



**COVID-19 PANDEMIC
Business Continuity Plan**



PROMULGATION STATEMENT

Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority's (LMHA) mission is to "create and maintain sustainable, affordable housing opportunities, provide pathways to a better quality of life, and empower vibrant communities." To accomplish this mission, LMHA must ensure its operations are performed efficiently with minimal disruption, especially during an emergency. This document provides planning and program guidance for implementing LMHA's COVID-19 Pandemic Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to ensure the organization can conduct its essential functions and provide services to our clients during this emergency.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joaquin Cintron Vega", is written over the printed name.

Joaquin Cintron Vega, President and CEO



BACKGROUND:

On March 9, 2020, the Governor of Ohio signed Executive Order 2020-01D declaring a state of emergency to protect the well-being of Ohioans from the dangerous effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19). To allow state departments and agencies to better coordinate in their response.

On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency to help the country combat the rapidly spreading coronavirus. This declaration was made effective as of March 1, 2020.

As the premier housing provider in the Northwest Ohio/Greater Toledo area, Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority (LMHA) is closely monitoring the progress of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as it continues to spread. LMHA is taking precautions to help minimize the amount of people affected and help slow the threat of the virus following the guidelines and recommendations from the Toledo- Lucas County Health Department, the Ohio Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The experts expect COVID19 cases to continue to grow as the virus spreads and the number of tests performed increases. To track the progress on the cases reported in Ohio, please refer to the following link:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/>



Local Actions:

Locally, Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority has joined a county wide effort, to include the following partners:

1. Municipalities, townships, independent governmental boards, and other local governmental organizations to include courts and the offices of independently elected officials within Lucas County.
2. Chamber of Commerce; all local school districts as well as private and charter schools; community colleges and universities; non-profit organizations that are located within or serve Lucas County
3. Health care organization to include public, private and non-profit hospitals, medical facilities, behavioral health, nursing homes, long-term care facilities providers and organizations that serve these organizations and populations that are located within or serve Lucas County

All organizations, including the Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority are operating within the Unified Incident Command Structure established by the Lucas County Emergency Management Agency (EMA).

John McGuire, LMHA's Director of Security Operations is appointed as Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority's liaison with the Emergency Operations Center.

Considering the most recent information, LMHA took proactive action to ensure the health and safety of our staff, our clients, visiting partners and the communities we serve. LMHA developed an action plan consistent with the actions taken by the local government and in a larger scale, by the State.

Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority prepared our staff and our communities to collaborate with the joint efforts LMHA, and our community partners are taking against the COVID-19.



Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority Actions:

On March 12, 2020, the Agency published a press release with our Official Statement about the COVID-19 pandemic. In the press release, LMHA clearly established the public the affirmative actions that together we discussed.

You can access the press release on the following link:

<https://www.lucasmha.org/DocumentCenter/View/838/Lucas-Metropolitan-Housing-Authority-Official-Statement-about-the-Coronavirus-Disease>

On March 13, 2020, Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority released our three-phased Action Plan. This document was the product of many conversations that considered the concerns by staff and clients including public housing residents and other programs' participants.

As result, Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority implemented a robust action plan that has been shared to our community at large, the Department and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other Housing Authorities from HUD Region 5. LMHA's action plan has also been used as reference by Housing Authorities outside of our jurisdiction.



Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority Action Plan:

LMHA implemented a three-phased work plan defined by:

1. **Education and Active Prevention Phase:** LMHA successfully provided information and guidance about COVID-19 to employees and LMHA's clients including public housing residents and other programs' participants.
2. **Mitigation Phase:** LMHA is actively enforcing actions that avoids COVID-19 from spreading.
3. **Business Continuity Phase:** LMHA successfully completed a Business Continuity Plan that guarantee the continuity of operations and services to LMHA's clients including public housing residents and other programs' participants while taking precautions with our staff.

You can access the most current version of the Action Plan on the following link below:

<https://www.lucasmha.org/254/Press-Releases>



Business Continuity Plan:

Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority will maintain normal operations to the extent permissible by the circumstances.

Employees are identified as essential and non-essential.

Essential employees: Are required to provide services and conduct business during their accustomed working hours, either from their designated offices or through the telework option, as required by their direct supervisor. Employees must remain available.

Non-Essential employees: Are required to provide services and conduct business from their homes or required by their direct supervisor. Employees must remain available.

Note: The Business Continuity Plan is the collaborative result between LMHA Executive Leadership and the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority wants to recognize and praise the efforts made by Mr. Steve Kowalik, Mr. Ricky Urbina and Ms. Eleanor Mays by working hand in hand with LMHA Management in the best interest of our Agency, staff and clients.



Guidelines for staff:

Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority is implementing the following measures:

1. LMHA will provide the employees with weekly updates on the agency's operational status; however, the LMHA will not be confined to a timeline for such notifications and/or meetings. Staff will be notified of the implementation of the alternative work arrangements/schedules.
2. LMHA has implemented a Telework Program for Essential and Non-Essential staff.
3. Attached is the list of essential and non-essential staff. (See attached)
4. Should it become necessary to close or shutdown specific departments and/or the agency, LMHA will implement procedures as prescribed in the Memorandum of Understanding MOU with AFSCME – *Furlough Program of 2019* and/or any procedures to maintain efficient operations of the agency. (MOU is attached for reference)
5. Should it be necessary to send an employee home to self-quarantine due to the probable or confirmed exposure to the virus, the Employee will not be required to utilize accrued leave to cover up to a 14-day virus-related absence. If an employee needs to be absent, alternative work schedules will be considered if they meet the telework parameters.
6. If an employee chooses to self-isolate due to pre-existing health conditions, the Employee will be required to utilize their available leave time.
7. LMHA will make determinations on case-by-case basis for employees needing childcare options during this period. The Employee will not be required to utilize accrued leave to cover childcare related absences up to 14 days.
8. Employees currently on an approved Family Medical Leave, unpaid or paid, will remain on leave and there will be no interruption of the employee's 12-week entitlement of FMLA.
9. Absences due to COVID, will be coded in Time on Demand with a special designation code and will not affect an Employee's eligibility for the attendance bonus.
10. Employees will retain their medical insurance benefits during the COVID absence period.
11. Unemployment benefits may be available for employees who are requested by a medical professional, local health authority, or employer to be isolated or quarantined as a consequence of COVID, even if they are not actually diagnosed with the disease.



12. The plan for all staff at LMHA is to return to their former work when the immediate danger of the COVID pandemic has ceased.

This implementation will remain in effect for thirty (30) days and can be renewed or modified as needed.



Call forwarding instructions:

All employees must be available upon request. To exercise this, it is an important and a non-delegable duty to forward your desk phone to your cellphone. To complete this task, you must follow the procedure below:

1. On the desk phone press *72
2. Enter the phone number that you want the phone forwarded to. You must enter the entire number including the Area Code, not just the extension. This number does not have to be an LMHA number.

Note:

After forwarding, all calls to your desk phone number will ring on the number you entered. Your desk phone WILL NOT ring if you get a call until you turn off Call Forwarding, nor will it receive Voicemail messages.

To turn off Call Forwarding:

1. On your desk phone press *73

If you forget to forward your phone, you may send IT an email with both your desk phone number and the number you want it forwarded to. IT can turn on forwarding for that number in the Telesystems Admin console.

Attached documents:

1. Essential and Non-Essential staff schedule
2. LMHA IT COVID Preparedness Plan
3. Short Term Telecommuting Agreement
4. LMHA Teleworker Self-Evaluation