

COVID-19 Response
Housing Choice Voucher Program
Frequently Asked Questions

Fort Worth Housing Solutions has implemented several changes to our normal operations in response to COVID-19. We have closed our offices to the public and have many employees teleworking. We will continue to provide essential services to our community. Some of the activities and services may be delayed as the result of modified employee work schedules.

1. Do I still need to pay my portion of rent to my landlord?

Yes, you are still responsible for your portion of rent.

2. I have lost my job or have had a reduction in hours worked, and cannot afford my portion of rent. What do I do?

You should report the job loss to FWHS. You may do so as follows:

- *Download the Change Form from our website at <https://staff.fwhs.org/wp-content/uploads/formidable/7/Notice-of-Change-Form-Rev-JAN-15-2020.pdf>. Complete it and email to hcvchanges@fwhs.org. You may also send it through the US Mail at 1201 E. 13th Street, Fort Worth TX, 76102, or drop it off in the Drop Box outside our office.*
- *If you cannot download the form, you may send us written notification of your job loss through one of the ways listed above.*
- *Attach any documentation you have of the job loss. If you do not have access to a copier, you may take a photo of the documentation and send with the written notice.*
- *If you do not have any documentation of the job loss, provide us as much information as possible.*

The effective date of the change in your rent portion will be the month after you report the change. It probably will take us longer than usual to process the action because of our modified work schedule.

3. If I self-quarantine because I have risk factors or am concerned about going to work and not get paid, can you reduce my portion of rent?

If you are self-quarantining for a short period of time such as 14 days and expect to return to work as normal, it is not necessary to report that for us to change your portion of rent. However, if you expect the loss of income to last longer, please report it to us as described in question # 2.

4. I heard that landlords cannot evict tenants at this time because of COVID-19. So do I have to pay my portion of rent?

You should continue to pay your portion of the rent. The Texas Supreme Court issued an emergency order that halts eviction proceedings through April 19, 2020. Exceptions will be made

if the tenant poses an imminent threat of physical harm to the landlord, their employees or other tenants, or if a tenant is engaged in criminal activity.

5. I know your office is closed to the public. How do I get documents or information to my Housing Counselor?

You may either email or fax the documents to your Housing Counselor, mail them to your counselor at 1201 E. 13th Street, Fort Worth TX, 76102, or drop them off in the Drop Box outside our building. The Drop Box is located to the left of the double green entry doors in the middle of the courtyard.

6. It is time for my annual recertification. Will it be done?

We are required to conduct annual re-certifications. Until such time as we are informed by HUD that we can suspend them we will continue to conduct them. All re-certifications will be done remotely. Your recertification documents will be emailed to you if we have a current email address for you. Otherwise, they will be mailed to you through the U.S. mail.

7. It is time for my annual or biennial inspection? Will it be done?

Annual and biennial inspections will be suspended until it is safe to resume them.

8. I am having a problem with my house or apartment. Can an Inspector come and look at it?

First, you should report any issues with your house or apartment to your landlord. If the problem is not addressed by your landlord within a week, and it poses a serious health or safety risk, please contact our designated inspector, Efren Herrera at 817-333-3655, or by email at EHerrera@fwhs.org. He will contact you and the landlord about the matter to assess the situation and dispatch an inspector if necessary.

9. My apartment community's office is closed so I cannot bring in my money order for rent. We have to make the payments online. I cannot do that. What do I do?

You should follow the instruction of your landlord on how to pay your rent. If you have a disability that prevents you from paying it in the manner instructed by them, please notify them, preferably in writing, of your request for an accommodation to pay it in another manner.

10. Do we have to report the money we are getting from the federal government because of COVID-19? Will it affect my rent?

This is a one-time payment. You do not need to report it and it will not affect your rent. If this changes, we will notify you.

11. My lease is about to expire and I want to move. Can I move?

We are not approving voluntary moves at this time.

12. My rent is going up because of a rent increase that has been approved for my landlord. Can I move?

Yes, because we consider this an involuntary move. But you will need to wait until your recertification, and at that time we will issue a relocation voucher upon request.

13. My rent is going up because of my zip code. Can I move?

Yes, because we consider this an involuntary move. But you will need to wait until your recertification, and at that time we will issue a relocation voucher upon request.

14. I had asked to relocate before the office closed to the public. I have not received a voucher to move. Can I move?

If you requested a voucher to move prior to March 17, 2020 and have not received it, please contact your Housing Counselor. If you are eligible to move, a voucher will be issued to you.

15. I have a voucher to move, can I still use it?

Yes, you may use it.

16. My voucher is about to expire. I have not been able to finish looking for a place to live because of COVID-19. Can my voucher be extended?

Yes, we are extending expiring vouchers by 60 days. It will be done automatically. You do not need to contact our office.

17. I had requested an Informal Hearing. When will it be scheduled?

We have suspended Informal Hearings and will notify you when we are able to schedule or reschedule your hearing. The action for which you have requested a hearing will be suspended until the completion of the Informal Hearing process. However, if this is inspection-related for damages caused by you or your family, you should take this extra time to make the repairs. After the repairs are made, please contact Inspector Efren Herrera at 817-333-3655 or EHerrera@fwhs.org and he will document that you have made such repairs. Once we have resumed physical reinspections, one will be scheduled before the hearing is rescheduled.

18. I am on the Section 8 Wait List. When will I hear from you?

We recently sent letters to everyone on the Wait List to see who is still interested in remaining on the list and who may be eligible for certain Special Purpose vouchers. Those persons who appear to be eligible for the Special Purpose vouchers will be notified by email or U.S. mail within the next 30 days. Others on the Wait List will be notified as regular vouchers become available. We do not know how long that will be.

19. Are you accepting new port-ins?

Yes. Portability documents may be emailed to Shannon Kimble at skimble@fwhs.org. Her telephone number is 817-333-3660.

20. Do you have any emergency housing?

We do not have any emergency housing. You may visit our website at <https://www.fwhs.org/properties/> to get a list of affordable properties.

21. Is the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Wait List open?

No, the Housing Choice Voucher Wait List is not open.

22. I am a landlord whose Section 8 tenant is refusing to pay her portion of the rent. What do I do?

You should respond as you would with any tenant. However, please be aware of the Texas Supreme Court ruling about evictions. We ask that you exercise patience with HCVP tenants who have experienced a job loss or other reduction in income. If reported to us in a timely manner by the tenant, we will adjust the tenant's portion of rent. It may take longer than usual because of our modified work schedule.

23. I am a landlord and have asked for a rent increase. When will I receive a response?

We are still processing rent increases. However, it may take longer than usual to receive a response because of our modified work schedule.

24. My landlord insists on showing my house to potential buyers and contractors without regard to the COVID-19 concerns. Can he do that?

Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley has stated that real estate agents should not be showing houses during the mandatory Stay at Home COVID-19 Response. In Fort Worth, suspected violations may be reported to the COVID-19 hotline from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 817-392-8478.

25. Are you still processing Requests for Tenant Approvals (RFTAs)?

Yes, we are processing them and scheduling move-in inspections.