

PHFA Homeownership Programs Division

COVID-19 Questions and Answers**Q1. What is the best way to contact the Homeownership Programs Division during the COVID-19 office closure?**

- A1. All PHFA's physical offices will be closed and PHFA staff will work remotely from home. Inquiries for the following units should be sent to the appropriate email address:
- Secondary (lock desk): secondary@phfa.org
Business Development (lender trainings): bizdevelopment@phfa.org
PreClosing (underwriting): preclosing@phfa.org
Purchasing: sfpurchasing@phfa.org
Final Documents: sffinaldocs@phfa.org
Quality Control: quality_control@phfa.org

Partners may also call 717.780.3871 and leave a message. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. For updates on loans submitted, lenders are encouraged to monitor the PHFA Pipeline Plus system for loan status. Staff will continue to monitor their work emails and phone lines during the closure, however, we recommend emailing the appropriate email addresses above for a response.

Q2. Is PHFA continuing to require in person homebuyer education for borrowers with FICO scores below 680?

- A2. Yes, the homebuyer education requirement is still required for borrowers with FICO scores below 680. However, during the COVID-19 office closure, PHFA will permit [PHFA's online counseling course](#) or remote counseling from one of PHFA's approved counseling agencies as an alternative in lieu of the face-to face counseling requirement. See [PHFA's online counseling course](#) for details. The PHFA counseling agency list has been updated to identify agencies offering the remote counseling option. See PHFA's [approved counseling agencies](#).

Q3. Will PHFA continue to review PreClosing submissions (underwriting packages)?

- A3. Yes, PreClosing submissions will continue to be reviewed in a timely manner. Staff is working remotely from home to review loan files. Please note we may encounter some delays in review time. Please allow up to five business days for files to be reviewed.

Q4. Will purchase files continue to be funded by PHFA?

- A4. Yes, PHFA's purchasing team will continue to purchase eligible loans. In addition to the purchase package being submitted via VirPack, at this time PHFA will continue to require the original note, original final title policy and original name affidavit to be mailed to us in order to purchase the loan.

- Q5. Will PHFA continue to conduct in person trainings and online webinars?**
A5. In person trainings will not be available until further notice. However, monthly webinars will remain available during the closure. Webinar announcements will be sent to our partners as normal. To view the upcoming webinar sessions, see the 'Lender' section for the [monthly calendar](#).
- Q6. Can lenders arrange private webinar sessions for internal staff?**
A6. Yes, contact PHFA at bizdevelopment@phfa.org and the Business Development team will gladly arrange a customized webinar session for your organization. Webinar sessions may also be arranged for other housing professionals like Realtors®, counseling agencies, etc.
- Q7. How will PHFA handle lock extensions for transactions affected by the COVID-19 closure of mortgage industry associated businesses (appraisal companies, title companies, etc)?**
A7. PHFA will handle these requests on a case by case basis. If you encounter an issue related to this matter, email secondary@phfa.org with details regarding the situation for PHFA to provide guidance.
- Q8. Will the PHFA Annual Lender Recertification still be due on April 30th?**
A8. Yes, lenders are required to submit their PHFA lender recertification by the deadline to remain an active PHFA lender. See here for the [Annual Lender Recertification Checklist](#). Any questions, please reach out to the Quality Control Unit, quality_control@phfa.org or tdressler@phfa.org.
- Q9. Will PHFA continue to review Final Documents submitted and fund lenders for their Service Release Premiums (SRPs)?**
Q9. Yes, the review of final documents will continue while the Agency is closed. There may be delays in review time and SRP disbursements will be processed as soon as possible.
- Q10. Will reports and notices be available on the Pipeline Plus system?**
A10. Yes, reports and notices will be accessible via the Pipeline Plus system.
- Q11. How can lenders determine which file submission date PHFA is working on?**
A11. To determine which file submission date the PreClosing team is working, log into the PHFA Pipeline Plus system and review the top of the message board. The submission date will be posted and updated daily. The message board will also provide Agency updates related to our business operations.
- Q12. Will borrower's mortgage payments still be processed in a timely manner by the servicing division?**
A12. Yes. Electronic payments will go through without any interruption or delays. The Philadelphia lockbox will continue to handle mailed payments. PHFA will also have staff picking up payments mailed to PHFA, which will be posted the same day.

