

The Virgin Islands Consortium

V.I. Housing Authority Announces Restrictions at its Facilities for Public Housing Residents

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Staff Consortium **August 04, 2021**



The Louis E. Brown Apartment Complex on St. Croix. The facility is operated by the V.I. Housing Authority. By. VI CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Housing Authority has announced that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, effective Tuesday, Aug. 3rd, the following administrative controls and guidance for residents of public housing and leaseholders have been put in place and will continue through August 31:

- All in-person contact with the public at VIHA facilities throughout the territory are suspended. Other than routine service providers, visitors are prohibited from

entering VIHA's facilities, including VIHA's Central and Management Offices at our various properties on each island.

- Community Centers are closed to large-group gatherings/events.
- After-School Programs will continue to be suspended until further notice.
- All scheduled appointments for applicants and other clients will be rescheduled as necessary.
- Residents can continue to utilize the payment outlets within the banks that are currently in place. Rental payments can also be paid using a U. S. Postal Money Order and sent via U. S. Mail.
- Residents with rent statements that must be adjusted should contact the Property Manager in their respective community by telephone, email and/or text message to obtain an updated statement. The new statement will be hand-delivered to their unit.
- Public Housing Residents and Housing Choice Voucher Participants who have experienced a loss or decreased income must complete a "Change of Circumstances Form" to report their changed financial circumstance. This form can be found on VIHA's website at www.vihousing.org. The completed form and supporting documents can be returned via email to liph@vihousing.org (for Low-income Public Housing) or hcvp@vihousing.org (for Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)), U. S. Mail, or in-person at the end of the suspension period.
- The Virgin Islands Housing Authority will continue to make monthly rental payments to landlords for eligible participants of the HCVP. Landlords are strongly encouraged to visit <http://www.vihousing.org/publicdocuments/HCVDirectDeposit.pdf> to obtain the appropriate form to sign up for direct deposit or contact our offices at (340) 714-0174 on St. Thomas and (340) 778-8442 on St. Croix for more information.
- For Housing Choice Voucher Participants, Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections of occupied units will continue during this period. When you observe our HCVP inspectors wearing gloves, booties, and/or face masks; these are being worn simply as a precautionary measure and to help provide a degree of protection and reassurance for their lives and yours. As always, the inspectors will clearly identify themselves before entering your unit. We ask that if anyone in the apartment is sick, please notify us prior to the inspection or before the inspector enters the apartment. Please note that VIHA is respectfully requesting any individuals present during an inspection to wear a face mask for their protection from Covid-19 as well as protection for our employees.
- Please be reminded to contact your landlord immediately if you are experiencing any repair issues relative to your rental unit.
- All utility checks will continue to be mailed to residents.
- Staff at our public housing communities will continue to serve customers via phone and email, and address all work orders as needed, unless otherwise notified.
- To report public housing maintenance emergencies, residents should continue to call (305) 447-2464 and provide the following information: name of housing community, building and apartment number, name of person reporting issue, contact telephone number, and description of maintenance emergency.
- Residents and employees are encouraged to follow the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Virgin Islands Department of Health (DOH), the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), and updates from the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services

(DHS) and the Virgin Islands Department of Education (DOE).

The authority said it is "continuing to do everything possible" to ensure that the health, safety and well-being of public housing residents, programs participants and staff is not compromised during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We will continue to monitor this situation closely and modify our plan accordingly. We apologize for any inconvenience and sincerely appreciate your understanding," V.I.H.A. said. "Furthermore, please listen to the guidance from our healthcare professionals and wash your hands frequently, wear gloves and a face mask when in public places."