

Hello Spring

SHA TIMES,
SPRING 2020

COVID-19

SHA CLOSURES DUE TO COVID-19

SHA is committed to doing everything we can to ensure the health and well-being of our residents and staff. To help prevent the further spread of COVID-19, the SHA offices are **CLOSED** to the public at least until **APRIL 30, 2020** in accordance to guidance provided by Governor Pritzker.

During this timeframe,

- Only emergency and/or move-in inspections for unoccupied units will be conducted
- Only emergency repairs on occupied public housing units will be conducted
- SHA will receive annual or interim recertification documents via drop box of mail for processing
- Interim Recertifications will be accepted **DAILY** during this closure to assist in timely rent determinations for families who have lost income.
- Tenants are still **REQUIRED** to pay their portions of rent
- A 120-day moratorium on evictions, including those by private landlords, has been issued
- Public Housing residents & HCV program participants may contact staff via telephone and/or email for assistance

These measures will be updated as further guidance is provided by federal, state, and/or local officials. Any updates will be also be posted on our website at www.springfieldhousingauthority.org. If you have any questions, please contact your specialist. Additional information about COVID-19 and prevention techniques can be found on page 6.

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2020 Census FAQ

What is the census?

The census is a count of every person who lives in the United States and its territories. It happens every 10 years. In early 2020, you will be asked to count everyone who lives in your home as of April 1. Responding to the 2020 Census is a chance to shape your future.

What's in it for me?



Your responses inform where over \$675 billion is distributed each year to communities nationwide for clinics, schools, roads, and more.



Census data gives community leaders vital information to make decisions about building community centers, opening businesses, and planning for the future.



Responding also fulfills your civic duty because it's mandated by the U.S. Constitution. The United States has counted its population every 10 years since 1790.



Your responses are used to redraw legislative districts and determine the number of seats your state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Is my information safe?

Your responses to the 2020 Census are safe, secure, and protected by federal law. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics. They cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way—not by the FBI, not by the CIA, not by the DHS, and not by ICE.

When can I respond to the census?

In early 2020, every household in America will receive a notice to complete the census online, by phone, or by mail. In May, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin following up in person with households that have yet to respond.

What will I be asked?

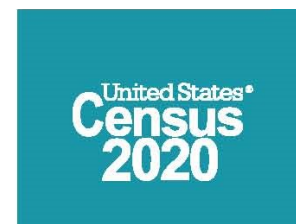
You will be asked a few simple questions, like age, sex, and the number of people who live in your home, including children.

What won't be asked?

The census will never ask for Social Security numbers, bank or credit card numbers, money or donations, or anything related to political parties.

So, how does the census affect housing?

The census data is used by Congress to determine how much funding HUD Programs, like the HCV and Affordable Housing Programs, receives every year. HUD also uses the data to establish Fair Market Rents and enforcing fair lending practices. By making sure you are counted, you can ensure that housing programs receive adequate funding in the communities that need it the most.



For more information, visit:

2020CENSUS.GOV

CENSUS QUESTIONS:

What information will be asked?

- Number of people at an address as of April 1st
- Phone Number
- Any additional people living or staying there
- Whether you rent or own
- Name
- Sex
- Race
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Age & Date of Birth
- Relationship
- Whether a person lives or stays somewhere else

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Does the 2020 Census ask about citizenship status?

NO. The 2020 Census does not ask whether you or anyone in your home is a U.S. citizen.

Are non-citizens counted in the census?

YES. Everyone counts. The 2020 Census counts everyone living in the country, including non-citizens.

Can my answers be shared with law enforcement or used against me?

