

IRCOM's Vulnerable Client Service Continuity Plan – April 23, 2020

IRCOM's main offices are **closed to walk-ins**. However, **our phone line remains open** weekdays from Monday-Friday, 9am – 5pm. To contact us, please call **204-943-8765**. A new staff directory of Voice-over-internet phone numbers will be shared soon.

IRCOM maintains our commitment to the community through a mix of remote and in-person services. As “community housing,” IRCOM is currently considered an **essential service** by the Province of Manitoba. Specific services including case management for vulnerable refugee families and youth, housing operations and tenant life and safety, and some financial services, are also currently considered essential services by federal and provincial bodies.

IRCOM has launched two new programs in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- **Essential Needs:** *For IRCOM tenants (at present)*. Food hampers and essential needs hampers (hygiene items, diapers, formula, etc.) are dropped off at tenants' doorsteps, for those facing income/food security challenges. Donations of food and other essential items are accepted, call 204-943-8765.
- **Outreach Information Services:** *For IRCOM tenants and registered IRCOM participants in the community*. A cross program team with needed languages (“Interpreters/First Language Delivery Team”) are conducting Modified Needs Assessments by phone. They ask a set of questions about awareness of COVID-19 information, food security, income security, knowledge of new benefits and resources, and children's needs and wellbeing. If needed, a triage/referral process into IRCOM's specialized services follows (e.g., case management, high-needs youth supports, access to benefits, crisis intervention, or to other community resources). Ongoing regular contact by phone is maintained during the pandemic.

Existing Programs and How they are Operating

Note: All in-person services are limited and delivered using IRCOM's “In Person Guidelines” based on public health directives and recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., using screening questions, by appointment whenever possible, limited time, 2 metres apart, using a physical distancing table set up on site, using Personal Protective Equipment in certain circumstances, and sanitation guidelines).

Community Resource Program (‘CRP’ - settlement team, case management)

- On-hold:
 - The majority of in-person services are discontinued including all group programs and workshops, all drop-ins for information and orientation, car rides/accompaniment to appointments or hearings, off-site in-person appointments or meetings.
 - **Early Childhood Development Hub** (in partnership with Freight House Early Learning & Care) is closed including licensed child care and parenting programming
 - No in-suite services (e.g., home visits, life skills training)
 - No drop-in settlement services for former tenants or others living in the community

- Remote Services:
 - Case management and high needs support for tenants (Levels 2-4) is done by phone or WhatsApp. There is regular contact, and higher levels have higher frequency of contacts, identifying strengths, gaps, needs etc. This can result in the mobilization of supports, referrals to new /modified resources, liaison with care/service providers and government agencies, etc.
 - Community Resource Program staff liaise with Outreach Information Services Teams to follow up on referrals after the Modified Needs Assessment (COVID-19) is conducted
 - Calls to assigned cases are done to check in on tenants' wellbeing
 - Technical information on community resources- access, changes, etc. is collated.
 - Virtual services for tenants such as "Conversation Buddies" or "Women's Hi Tea" are planned
- Limited in-person services for tenants:
 - Urgent information and orientation and basic needs gaps in newly arrived tenants, new move-ins, and newly arrived RAP clients are being addressed.
 - Initial Needs Assessment and Referrals are being done, along with pared down new tenant orientation
 - Community Resource Program staff will meet with tenants for issues that are a threat to safety, health or wellness in an immediate sense – and that cannot be resolved remotely
 - Essential needs (food hampers, diapers, etc.) are being determined and distributed to tenants (for now), in coordination with Administrative staff (donations)

High Needs Support Team ('HNST' - cross-departmental team focused on crisis intervention- primarily tenants)

- On-hold: In-person supportive counselling, in-person crisis intervention, accompaniment, in-person life-skills (for high-needs tenants and youth) are discontinued at this time.
- Remote services primarily for tenants and to some extent for IRCOM registered participants in community continue, including:
 - Crisis intervention by phone and referral to emergency services if needed (e.g., assault, suicidality, mental health crises, arrest, family violence, injury)
 - 24-hour coverage for after-hours emergencies at IRCOM (tenants) will be flagged by Live-In Building Supervisors, who will contact the High Needs Support Team
- Limited in-person services for tenants:
 - On-site crisis intervention will occur when all other services are not feasible or will not arrive in time

After School Program (ASP)

- On-hold: In-person children's daily programming, in-person youth programming, rides and transportation, family events are postponed
- Remote services for registered IRCOM participants (tenants and non-tenants) include:

- Homework assistance by appointment booked via SnapChat, conducted by WhatsApp or FaceTime (priority Grade 12s and youth without home supports)
- Connecting with schools/teachers to coordinate with and support school-based learning plans
- Safe youth and children wellness check-ins, games, challenges, fun engagement via social media
- Wellness check-ins for high needs/ vulnerable youth are supported by phone or WhatsApp
- The overall Service Continuity Plan includes supporting Interpreters/First Language (IFL) in their Outreach Information Services (COVID-19)
- Limited in-person services for registered IRCOM participants (tenants and non-tenants):
 - By appointment/ referral only.
 - Distribution of donated devices to youth lacking technology
 - Distribution of activities packages to IRCOM tenants (crayons, colouring, games, etc.)
 - Supporting the distribution of food hampers/essential needs packages to tenants

