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

On March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump signed a national emergency declaration concerning the coronavirus pandemic. The national emergency has had far-reaching impacts on operations at Public Housing Authorities. Many tenants have lost jobs or had their hours cut and are concerned about how they will pay rent and for other basic needs. Here is what you need to know:

QUESTION: What is the suspension of evictions about?

Answer: 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 - July 24, 2020. Columbia Housing or your landlord can still terminate assistance and evict for drug abuse, criminal activity, lease violations, fraud, repeated minor violations or other good cause.

QUESTION: Should I still pay rent?

Answer: Yes. Rent is still due during this time and will accumulate if unpaid.

QUESTION: What if I have trouble paying my rent?

Answer: Columbia Housing is waiving its operational policies regarding rent reductions for families that have suffered the loss of employment as the result of business closings related to the COVID-19 protocols.

Public Housing Residents and Housing Choice Voucher participants may now more easily report loss of income through one of the following methods:

1. Complete a fillable form.

Housing Choice Voucher Program Participants Public Housing Residents

2. Send an e-mail to covid19@columbiahousing.org
3. Call 803-251-2747 and verbally report the loss of income.

Tenant rent changes resulting from a reduction in income will be effective on the first day of the month following the income change.

Columbia Housing recognizes the increased challenges facing the families we serve and want to reassure the community that we are implementing every option available within the HUD regulatory confines to ease the burden on our families.

WATCH OUT FOR SCAMS

Scams relating to COVID-19 make fraudulent promises ranging from providing tests, vaccines, or medical equipment, to helping pay mortgages, or claiming to help get you a federal stimulus payment. The best defense is to say NO if anyone contacts you and asks for your Social Security number, bank account number, credit card information, Medicare ID number, driver's license number or any other personally identifiable information by phone, in person, by text message, or email. Report scams to ftc.gov/complaint.

