Louisiana Housing Corporation

LOUISIANA HOUSING CORPORATION	POLICY NO. 49		
SUBJECT: COVID-19 RE-BOARDING – HEALTH PANDEMIC RESPONSE			
Review Dates:			
Approval:	Kevin Brady, Human Resources Director	Date:	1/12/21
Approval:	E. Keith Cunningham, Jr.. Executive Director	Date:	Jan. 13, 2021

SUMMARY OF CHANGES		
Date	Author	Change Description
1/12/21	K. Brady	Extended dates for FFCRA special leave. Remove information on the Family Medical Leave Expansion Act, which expired 12/31/20.

I. POLICY.

Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) has an established protocol for re-boarding into the workplace in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan's priority focuses on personal and public safety. The goal is to return team members methodically and systematically in phases with minimum impact, miniscule delay, and reduced risk of exposure.

This policy has been developed from a number of resources, including the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Labor (DOL), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHH), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Louisiana Office of Risk Management (ORM), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), the Family Medical Leave Expansion Act (FMLEA), and Louisiana Department of State Civil Service (DSCS).

This policy is only effective if all LHC team members and stakeholders strictly adhere to it and the accompanying procedures. Employees will be thoroughly educated regarding the policy and procedures. Violations of this policy shall be addressed through the disciplinary process.

II. APPLICABILITY.

This policy applies to all employees, board members, contract employees, and all other stakeholders and visitors to physical locations of the LHC.

III. PHASE COMPONENTS.

Re-boarding will be a phased approach following the guidelines of the Open Safely Program administered by the State Fire Marshall. The re-boarding protocol will be set in three phases. Each phase addresses staffing levels, physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, and public access. Timing of phases is governed by the Open Safely Program administered by the State Fire Marshall.

The agency cannot move to the next phase until the Open Safely Program moves forward to the next phase. The agency may move at a slower pace than the Open Safely Program, i.e. the LHC may not begin Phase 3 until after the Open Safely Program has already implemented Phase 3. If there is regression in the Open Safely Program phases, then the LHC will follow, i.e. the LHC is in

Phase 2 and the Open Safely Program returns to Phase 1, then the LHC will return to Phase 1.

1. **Staffing Levels.**
   The phases of the re-boarding process require LHC team members to telework and physically report to the office on staggered and partial on-site work schedules. The schedules are determined by department heads and are based on the essential business needs of the corporation, the department, and individual employee needs.

2. **Physical Distancing.**
   Physical (social) distancing has been implemented as recommended by state and local health authorities. This involves practices to minimize COVID transmission from person to person.

3. **Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection.**
   The Agency adheres to the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control, the Open Safely Program, and the Louisiana Department of Health in regards to cleaning and disinfecting the workplace.

4. **Public Access.**
   Public access to the building is restricted during Phase 1 and Phase 2.

IV. SELF-ASSESSMENT.

Employees are required to perform a self-assessment prior to physically reporting to work. If an employee is sick, then they should stay home from work. The self-assessment includes the tasks listed below.

1. The employee should take their temperature at home. If the temperature is above or near 100.4 degrees, the employee should stay home.

   Employees should not physically report to work until free of signs of a fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.

2. The employee should ask themselves the questions listed below. If the answer is 'yes' to any question, the employee should consider staying home, knowing that physical access to a work location may be denied.

   - Have you experienced fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough and/or shortness of breath) in the last 14 days?

- Have you been near a person with possible COVID-19 infection?
- Has a family member or someone with whom you are in close contact been near a person with possible COVID-19 infection?
- Have you been in close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient?

Employees should not physically report to work until free of signs of a fever and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines.

3. In addition to the above tasks, employees with chronic illnesses or other underlying health conditions should self-assess to determine if they are currently experiencing flare-ups or other severe symptoms. If 'yes', the employee should consider staying home until these symptoms subside.

V. TESTING AND SELF-ISOLATION.

Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting workers, customers, visitors, and others at the worksite.

1. **Self-Assessment.**
   Employees shall perform a self-assessment prior to leaving their home to physically report to work. If ill, the employee should stay home.

