



— BALTIMORE CITY —
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19

Emergency Response and Action Plan Summary

April 2020

Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development
417 East Fayette Street - 14th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

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The Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) works to improve the quality of life for all Baltimore City residents by revitalizing and redeveloping communities and promoting access to quality affordable housing opportunities in safe, livable neighborhoods. Under the current State of Emergency, DHCD is maintaining services to the greatest degree possible. This COVID-19 Emergency Response and Action Plan (ERP) reflects steps taken by DHCD during this rapidly evolving period of crisis. While DHCD's Executive Team will work to maintain the ERP with updates, it is noted that this Plan is auxiliary to formal communications from the Mayor's Office and other policy setting entities within Baltimore City Government. This summary report speaks to:

1. Operating Adjustments and Safety Protocols
2. Status of Agency Services
3. Departmental Coordination and Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans
4. Ongoing Productivity

1. Operating Adjustments and Safety Protocols

- At the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, Human Resources guidelines were issued, making the workforce aware of the City Emergency Response Plan of Action and setting priority designations for City functions and services.
- DHCD began maximizing telework opportunities and taking on-site precautions. Steps were taken at the Division and Departmental level to maintain the safety of employees and workspaces.
- On-site functions were adjusted to keep workspaces as safe and clean as possible for those continuing to work on-site, and paid leave was requested for employees that are not emergency essential and cannot telework.
- Office Practices were adopted to maintain safe distances for both individual work and common areas.
- Meetings were limited and the use of teleconferencing was implemented using Microsoft Teams and other tools as necessary.
- Elevator protocols were established to adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Protocols were established to secure areas according to Department of General Services protocols, in the event of potential exposure,
- DHCD leadership and staff keep current and follow COVID-19 staying healthy practices as communicated by the Centers for Disease Control and City guidelines and continue to adjust operations accordingly.

2. Status of Agency Services

While DHCD remains operational, due to the COVID-19 emergency, some services and functions have been modified in some instances and suspended in others. Executive Orders from the Governor and the Mayor have also impacted the status of many City services. The following chart provides a snapshot of the status of DHCD services and functions currently:

- **Community Services Emergency Response**
- **Construction & Trade Inspections**
Utilizing real-time onsite video inspections
- **Dumping Investigations**
Monitoring network of dumping enforcement cameras
- **Emergency Rehab and Repair**
Emergency rehab repair needs managed on a case by case basis over the phone: (410) 396-3023
- **Expiring Licenses & Permits**
Automatically extended for 30 days after conclusion of Maryland's State of Emergency
- **Grants Programs (CDBG & CCG)**
- **Homeownership Incentives Program**
- **Housing Rehab, Weatherization and Lead Hazard Reduction Case Work**
- **In-person**
Permit applications, plan reviews, licensing, & registration
- **Inspections for Critical 311 Service Requests**
 - Dangerous Structures (collapse, work without permit, defective porch, etc.)
 - Demolition Violations
 - Emergency Sewer Complaints
 - Fire Protection (smoke or carbon detector not working, fire system, etc.)
 - Major Systems Not Working (heating, ventilation, air condition, electrical, plumbing)
 - Sanitation Complaints
- **Inspections for Non-Critical 311 Service Requests**
- **Land and Asset Management**
 - Relocation and Property Closings on case by case basis
 - Tax Sale Filings and Condemnation can be prepped, but cannot be filed
 - Vacants to Value Applications accepted via email
- **Lien Releases**
- **LIGHT Intake and Assessment Unit**
Application assistance for home repair programs available over phone and email: (410) 396-3023
- **Permitting**
Available online and customers can call during work hours: (443) 984-1809
- **Plans Review**
Available online and customers can call during work hours: (410) 396-3460
- **Project Finance and Development**
- **Re-inspection of Non-Critical code violation notices**
- **Rental Licensing, & Registration**
Available online and customers can call during work hours: (410) 396-3575
- **Services Suspended by City Agencies (related to DHCD work orders)**
Includes vacant building boarding, lot maintenance, rodent control, abandoned vehicle towing, and tree removal
- **Summer Food Service Program**
- **Tax Sale Prevention Services**
Available by phone and email: (410) 396-3483