Newcomer Literacy Initiative ('NLI' - English Classes for Adults at IRCOM and in the community)

- On-hold: No in-person classes and no in-person assessments will be held, and new student intake is postponed
- Remote services:
 - Assignments are sent by email, ESL Library, WhatsApp, YouTube, and over the phone. There is emphasis on YouTube, WhatsApp, video and phone calls for lower levels
 - Teachers contact students 2-4 times a week with calls, videos, activities or messages
 - We will continue to do PBLA and build portfolios where possible
 - "Conversation buddies" will happen with IRCOM staff by phone
 - We will aid in access to technology for students
- Limited in-person services:
 - Initial drop off of learning packages and binders to higher CLB levels (3/4)
 - Future drop offs of learning packages
 - Coordinating some tech lending to NLI students
 - Supporting essential needs (food hampers, diapers, etc.) drop offs to students

Child Care Program (CCP)

- On-hold: All in-person child care services are postponed.
- Remote services:
 - A YouTube channel for NLI students' children has been developed for tenants and non-tenants, uploaded with stories, activities (new content 2x per week)
 - The Service Continuity Plan includes supporting Interpreters/First Language (IFL) in their Outreach Information Services (COVID-19)

- Limited in-person services:
 - Distribution of activities packages to IRCOM tenants and EAL students in community (word searches, crafts kits)

Asset and Capacity-Building Program (ACBP)

- On-hold: Immigration Loan Repayment Program was complete before the pandemic and there will be no new intakes for this program. There is no in-person Money Management Training Workshops, in-person cash-outs, in-person RESP program and in-person income tax workshops
- Remote services:
 - We will continue to accept referrals from partner agencies and serve low-income newcomers living in the community as well as IRCOM tenants
 - Income tax services will be by appointment only, and take place by phone, app, or on-line with newcomers who meet criteria (e.g., low-income, not self-employed, etc.)
 - Support for EI and EIA set-up will occur, as well as CRA problem-solving, and Identification Support (birth certificate applications and PR card renewal)
 - Support to access new benefits such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) will occur, as well as setting up MyAccount with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
 - Staffing and information updates regarding accessible benefits will be provided
- Limited in-person services:
 - Registered Asset Building Program/Money Management Training and Matched Saving participants will receive homework in the mail. IRCOM staff are in contact with SEED Winnipeg for more details
 - For any low income newcomers in the community, tax filing support for urgent cases (no previous tax returns, no Canada Child Benefit, language / technology barriers, etc.) will be available. We will support clients with language barriers by hiring an interpreter or by submitting an Authorization Form to CRA

To make a referral or appointment:

Amal at 204-306-9849; amals@ircom.ca

Shalini at 204-306-9852; shalinis@ircom.ca

Rania at 204-306-9851; ranias@ircom.ca

Volunteer and Community Service Program and the Common Ground Project

- On-hold: No in-person volunteer selection, interview, training, and placement will occur. In-person Common Ground activities (feast, reconciliation circles, etc.) are postponed
- Remote services:
 - IRCOM staff will issue communication updates to current volunteer pool
 - We will provide support to foreign practicum student as the situation evolves
 - Virtual connection with Indigenous communities through Common Ground will continue

- Limited in-person services
 - None

Greening Program

- Planning for the garden plots has begun and tenants will start gardening in June.
- Previous tenants and volunteers will run the program as safely as possible.
- Donations of seeds and soil are welcome.

Housing Department (tenants only)

- On-hold: No minor repairs and maintenance of suites will occur. There will be no non-urgent drop ins or pest management in occupied suites as per MHRC.
- Remote services:
 - Rent collection will happen on-line where possible
 - Repair / maintenance requests, rent non-payment follow up, and pest prevention information and will occur by phone
- Limited in-person services:
 - Move-ins will continue along with new tenant lease signings
 - Tenant exit walkthroughs / damage assessment will occur without tenants if possible- follow ups will be by phone. Move-outs will continue based on the family's requests: extensions to their stay is available during pandemic
 - Urgent maintenance will occur while tenants are outside the suite
 - Rent cheques are required to be dropped off in drop boxes, however rent collection assistance (cheque-writing) will be available
 - Pest prevention information will occur in-person if remote meetings are not possible. Pest prevention will continue in non-occupied suites as per MHRC
 - Urgent tenant drop-ins are available for new keys, laundry cards etc.
 - Fire, Life and Safety matters continue, including inspections
 - All duties required for the operation of IRCOM apartments (cleaning, sanitizing, snow clearing, parking enforcement, etc.) will continue
 - Contractor guidance will occur, only as absolutely required