2. **Becoming Ill After Reporting to Work.**
   If an employee reports to work and begins to feel ill or have adverse symptoms (including fever, coughing, tiredness, chills), then they are expected to immediately report this to their supervisor or Human Resources and are required to leave the workspace and return home.

3. **Testing Requirements.**
   a. Employees who report COVID-19 symptoms to their supervisor or Human Resources, whether or not they have physically been to the worksite, shall be required to submit for testing.
   b. Employees who report to work and begin to show symptoms of COVID shall be required to submit for testing.

4. **Positive Test Results.**
   a. Employees testing positive who have NOT been to the worksite physically in the previous 14 days shall self-isolate. The employee may utilize leave

or telework until symptoms become too severe to perform work responsibilities.

b. If an employee tests positive and has been to the worksite physically in the previous 14 days, then the procedure below is immediately enacted.

   i. The employee shall immediately stop reporting to the workplace and self-isolate.
   ii. The employee shall contact their supervisor and Human Resources.
   iii. The employee shall communicate to Human Resources all persons with whom the employee came in physical contact in the previous 14 days in the workplace.
   iv. Human Resources shall contact all employees with whom the employee had direct contact informing them that they will be required to report home and self-isolate for 14 days. Employees who self-isolate due to possible exposure shall be required to test. If the test is negative, then the employee shall continue to self-isolate until the 14-day self-isolation period has elapsed.
   v. Human Resources shall notify the employees in the building that an individual at their physical location has tested positive. Individuals with whom the employee did not come in physical contact with may continue to physically report to work.

5. **Employees Recovered from COVID-19.**
An employee who had COVID-19 symptoms and was directed to care for themselves at home may end self-isolation and physically return to the workplace when at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery and meet the requirements listed below.

   a. Have a negative test result for COVID-19.
   b. Have been fever free without using fever-reducing medications.
   c. Show improvement in respiratory symptoms including no longer coughing or having shortness of breath.
   d. It has been at least 7 days since symptoms first appeared.

VI. LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19.

1. **Civil Service Leave**.
The Department of State Civil Service (DSCS) has addressed for the need for leave relief for employees and households during COVID response. DSCS

Rules expire upon Order of the Commission or in 120 days from approval, whichever comes first. Reference Civil Service Rules for complete rule text.

a. Sick Leave Expansion.
In addition to the current rules for use of sick leave, an Appointing Authority may grant sick leave to employees for the reasons listed below.

i. Assertion, supported by medical certification, of the employee's own need to be isolated from the workplace to avoid a health risk exposure during a health pandemic declared by the Governor because of their diagnosed high-risk immunological disorder.

ii. The need to care for a dependent child as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act when there is a health pandemic declared by the Governor and there is no other suitable person available to care for the child because the child's school or place of care has been closed or the childcare provider is unavailable due to a reason directly related to the health pandemic.

iii. In lieu of requesting annual leave, an employee may request their accrued sick leave for: illness or injury in the immediate family, which necessitates the absence; and, medical, dental, or optical appointments for immediate family members when it is not possible to make appointments during non-duty hours.

b. Enforced Sick Leave.
An appointing authority may place an employee on sick leave when:

i. the employee asserts an inability to work due to the employee's illness or injury.

ii. there is an apparent need to remove the employee from the workplace to avoid the spread of illness.

An appointing authority may place an employee on sick leave and require the employee remove themselves from the workplace when the employee has declined to utilize sick leave and presents for duty displaying symptoms of illness. To enforce sick leave under this subsection, the symptoms must be observed by at least two individuals, one of whom must be in a supervisory capacity. The employee may be returned to duty at the appointing authority's discretion; however, they shall be returned to duty upon presentation of a certification from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner who, after examining the employee, certifies that the employee is fit for duty.

c. Special Leave Related to COVID-19 Health Pandemic.
An appointing authority may grant time off without loss of pay, annual leave or sick leave to an asymptomatic employee directed by the appointing authority to be tested for COVID-19 and/or self-isolate after being exposed through close contact to an individual with a confirmed positive COVID-19 diagnosis.

