



PAA Recommendations Rental Assistance COVID-19

Pennsylvania Apartment Association (PAA) members are committed to upholding the highest standard of excellence in providing safe, quality housing for renters, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. With increased statewide mandates limiting business activity, social interaction, and stay at home orders, the coronavirus continues to put extraordinary pressures and financial insecurity on our citizens. PAA recognizes that those most impacted by temporary or permanent unemployment, reduced wages, and work absences related to childcare are potential residents in our properties. Therefore, PAA is recommending several options and policies so our property owners can help residents navigate this unprecedented crisis with minimal disruptions.

Communication – Make sure you are communicating regularly with your residents, keeping them aware of new policies, how to send rent payments, additional cleaning and safety precautions being implemented, package and food delivery rules, laundry facilities usage, pet changes, and various COVID-19 safety resources. If employees are no longer onsite, make sure residents still have access to address concerns, maintenance emergencies, and other needs.

COVID-19 Cases – Develop a confidential method for residents to report their own suspected or confirmed coronavirus diagnosis and encourage them to do so. Have a consistent policy in place for managing confirmed cases including mail delivery, maintenance requests, and other issues.

Request documentation – Once the line of communication is open, ask those residents that are financially impacted due to COVID-19 to provide documentation that they have lost their job, been furloughed, etc.

Late Rental Payments – Extend grace periods for late payments and consider waiving late fees for residents that have provided documentation of hardship. This may help renters in need and encourages at least partial payment.

Payment plans – Create payment plans for residents who had previously outstanding eviction balances or cannot pay rent because of the COVID-19 outbreak and put them in writing.

Resources - Identify government and community resources that may assist renters, such as food assistance, financial, and healthcare resources.

Evictions - Remember that evictions have been halted by the Governor and the district court. Clarify however that the freeze on evictions does not rescind leases nor wipe out the responsibility to pay rent. However, residents and housing providers are encouraged to communicate with each other to create reasonable ways to resolve these situations.

These recommendations are in line with NAA & NMHC guidelines. However, each property owner and manager will need to decide policies and services applicable to their properties and circumstances.

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