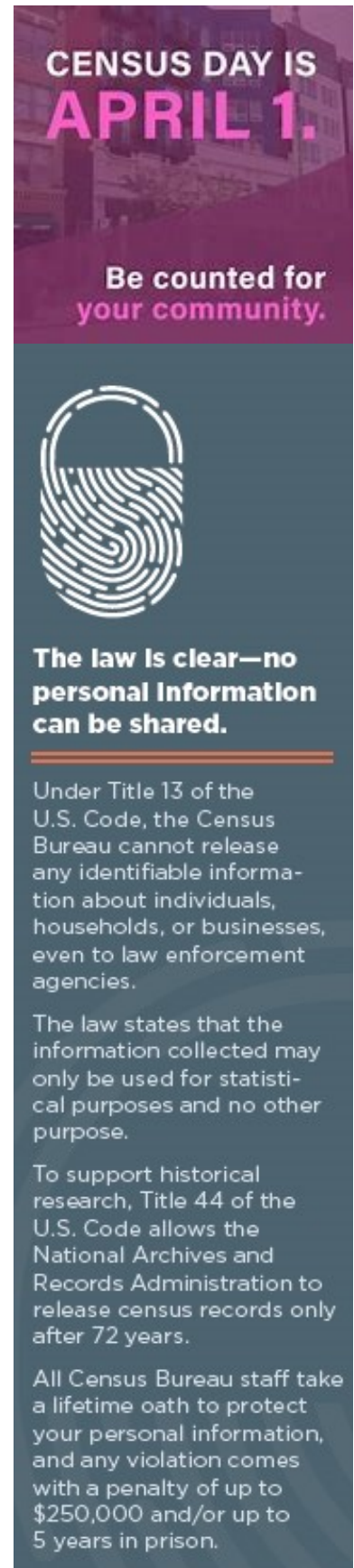
NO. The law prevents the Census Bureau from sharing your information with law enforcement. Your answers cannot be used to impact your eligibility for government benefits. Your answers are only used to create statistics about our country. The Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the U.S. Code to protect your personal information and keep it strictly confidential. That's every answer, to every question.

What questions WILL NOT be asked by the Census Bureau?

During the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau will **never** ask you for:


- Your Social Security number.
- Money or donations.
- Anything on behalf of a political party.
- Your bank or credit card account numbers.

If someone claiming to be from the Census Bureau contacts you via email or phone and asks you for one of these things, it's a scam, and you should not cooperate.



**CENSUS DAY IS
APRIL 1.**

**Be counted for
your community.**



**The law is clear—no
personal information
can be shared.**

Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about individuals, households, or businesses, even to law enforcement agencies.

The law states that the information collected may only be used for statistical purposes and no other purpose.

To support historical research, Title 44 of the U.S. Code allows the National Archives and Records Administration to release census records only after 72 years.

All Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information, and any violation comes with a penalty of up to \$250,000 and/or up to 5 years in prison.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Experienced, IRS-certified volunteers will help you get the tax credits you deserve

Tax sites will close when capacity is reached.

Tax preparation is offered on a **first-come, first-served** basis.



For households earning up to \$56,000 and individuals earning up to \$30,000 annually*, please bring all of your tax documents:

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Original Social Security card/ITIN** for everyone on your return
- A valid form of photo ID
- Bank routing and account numbers** for your savings account, checking account, and/or prepaid card
- Verification of health insurance** if purchased through the Marketplace (Form 1095-A)
- Copy of previous year's tax return**, if available
- If you are **married filing jointly, both spouses must be present**

2. YEAR-END INCOME STATEMENTS

- W-2** for each job
- 1099-MISC or 1099-K** for Self-Employment income, including cash income and ride-share work such as driving for Uber/Lyft
- 1099 Forms** for retirement, Social Security, unemployment, interest, dividends, stock sales, and miscellaneous income

3. EXPENSES AND CREDITS

- Record of **educational expenses** you paid for children in grades K-12
- Tuition expenses** paid for you or your child to attend college or university (Form 1098-T)
- Student loan interest** paid (Form 1098-E)
- Childcare expenses**
Provider name, address, and tax ID or Social Security number
- Homeowners** Mortgage interest and real estate taxes paid

*OUT-OF-SCOPE SITUATIONS

Ladder Up cannot prepare your tax return if you have income from rental property, filed bankruptcy in the year you wish to file, or received Form 1099-A. There are also other, less common situations that are out of scope. If you are unsure whether we can complete your taxes, please call and leave us a message at (312) 409-1555 or check our website: goladderup.org/TAP



FAMILY SERVICE CENTER
730 E Vine St
Springfield, IL 62703
Wednesdays: 5:30 - 8 pm
Saturdays: 9 am to 12 pm
 Please plan to be at the tax site for 2 to 4 hours to have your taxes completed

NOTE: DUE TO COVID-19, THE IRS CHANGED THE TAX FILING DATE TO JULY 15, 2020!



