OPEN LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I. In accordance with the Order of the City of Kansas City, all individuals, staff, residents and participants are to stay in their residences, except they may leave their residences or place of rest only to perform “Essential Activities” as defined in the Order. People at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are urged to stay in their residence or place of rest except as necessary to seek medical care and to obtain provision of essential life items. All individuals, staff, residents and participants shall exercise social distancing requirements at all times.

II. HUD has issued its notice waiving various statutory and regulatory requirements. The HAKC is taking advantage of all applicable waivers as deem appropriate. Most of these waivers will expire July 31, 2020. The impact of these waivers are illustrated in the operational procedures noted below.

III. THE HAKC’S OFFICES ARE CLOSED, UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE EXCEPT FOR ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL. Communications to HAKC should be through mail at 920 Main Street, Suite 701, Kansas City, MO 64105; or by email at HAKC@HAKC.ORG; or by phone at (816) 968-4100. Please note that call volume may be higher than usual, and we appreciate your patience as we work through this together.

We anticipate that offices will open on a limited basis beginning May 18, 2020 for appointments ONLY. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff and the visitors to wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

IV. TO OUR APPLICANTS

A. Applications for both the Public Housing and Housing Choice (Section 8) voucher program will not be accepted at HAKC offices. Applications will be accepted online ONLY at WWW.HAKC.ORG and click on Apply On-Line.

B. Applicant Interviews: All in-person intake appointments are cancelled until further notice, and all applicants with interviews already scheduled will be mailed an intake packet and be given a phone interview. Beginning May 18, 2020, in person interviews may occur, BUT ONLY by appointment. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff and the applicant to wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.
V. TO OUR RESIDENTS LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING

A. All Public Housing and Scattered-Site management offices are closed to walk-in visitors until further notice. Site managers and maintenance personnel may continue to use the offices, but please do not contact them directly when they are on site. Use phone, e-mail, or mail.

Beginning May 18, 2020, in person meetings may occur, BUT ONLY by appointment. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff and the resident(s) to wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

B. Lease Signings for New Tenants: Lease signings and initial unit assignments will continue by appointment ONLY. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff and the resident(s) to wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

C. Rent Payments: Rent from residents living in public housing remains due on the first of the month; however, HAKC will review individual cases for extenuating circumstances. Rent payments will not be accepted at HAKC offices. Rent payments may be made by mail to the Lock Box Housing Authority of KC, MO, PO Box 414226, Kansas City, MO 64179-9893, along with the top portion of your billing statement. If you do not have a statement, included your name and address.

D. Lease Enforcement: HAKC will continue to send reminders of rent that is due and may issue notices of violation for non-payment of rent. However, all evictions for non-payment of rent are suspended until the July 24, 2020. HAKC will vigorously pursue evictions involving life-threatening violations, drug related violations and violations involving criminal activity.

E. Resident applying for or living in Public housing - Hearings: All in-person grievance hearings are suspended. Applicants may appeal their denial by submitting via email or U.S. Mail, a written explanation of why their denial should be overturned, along with supporting documentation. If applicable, Residents may appeal the adverse action by submitting via email or U.S. Mail, a written explanation of why the action should be overturned, along with supporting documentation.

Beginning May 18, 2020, in person hearings may occur, BUT ONLY by appointment. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff, resident(s) and all other participants in the hearing wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

F. Rent Calculations / Re-Certifications:

1. Interim recertifications will be conducted for income decreases only.

2. Income changes must now be reported by US Mail, e-mail, or phone.

3. Resident may request a financial hardship exemption (Minimum Rent Emergency Waivers) with supporting documentation.
G. **Resident Work Orders:**

1. Maintenance requests will only be accepted by phone to the work order number (816) 842-5309.

2. All non-emergency work orders are generally delayed until further notice. However, some routine work orders will be addressed based on the nature of the work order and the availability of staff.

3. At this time, maintenance crews will only be responding to emergency, health, and safety items.

4. Maintenance workers will exercise all reasonable health precautions when working in your home. All those present in the unit must remain at least ten (10) feet from the worker until the job is complete and he has cleaned the work area and exited. You may be asked to remain if a different room or, in limited circumstances, asked to leave the unit while the work is performed.

5. Lock outs due to lost or forgotten keys will not be considered an emergency work order; but will be handled as expeditiously as possible.

6. All those in the unit at the time the work is performed may be required to wear a face mask while HAKC staff is in the unit.

H. **Inspections and Accessing of Units:**

1. Routine annual inspections will be delayed until further notice.

2. Life and Safety inspections will be conducted by staff as needed.

3. Housing Managers (HM’s) will utilize all reasonable health precautions as available.

4. All those in the unit at the time the inspection is performed may be required to wear a face mask while HAKC staff is in the unit.

I. **Transfers:** Reasonable Accommodations/Emergency Transfers will continue as usual.

J. **Community Centers, meeting rooms, lobby seating and common areas:**

1. Community Centers and rooms will remain closed in order to maintain social distancing as recommended by the CDC.

K. Only designated guests such as health care providers, aides, legal representatives and first responder personnel will be allowed in the building at **Brush Creek and Pemberton Heights**. Residents may request other guest be added to a guest list. Such guests must follow the health protocols issued by the Health Department and the CDC.
L. If you are receiving case management, or a participant in the **Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program**, you will continue to receive case management by phone. Classes and other events may be canceled. FSS contracts of participation may be extended based on individual circumstances.