Bernard C. "Jack" Young
Mayor

Symbols: ● Unaffected ● Modified ● Suspended

CALL 311 for information on a particular service or a service that is not listed. For more information on COVID-19, visit coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov

3. Departmental Coordination and Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans

The Department and individual Divisions have prepared Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans to ensure the Agency can continue performance of essential functions during the COVID-19 emergency. These deployment plans are subject to change based on the ever-evolving nature of the crisis. Departmental summary information is available here (primarily for public facing functions) to show the approach the agency is taking to stay safe while remaining productive and serving the public.

Commissioner's Office	
Department Oversight	All functions of Commissioner's Office, including Administration and Communications, continue through telework and limited on-site presence. Service level minimally impacted.

Office of the COO	
Divisional Oversight	The COO continuing to oversee Divisional programs through telework.
Affordable Housing Trust Fund	Function continues through telework. Service level minimally impacted. Issuance of AHTF Notice of Funding Availability delayed for policy consultation in light of crisis. RFP for consultant services was issued.
Inclusionary Housing Board	Function continues through telework. Service level minimally impacted. RFP for consultant services is forthcoming.
Community Catalyst Grant Program	Function continues through telework. Service level minimally impacted. Next round RFP forthcoming.

Development Division	
Development Project Management	Function continues primarily through telework. Service level minimally impacted.
Neighborhood Development Coordination	Function continues primarily through telework. Service level minimally impacted.
V2V Walk In	Function Suspended. Applications can be accepted via email.
Asset Mgmt., Adopt-a-Lot and City owned Property issues	Function continues primarily through telework. Service level minimally impacted.
Request for Proposals, Expressions of Interest, other offering	Function continues primarily through telework. Service level minimally impacted.
Marketing Events	Public events and meetings suspended. Related functions continue primarily through telework. Service level moderately impacted.
Relocation	Function continues primarily through telework. Service level moderately impacted. Inspections on site on a case by case basis.
Condemnation Cases	Function continues primarily through telework. Service level critically impacted: Cases continue to be prepped but cannot be filed as courts are closed.
Tax Sale Filings	Function continues primarily through telework. Service level critically impacted: Cases continue to be prepped but cannot be filed.
Property Closings	Function continues primarily through telework. Service level moderately impacted: Closings to be managed on case by case basis.

Housing Code Enforcement	
Essential Staff will provide operational support for HCD	Function continues through combination of on-site and telework. Service level moderately impacted. Essential Service Request have been designated.
Special Operation Inspectors will support emergency needs	On call- will be deployed accordingly by Emergency Management Director.
Other Inspections and Responses	DHCD's inspectors will zone their assigned district while responding to emergency SRs to identify and report local businesses that may not be following the current closure rules.
Inspections for Non-Critical 311 Service Requests	Function suspended except as emergency or special request.
Inspections for Critical 311 Service Requests	Function continues. Service level moderately impacted.
Re-inspection of Non-Critical code violation notices	Function suspended.

Homeownership and Housing Preservation

Providing homeownership incentive checks, deeds of trusts, promissory notes for real estate settlements	Function continues with telework and limited on-site work as long as real estate transactions continue.
Providing lien releases, subordinations and certificates of satisfaction for ongoing real estate transactions	Function continues with telework, with drop-offs for signatures and notarizations. Continuing as long as real estate transactions continue.
Ombudsman and Homeowner Preservation Support	Function continues with telework. Providing telephone and email support to residents regarding tax sale, water bill payments, and tax credits. No in-person trainings or meetings being conducted.
Summer Food Service Program	Emergency Meal Service Activated. Telework and field work for drivers and support staff of delivery and mobile meals trucks and vans, and staff to perform compliance checks.
LIGHT Program	New Intake and in-person case management for existing clients suspended at this time.
Lead Program	In-person case management suspended at this time.
Weatherization Program	In-person case management, and house visits suspended at this time.
Rehab Services	In-person case management suspended at this time. Will address emergency repairs on case-by-case basis.