Don't pay to file your simple taxes.*

***No really, it's free for simple returns.**

United Way has partnered with industry leader H&R Block to help people easily and accurately file both their federal and state returns through MyFreeTaxes®.

MyFreeTaxes is the only free, national, online tax filing product offered by a nonprofit, because United Way fights for the financial stability of every person in every community. United Way is committed to ensuring that people can easily and accurately file their taxes to receive the refunds they deserve.

- MyFreeTaxes is mobile optimized so anyone can access MyFreeTaxes from their computer, tablet or smart phone.
- MyFreeTaxes is completely free for anyone of any income who needs to file a simple return.

Over 1.2 million people nationwide have used MyFreeTaxes, bringing over \$1.7 billion in refunds back to our local communities.

TAX ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offers free, individualized tax preparation for low-to moderate-income taxpayers, especially those 50 and older. Before visiting a Tax-Aide site, please note that you will need to bring your important documents to the site. For a list of documents, visit AARP's website at <https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes>

- Federal Tax assistance is available at all locations. State tax assistance is available at all locations in your state for in-state residents, and may be available to out-of-state residents in select neighboring states. Please contact sites in your neighboring state to confirm availability.
- Site hours are subject to change on a weekly basis. Therefore, please check again the day before you plan to go to the site.
- In Central Illinois, the AARP Foundation Tax Aides are located at Senior Services of Central Illinois, Lincoln Library, Union Baptist Church, Chatham Area Public Library & Rochester Public Library. For more information, visit <https://secure.aarp.org/applications/VMISLocator/searchTaxAideLocations.action>

Share Facts About COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

**FACT
1**

Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

**FACT
2**

For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.

Older adults and people of any age with underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, or heart disease, are at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

**FACT
3**

Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

**FACT
4**

There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

**FACT
5**

You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
- Seek medical advice if you
- Develop symptoms

AND

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.



SELF-SUFFICIENCY SPECIALISTS

Deborah McKenzie
HCV A - F
Ext 228

Allison Smith
HCV G - O
Ext 259

Alfonzo Smith
HCV P - Z
Ext 251

Rob Staff
Affordable Housing
Ext 212

If you have goals that you would like to achieve and could benefit from **one-on-one** support in achieving them, as well as earn \$\$ once those goals are completed, then the Self-Sufficiency Program is for **YOU!** Ask your specialist today!

HOMEOWNERSHIP & PRE-FORECLOSURE SERVICES

SHA offers the following two programs that make purchasing a home more affordable for low- to moderate-income families and individuals:

HCV Homeownership Requirements:

- Must be a Section 8 participant **OR** currently eligible for the HCV Program
- Minimum annual income of \$14,500 from wages unless elderly or disabled*

Affordable Housing Homeownership Requirements:

- Do not need to be a resident of affordable housing
- Minimum annual income of \$24,000 from wages



All applicants must be employed FULL-TIME for 12 consecutive months, unless elderly or disabled*, must be a first time homebuyer, and must complete pre- and post-purchase counseling offered through SHA. We are now offering Pre-Foreclosure Counseling Services including information on options, completing paperwork, working with lenders, short-sales and deed in lieu.

Through the Foreclosure Prevention Program (FPP), SHA can provide options and work as an authorized third-party to help and possibly obtain a solution to delinquency. For more information about SHA's Homeownership or Pre-Foreclosure Services, please contact SHA's Homeownership Coordinator Deborah Lorenc at **217-753-5757 Ext 209**.

**head of household, spouse or sole member must be a person with disabilities*

SECTION 3

The Springfield Housing Authority's Section 3 Program is designed to help low and very low income people within our housing programs, as well as in Sangamon County, to find employment opportunities on HUD funded projects. Applications for this program are accepted at the SHA Main Office, 200 N 11th St or can be completed on-line through our website at www.springfieldhousingauthority.org. This page is updated with new opportunities, training information and requirements of the Section 3 program. If you have any questions regarding this project or would like more information on how to sign up for the Section 3 program, please contact Blake Whitener at **217-753-5757 Ext 315** or visit our website.