Beginning May 18, 2020, in person meetings may occur, BUT ONLY by appointment. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff and the resident(s) to wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

M. If you are a participant in the **Choice Neighborhood Initiative program** and need assistance with relocation or have questions, please contact your Choice case manager.

VI. TO OUR HOUSING CHOICE (SECTION 8) VOUCHER HOLDERS

A. New Voucher applicants:

1. **Intake appointments** will be conducted by phone, US Mail or other electronic means, such as video conferencing.

2. **Documents** may be returned by mail, e-mail, or fax only. Do not hand deliver. In many cases, such as income verification, HAKC will accept self-certification. However, HAKC will address any material discrepancies that may arise at a later time.

3. **Briefings** will be held by electronic means such as video conferencing, webcast; or by using expanded information packets.

4. **Extensions to the Initial Term** of your voucher may be extended upon request. Requests should be made by calling HAKC or through email.

5. Beginning May 18, 2020, in person meetings may occur, BUT ONLY by appointment. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff and the resident(s) to wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

B. Current Voucher holders:

1. **All in-person meetings** are currently suspended.

2. Voucher holders may contact their **Program Specialist** by phone or email with any questions.

3. Beginning May 18, 2020, in person meetings may occur, BUT ONLY by appointment. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff and the resident(s) to wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.
C. Annual Examinations:
   1. **HAKC may delay Annual Re-examinations;** however, all annual recertifications that were delayed will be completed by December 31, 2020.

D. Rent Calculations / Re-Certifications:
   1. **Interim recertifications** will be conducted for income decreases only.
   2. **Income changes** must now be reported by US Mail, e-mail, fax, or phone. HAKC will accept self-certification of changes in income. If first reported by phone, the participant must later submit a written certification through the mail or email.
   3. Resident may request a **financial hardship exemption** (Minimum Rent Emergency Waivers) with supporting documentation.

E. If you are receiving case management, or a participant in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, you will continue to receive case management by phone. Classes and other events may be canceled. FSS contracts of participation may be extended based on individual circumstances.

F. If you are absent from your unit for an extended period, notify the HAKC and your landlord. HAKC will continue to provide housing assistance payment based on individual extenuating circumstances.

VII. TO OUR LANDLORDS

A. **HAP Contract** applications will continue to be processed by phone, email, fax or mail.

B. **HAP Contract Payments** will continue to be processed.

C. Inspections:
   1. **Initial inspections** for new HAP contracts will continue. In appropriate circumstances, HAKC will allow self-certification of the condition of the unit, provided the owner/landlord must certify that he/she has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life-threatening conditions exist. If self-certification is approved, HAKC will conduct a physical inspection as soon as possible but no later than October 31, 2020.
   2. **Complaint inspections** involving **Major Health and Safety** issues will be inspected.
   3. **Inspectors** will utilize all reasonable health precautions when inspecting the unit. Please maintain safe distance (CDC recommends 6 feet) when conversing with the inspector.
   4. Until further notice, in order to minimize **re-inspections**, Landlords may self-certify required repairs not involving major health or safety items.
Remediation/abatement of major health or safety items is required within 24 hours of the inspection. Re-inspections will be conducted when appropriate.

5. **Annual inspections** are suspended until further notice.

6. HAKC staff will exercise all reasonable health precautions when working in your home. All those present in the unit must remain at least ten (10) feet from the worker until the job is complete and he has cleaned the work area and exited. You may be asked to remain if a different room or, in limited circumstances, asked to leave the unit while the work is performed. All those in the unit at the time an inspection is performed may be required to wear a face mask while HAKC staff is in the unit.

**VIII. TO OUR VENDORS AND CONTRACTORS**

A. **Repair and Construction Contracts** will continue per contract terms and scope of work.

B. **All contract payments** will be processed as normal every 30 days or as otherwise stipulated in the contract.

C. **All procurement processes** including RFP/Qs will proceed as normal except pre-bid conferences and interviews will be conducted by phone or video conference until further notice.

**IX. TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

A. Until further notice, **communication with HAKC staff** will be by phone or electronic means.

B. **All contract payments** will be processed as normal every 30 days or as otherwise stipulated in the contract.

C. **Please observe HAKC requirements** regarding visiting HAKC properties or any satellite office your agency maintains on HAKC property. Consult your contract manager if you have any questions.

**X. TO OUR STAFF**

A. Only designated essential staff will be permitted at or in HAKC offices. When feasible and appropriate, some staff may be required to work from home. Some staff will be granted leave with pay.

Beginning May 18, 2020, offices will open on a limited basis for appointments ONLY. Staff previously assigned to work from home or were granted leave with pay may be required to work at or in HAKC’s offices. Specific protective measures will be taken, including requiring both HAKC staff and the visitors to wear a face mask and provided appropriate social distancing can be maintained.
B. HAKC Public Safety will be working as normal and will be addressing all matters of a public safety concern.

C. HAKC Board of Commissioners’ meetings may occur via video conference or telephonic conference meeting as needed.

XI. During this urgent and unprecedented public health crisis, the United Way of Greater Kansas City wants to remind you of the referral services available through 211, a one-stop resource for community relief – food, financial help, utility assistance, tax services and more. Through 211, callers are connected to more than 8,000 programs run by nonprofit organizations and government agencies throughout the 23-county United Way 211 service area. For assistance, visit 211kc.org or dial 211.