Permits and Litigation	
Building Inspection Emergency Response	This service is only necessary should Building Inspections be contacted about a structure believed to be in danger of collapse. This is a 24-hour service. Inspector would respond to site and be able to enter data.
Building Construction Trades Inspections	<p>Functions are continuing as long as construction is essential industry.</p> <p>For unoccupied properties, inspectors are working primarily in the field with appropriate social distancing, use of video conferencing, and use of masks. Larger construction jobs may make use of third-party validation by an engineer or other certified party on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Interior inspections of occupied properties will only occur on a case-by-case basis, if the area to be inspected is separate from the main living area and can be done using video chat.</p>
Construction and Use Permit	Service conducted via telework. Limited on-site personnel.
Trade License Issuance	Service conducted via telework. License expiration has been suspended under Governor's Executive Order.
Construction Plan Review	Service conducted via telework for all employees. Limited on-site necessity from time to time to electronically stamp plans.
Zoning Review	Service conducted via telework and limited on-site.
Demolition	Suspended City demolition projects, unless an emergency demolition. Open City demolitions (buildings already razed) are continuing.
Property Registration, Rental Licensing and Short-term Rental	Service conducted online and via telework.
Special Investigation Unit Code Enforcement Litigation and Receivership	Team is working primarily telework performing investigations. Investigators are also working telework to field and taking safety precautions in order to check on dumping cameras and other emergencies.
Notice Production/Constituent Services	Walk-in service suspended. Manager reporting in office to process work.

Office of Policy and Partnerships

Constituent Services	Function minimally impacted. Continuing through telework.
City and State Legislative Bill Reports Testimony Hearings and relationships legislators.	Function minimally impacted. Continuing through telework.
Agency strategic planning, budgeting, operational and alignment support.	Function minimally impacted. Continuing through telework.

Research and Consolidated Planning

Payments to non-profit entities and City agencies.	Minimally impacted. Function continues primarily through telework with on-site functions as needed.
Preparation and processing of CDBG contracts and MOUs.	Minimally impacted. Function continues primarily through telework with on-site functions as needed.
Preparation of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan	Moderately impacted. Function continues through telework. No further community meetings at this time. HUD is extending deadline for delivery of Consolidated Plan and Action Plan.
Payroll - Contracts & CDBG Compliance	Minimally impacted. Function continues primarily through telework with on-site functions as needed.
Processing of federal Environmental Review Forms (ERF) and Release of Funds Forms (RFF)	Minimally impacted. Function continues primarily through telework with on-site functions as needed.
Maintenance of the federal Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) data.	Minimally impacted. Function continues primarily through telework with on-site functions as needed.

Ongoing Productivity

DHCD has ongoing responsibilities as part of the City's COVID-19 response. Personnel with a daily coverage schedule of responsibilities and are expected to fulfill duties or activate a backup daily.

Daily coverage responsibilities include:

- Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Joint Information Center (JIC)
- EOC Briefings and Log Updates
- Daily Internal Operations Reports
- City Cabinet Calls
- Inventory Reports
- Attendance Reports

As we move into and through this crisis, leadership will collectively work together to build out a set of resources to assist each other during this unusual time. The Agency will also begin to identify and outline a plan to return to normal operations once those can be initiated. Upon return to normal functions and services, our agency and many others will be required to execute a rapid restoration of services, addressing a backlog of 311 service requests, inspections, rescheduled meetings and hearings, and re-initiating programs that have been suspended. Plans will also need to include an emphasis on how agency resources can be deployed to assist the public through the recovery process once the pandemic is abated.

Ongoing agency updates and actions can be found at <https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/dhcd-covid-19-updates>. Overall city actions related to the COVID-19 incident are located at <https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/>.