REMINDER to ALL AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PARTICIPANTS:

As a participant in SHA's subsidized housing programs, it is your obligation to report **ANY AND ALL** changes that happen in your household. This means if your income goes up or down, someone moves out, or you are requesting to add someone to your household. Failure to report income can lead to repayments or termination of your assistance. If you have questions about how or when to report, ask your specialist.

BOS ACCOUNTS

If you receive utility assistance, you **MUST** visit any of the Bank of Springfield (BOS) locations listed below to complete the initial sign-up process. Utility assistance payments will **ONLY** be distributed through the BOS debit card. You will need to bring a **valid Photo ID & Social Security Card** to open this account. The Visa debit cards work at any location that Visa is accepted. ATM locations can be viewed by visiting the BOS website at www.bankwithbos.com or calling 217-529-5555 or toll-free at 1-877-698-3278. BOS has three full service branches in Springfield and one in Chatham to serve you:

***2600 Stevenson Dr**

***850 E Madison St**

***3400 Wabash Ave**

***1140 Commercial Ct (Chatham)**

AFFORDABLE HOUSING (FORMERLY KNOWN AS PUBLIC HOUSING)

DIRECT DEBIT

Make your rent a priority each month, as the eviction process will be followed to keep tenant accounts paid in full each month per HUD regulations. Those who leave with a balance will be reported to HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (**EIV**) System. This means those with balances will not be allowed to receive assistance from another housing authority until any past balances are paid in full.

Direct debits will be withdrawn from your account on the **FIFTH (5TH)** of each month. You will not be held responsible for any late fees and save money on checks/money orders and transportation. Enjoy the benefits and savings of utilizing our direct debit program. Direct debit may be utilized on any debit card including Social Security benefit cards. Call Becky to sign up today at **217-753-5757 Ext 227** or visit our website.

INCOME CHANGES

Be sure to report **ALL** household income, including temporary employment, unemployment, child support, social security and/or TANF. In addition, be sure to report any decrease in income, including no income. Income changes for all residents are accepted from **8:30 to 11:30 am or 1:00 to 4:00 pm** on the following days:

April 1, 2, 6 & 7

May 4, 5, 6 & 7

June 1, 2, 3 & 4

Your Occupancy Specialist will verify the total income, including unreported income. Your rental payments will be based on the household's total income. **All income is reported to EIV and SHA will discover any unreported income.**

CHECK YOUR BALANCE ONLINE

To check your current balance, visit our website at www.springfieldhousingauthority.org. The Username is the Head of Household's Last Name. The Password is the Head of Household's last four digits of their Social Security Number. For more information, contact Becky at **217-753-5757 Ext 227**.

LATE FEES

Rent is due on the **FIRST (1ST) day** of the month. If your rent is not received in our office by the **SEVENTH (7TH)**, a \$10 late fee will be added. Residents will receive a 14-Day Notice, which comes with an additional \$15 fee. The 14-Day Notice fee is **NOT** assessed until a resident is served with the 14-Day Notice by the Process Server. If rent is late, residents may receive late fees totaling \$25.

If court proceedings are started for delinquency, chronic delinquency (late twice), or non-compliance, a summons fee will be issued, which ranges from \$40 (in-person service) to \$45 (if in-person service unsuccessful). Once court proceedings are initiated, residents **MUST** pay the entire account balance, which includes any charges for the next month. Some examples of charges include (but are not limited to) rent, late fees, maintenance fees, and utilities.

Rent payments are **#1 PRIORITY!!!**

YARD WORK

You are responsible for the exterior of your home and yard. Lawns should be cut and free of any yard waste or debris **at all times**. Failure to maintain the exterior of your home will result in a non-compliance charge in addition to a minimum charge if SHA has to perform maintenance. Any fines assessed by the city will be billed to your SHA account.

WASTE REMOVAL

Please note that regularly scheduled waste pick-up may be delayed due to holidays or weather. To ensure timely pickup, please make sure that your totes are in their designated pickup location prior to 7 AM on your scheduled pickup day. The location must be free of any obstructions as this may cause a delay in service if Republic Services determines that it is not safe. To report a missed pickup, please contact Republic Services at 217-522-7797.