Such special paid leave shall not extend beyond 14 calendar days as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Once the employee develops symptoms of illness or is confirmed with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, the employee shall immediately be placed in an appropriate leave status, including leave without pay if the employee has exhausted both annual leave and sick leave.

2. **FFCRA Leave Provisions**.
The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) allows up to 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPLS) for eligible employees. FFCRA provisions expire March 31, 2021. Reference the FFCRA for full policy text.

a. 80 hours full pay.
Employees who use EPSL for the reasons below qualify for 80 hours at their regular pay rate.

i. The employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
ii. The employee has been advised by a healthcare provider to self-isolation due to concerns related to COVID-19;
iii. The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking medical diagnosis.

Documentation may be submitted after request for the leave. Documentation needed is medical practitioner's certification of COVID diagnosis or Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation orders related to COVID-19.

Employee indicates Special Leave on the timesheet and requests Special Leave through the Electronic Leave System. Employee enters 'COVID' in the Comments field on the leave request. Documentation may be attached to the Leave Request or may be submitted via email to your supervisor or directly to Payroll.

b. 80 hours partial pay.
Employees who use EPSL for the reasons below qualify for 80 hours at 2/3 their regular pay rate.

i. The employee is caring for an individual who is subject to a Federal, State or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID19 or an individual who has been advised by a healthcare provider to self-isolation due to concerns related to COVID-19;
ii. The employee is caring for his child whose school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons; or
iii. The employee is experiencing any other substantially similar condition that may arise, as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Documentation for reason # i above may be submitted after request for the leave. Documentation needed is medical practitioner's certification of COVID diagnosis or Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation orders related to COVID-19.

Documentation for reasons # ii and # iii above are submitted at the time EPLS is requested. Documentation for reason # ii is the notification from the specific school or day care that it is closed for the duration of the EPLS use. Documentation for reason # iii is certification from a health care practitioner.

How 2/3 paid leave works: This leave may be used intermittently to allow the employee both the ability to telework and address family needs. An employee who requests the use of EPLS is only paid at 2/3 their regular hourly rate. The employee must use their accrued leave to be paid at their regular rate.

Example 1: If an employee requests 8 hours of leave, they are credited with 5.25 hours of EPLS and they must use their accrued leave to make up the additional 2.75 hours for the day.

Example 2: If an employee requests 4 hours of leave, they are credited with 2.75 hours of EPLS and use 1.25 hours of their leave.

Employee (or supervisor) indicates Special Leave on the timesheet.
Employee requests Special Leave through the Electronic Leave System.
Employee enters 'COVID' in the Comments field on the leave request.

VII. REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATION.

The Centers for Disease Control identifies a number of medical conditions that might place individuals at higher risk for severe illness if they are infected by COVID-19. Employees to whom this apply may request an accommodation based on their medical condition. For a list of the medical conditions identified by the CDC, please contact Human Resources.

Although many people feel significant stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, employees with certain preexisting mental health conditions, for example, anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder, may have more difficulty handling the disruption to daily life that has accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees with these types of preexisting mental health conditions may request accommodations in the same manner referenced below.

1. Employees at higher risk should communicate to their supervisors that they have a medical condition that necessitates a change in re-boarding plans to meet a medical need.
2. Protocol for requesting accommodations is addressed in LHC Policy 2: Americans with Disabilities Act.
3. Employees may request accommodation in conversation or in writing from their supervisor or Human Resources. Supervisors should let Human Resources know if the employee requests an accommodation.
4. Medical certification will need to be provide to support the accommodation request.

VIII. EDUCATION.

Employees will receive required training prior to physically reporting to the workplace. Training topics include those listed below. Training may be in electronic or hard copy form. Visitors are provided LHC's Physical Distancing and Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines upon entering an LHC location.

- Re-boarding Policy.
- Re-boarding Procedures.
- Proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Workplace infection prevention for employees.

IX. QUESTIONS.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to a member of the Human Resources Department.

X. VIOLATIONS.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Reports of persons violating this policy should be brought to the attention of your immediate supervisor, an Executive Team member, or a member of the Human Resources Department.

Visitors who violate this policy shall be required to leave the building immediately.