if there is no conflict with state or local laws.
- The PHA or your landlord can still terminate assistance and evict for drug abuse, criminal activity, lease violations, fraud, repeated minor violations, other good cause, etc.
- HUD does not intervene or participate in eviction proceedings. If you feel you are being wrongfully evicted, contact your local legal aid organization or social service agencies. If you are a Voucher participant, you may also contact your local PHA.



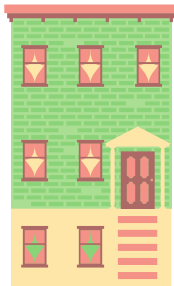
¹ Enacted in Section 4024 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, 2020 "CARES Act" (Public Law 116-136).

**TOWN OF BROOKLINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**
11 Pierce Street, Brookline, Massachusetts, 02445
Telephone: (617) 730-2300 Facsimile: (617) 730-2296
Website: www.brooklinema.gov

The following guidelines aim to help property owners, managers, and trustees take the necessary measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.

**Given the current situation, everyone should be suspected of infection and carefully follow guidelines*

Property owners, managers, and trustees



- If possible, try to have one assigned maintenance personnel and avoid rotations
- Cancel any walk-in office hours and hold them over the phone
- Accept maintenance requests only in case of emergency
- For liability purposes, remind tenants that if you send maintenance personnel, they will have most likely interacted with other apartments in the past
- Be transparent with your tenants: Send an email to your tenants in anticipation, explaining that you will be prioritizing emergencies only, and that finding maintenance staff may be more complicated

Tenant

- If possible, explain the situation to the maintenance personnel over the phone beforehand to avoid prolonged contact in person
- If possible, have everyone living on the premise stay in their room/a separate room from where the intervention is taking place, and have only one person interact with maintenance personnel, ideally someone in the house who does not present COVID-19 symptoms
 - If children are in the house, make sure they stay in a different room
- Wear a face cover and gloves
- Do not greet maintenance personnel by shaking hands
- Remain at 6 ft of distance from each other at all times
- After the repair, disinfect all surfaces where repair has taken place and all surfaces that have been touched (doorknobs, light switches, etc.) with bleach
- Wash hands before and after interaction

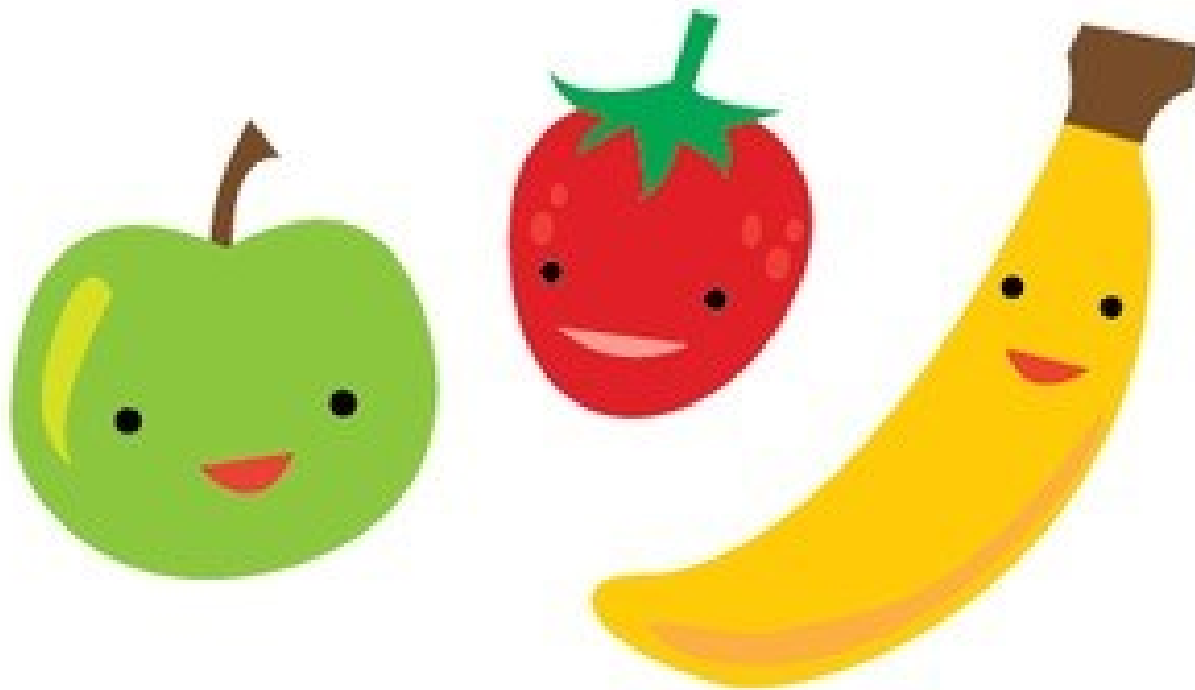
Maintenance Personnel



- If sick or immuno-compromised, stay home
- Inform employer if you test positive for COVID-19 or have been in contact with COVID-19 positive patient
- Wear a new mask and new gloves after each apartment, and shoe covers if applicable
 - Consider carrying hand sanitizer in your bag if possible
 - If no mask available, cover your mouth with cloth
- Wash hands when you enter the apartment
- Stay at 6ft distance from the tenant
- Avoid touching unnecessary areas
- When possible, train apartment complex office on common service requests responses and common procedures (cut off valves, reset breaker, garbage disposal, for example)

BEFORE CALLING IN FOR A REPAIR, ASK YOURSELF:

- ✓ Is this an emergency? (Prioritize repairs that involve hygiene, i.e. working bathrooms, sinks, garbage disposals, as well as those related to propriety code such as fire alarms and pest control)
- ✓ Can maintenance help tenants over the phone, or via video?



FREE BREAKFAST & LUNCH

for all children 21 and younger

DESAYUNO Y ALMUERZO GRATIS

Para todos niños de 21 años y menores

@ High St. Veterans | 30 New Terrace Rd (parking lot)

Monday / Wednesday / Friday 12:15pm-12:45pm

@ Egmont St. Community Room | 55R Egmont St.

Wednesday / Friday 1pm-1:30pm

Call/Text: 617-821-1290 Online: publicschoolsofbrooklineschoolnutrition.com