PEST CONTROL

If a Public Housing resident requests pest control but is not ready for treatment when American Pest Control arrives at their unit, a \$50 charge will be added to their account.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPLICATIONS

Applications for Affordable Housing, including King's Court and the Villas at Vinegar Hill, are accepted every **Monday & Tuesday** from **8:30 to 11:30 am or 1:00 to 4:00 pm**. All applications **MUST** be submitted in person. Telephone, mail, internet, and fax applications will **NOT** be accepted. For information on what documents to bring with your application, please visit our website.

WALK-IN HOURS FOR CURRENT RESIDENTS

Walk-In hours for current Public Housing residents are **Wednesdays from 8:30 to 11:30 am or 1:00 to 4:00 pm**.

PH OCCUPANCY SPECIALISTS

Regina Young
AMP 1 & 4
Ext 208

Latina Faulkner
AMP 2 & 7
Ext 257

Te'Era McClain
AMP 3
Ext 217

Tamiko Bilbro
AMP 6, 8 & 9 (VILLAS)
Ext 256

WALK-IN HOURS FOR TENANTS & LANDLORDS:

Mondays
1:00 - 4:00 pm

Wednesdays
8:30 - 11:30 am
1:00 - 4:00 pm

All other times are by **appointment only**.

NOTE: Paperwork must always be given to your specialist. It **cannot** be dropped off at the front desk.

HCV WAITING LIST IS OPEN

The waiting lists for the HCV Program is open and applications are accepted only on Tuesdays. Keep your address current with this office, as notification will be sent by mail only. For more information, visit our website.

HCV SPECIALISTS EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2020

Kylie Hagaman
A - C & Mo - O
Ext 282

Hailey Stelivan
D - H & P - Re
Ext 253

Heather Wasilewski
I - Mi & Rh - Ru
Ext 218

Lisa Sloan
S - Z
Ext 281

Sharon Helms
Special Projects
Ext 273

INCOME CHANGES

Income changes for all residents are accepted from **8:30 - 11:30 am or 1:00 - 4:00 pm** on the following days:

April 1, 2, 6 & 7

May 4, 5, 6 & 7

June 1, 2, 3 & 4

If your income increases or decreases by \$100, you **MUST** report it to your specialist. If you are reporting a new job, you must report it the month following your hire date. Five (5) paychecks are **NOT** needed to report new income as staff have processes to verify new income.

FAMILY CHANGES

All family members **MUST** be approved by SHA prior to moving in. In the case of birth or adoption of children, you must notify your caseworker. Family composition changes can be requested in person during regular walk-in hours.

30-DAY NOTICES

All tenants interested in moving **MUST** submit a 30-day notice during **walk-in hours** on the following days only:

April 27 & 29

May 20 & 27

June 24 & 29



HAP & UTILITY PAYMENTS

All HAP and utility payments are processed during the first five business days of the month. Please wait until **AFTER the FIFTH (5TH) business day** before you call to check on a payment.

ONLINE PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please visit the "Landlord" section of our website to review and confirm electronic payments.

To retrieve your user name, password or ask questions regarding our program, please call Melissa at **217-753-5757 Ext 219**.

LANDLORD ORIENTATION

Our next new landlord orientation will be on **Monday, May 4, 2020 at 9 am** in our conference room at the Administrative Offices.

LANDLORD REFERRAL PROGRAM

Refer a new landlord who leases to a tenant for at least six months and receive \$50 as part of our new referral program.

Only owners are eligible for this new program, which allows for a maximum of four referrals in a 12-month period.

For more information about this program, call **217-753-5757 Ext 219**.



Jackie L. Newman, Executive Director
200 North 11th Street
Springfield, Illinois 62703

Phone: 217-753-5757
Fax: 217-753-5799
www.springfieldhousingauthority.org

**SHA will be closed
to observe the following holidays:**

GOOD FRIDAY

Friday, April 10

MEMORIAL DAY

Monday, May 25

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Friday, July 3

CONGRATULATIONS

**Robb Stark, Procurement Specialist
2019 Employee of the Fourth Quarter**

PROMOTIONS & NEW POSITIONS

Candi Clouse-Guccione, HCV Manager

WELCOME NEW STAFF MEMBERS

**Te'Era McClain, Occupancy Specialist
Alfonzo Smith, FSS Specialist
Angie Vargas, Management Associate
Heather Wasilewski, HCV Specialist
Karla Wilhelm, ROSS Coordinator
Regina Young, Occupancy Specialist**