



HOUSING AUTHORITY *of* JOLIET

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 19, 2020

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The Housing Authority of Joliet takes action in response to COVID-19 Outbreak. *HAJ implements unprecedented measures to protect health and safety of HAJ staff, residents, and vendors.*

Under the direction of the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and CEO, Michael Simelton, the Housing Authority of Joliet (HAJ) is taking bold steps to ensure the health and safety of staff, residents, and partners during the COVID-19 outbreak. As of March 16th, HAJ offices have been closed to the public and are not accepting any visitors. All briefings, meetings, and events have been postponed. Beginning March 30th, HAJ will be operating on a skeleton staff with most employees working remotely.

“During this unprecedented time, the HAJ is doing all it can to protect its residents, staff and the community as a whole. This pandemic shows us that we are all connected. The realization of this connection tells us that we have the responsibility as a community to follow best practices, in these troubling times, in order to flatten the curve and prevent a worsening health disaster. As an agency we are going to do our part for the greater good of the community and we ask the community to do the same for us and respect the safety guidelines in order to help protect our most vulnerable residents. We want to thank everyone for the sacrifices they're making to keep us all safe,” said Board Chairman, Angel Contreras.

While the evolving situation creates uncertainty, our commitment to our residents and personnel will not change, nor will this community’s need for affordable/workforce housing. We support the social distancing protocols. “As the custodian of affordable housing in Will County, we are taking unparalleled action to protect employees and residents at this time,” said CEO Michael Simelton.

Temporary policies implemented by HAJ include:

- Implementing a “no visitor” policy – no outside visitors will be allowed at the Housing Authority offices – only the US Postal Service, medical professionals, HAJ staff and emergency responders will be allowed on the premises until further notice.
- Cancelling all community / communal events until further notice – this includes all moving briefings, port-in briefings, and annual inspections.
- Posting CDC informational materials regarding symptoms and preventative measures (washing hands, limiting contact, avoiding crowds, etc.) in all common areas, as well as on all HAJ digital platforms.
- Educating all HAJ property managers about these items and providing them with resources to share with residents in case they have questions.
- Cleaning high touch / high traffic surfaces in the common areas several times throughout the day, i.e. doorknobs, elevator buttons, intercom keypads, etc.



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- Preparing to equip our maintenance and janitorial staff with protective gear as needed

Said policies will remain in effect until April 15th, but HAJ is prepared to extend the deadline per recommendations provided by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). As April 15th approaches, a reassessment will be undertaken by HAJ senior staff.

“During this extraordinary time things are going to be a hardship to many individual lives. As circumstances continue to evolve, we want to ensure residents and staff are supported, as we are committed to doing everything we can toward providing uninterrupted services, while maintaining safety,” said Simelton.