- Q13. Will payoff requests continue to be processed?**
A13. Yes, payoff requests will continue to be processed.
- Q14. What if customers have questions about their PHFA mortgage?**
A14. Our Customer Solutions Center is still available by calling 1-855-827-3466. Customers can also send a secure email message through the online borrower portal <https://phfa.customercarenet.com>.
- Q15. Will PHFA follow the Fannie Mae guidance announced in the [Single-Family Lender Letter \(LL-2020-04\), Impact of COVID-19 on Appraisals](#) for the HFA Preferred™ program?**
A15. *(For applications dated on or after June 1st see A17-Updated June 1st)*
A15. Yes. This appraisal guidance is only acceptable for the HFA Preferred™ program. PHFA will not accept a Property Inspection Waiver (PIW) even if offered per the DU findings.
- Q16. How will PHFA handle verbal verification of employment during the COVID-19 closure?**
A16. Follow the respective government entities COVID-19 guidelines during this time.
- Q17. How will appraisal flexibilities for the Keystone Home Loan and Keystone Government (K-Gov) Loan program be handled?**
A17. *(Updated June 1st)* For loan applications dated on or after June 1st will require the full traditional appraisal for all PHFA first mortgage programs. Appraisal flexibilities will no longer be acceptable for loan applications taken after that date since appraisers are now permitted to access homes under Governor Tom Wolf's new real estate guidelines. Traditional appraisals are highly preferred for loan applications taken prior to June 1st, if possible. The appraisal flexibilities will remain for loan applications taken prior to June 1st.
A17. For the Keystone Home Loan and Keystone Government (K-Gov) Loan programs, PHFA will accept the following appraisal type below for loan applications dated on or before May 17, 2020:
- **Exterior-Only Appraisals:** must include multiple listing service (MLS) from the listing agent with all interior photos of the subject property. Lenders must provide a hold harmless letter signed by all borrowers releasing PHFA from all risks, liability and defects of the subject property. Lenders must also provide PHFA with the seller's property disclosure statement. This document must be included in the Pre-Closing package to be reviewed.
 - **For vacant properties:** exterior-only appraisals will be acceptable during the COVID-19 closure. Lenders must adhere to the exterior-only appraisal guidance mentioned above. In addition to the exterior-only appraisal guidance, the property must have been vacant for no more than 90 days from when the sales agreement was executed. If vacant prior to March 15, 2020, documentation showing the subject property was properly winterized during the entire vacant time is required to be provided in the Pre-Closing package. The home must have been on the market for no more than 60 days out of the past 120 days.

- **Desktop appraisals** are not permitted at this time.

For the HOMEstead program, full appraisals must be provided.

Q18. The IRS is not processing tax transcripts during the COVID-19 closure. How will transcripts be handled?

A18. PHFA will temporarily fund eligible mortgages without two years of tax transcripts from the IRS, as long as the file contains the two most recent years of completed tax returns signed by the borrower (or three years if using the MCC Program). The returns should be included with the pre-closing package submitted to PHFA and a post-purchase condition will be placed on the file for the transcripts as soon as they are available. If the returns are missing, the loan will be approved with a condition to provide the returns and the transcripts. The returns must be included with the purchase package in order to be eligible for funding, and a post-purchase condition will remain on the file for the transcripts. The lender must therefore still obtain a 4506(T) at closing. This policy is in effect immediately and will remain in place until further notice.

We anticipate keeping this policy in place for some time after the IRS processing center is up and running, as we anticipate the IRS will be backlogged. All other policies remain in place; this change is only pertaining to the procedure for obtaining federal tax transcripts from the IRS.

Transcripts required for self-employed borrowers would still need to be provided with the Pre-Closing package.

Q19. Will PHFA e-signatures and electronic notarization of mortgage documents?

A 19. Yes, under the HFA PreferredTM and the Keystone Home Loan- Conventional loan programs. The lender must follow the respective government agency's guidance and all applicable state and federal laws, including the E-SIGN Act and Uniform Electronic Transaction Act (UETA). Lenders must provide PHFA with sufficient documentation that all applicable consumer disclosures have been delivered. Failure to properly document all requisite disclosures shall entitle PHFA to exercise its rights to recourse under the MOSA for loan defects.

Electronic signatures are **not** acceptable under the Keystone Home Loan –government financing (FHA, VA & RD loans); Keystone Government (K-Gov) Loan or the FHA Streamline and VA Streamline refinance programs. Closing documents for these programs must be signed with "wet ink". These programs are or could be funded by Ginnie Mae and in prior notices they have indicated electronic signatures are not permitted.

Q20. Is the wood destroying insect certification still required?

A20. Yes. During the COVID-19 closure, lenders that are not able to provide insect certifications, proof of treatment, or damage assessment to the certifications are allowed to escrow for these items to be completed. Please refer to [Chapter 8](#) of the Seller's Guide, Property Guidelines for details.

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Q21. Are water potability tests still required?

A21. Yes. During the COVID-19 closure, lenders that are not able to provide clear water tests are allowed to escrow for the test to be completed. Please refer to [Chapter 8](#) of the Seller's Guide, Property Guidelines for details.

Q22. Can final documents be emailed to PHFA?

A22. Yes, during this period of limited building access, please email final documents to sffinaldocs@phfa.org. The original documents should continue to be mailed to PHFA.