



**Mayor Mark A. Cayer Update  
March 23, 2020**

To the Lewiston Community:

As your Mayor, I must call attention to the fact that a person's home is a crucial component of their health. The City of Lewiston is making great efforts, specifically through the remediation of lead hazards, to ensure all community members have safe housing, but our work is far from finished.

Now, COVID-19 has illustrated another way a safe home is central to public health. People, such as seniors and those with compromised immune systems, are vulnerable and need to remain in the safety of their own home to avoid exposure to this dangerous and highly contagious virus. Those infected, whether exhibiting symptoms or not, must quarantine in their homes to prevent the spread of the virus. Everyone, regardless of circumstance, needs a safe and reliable home.

The emergency measures we are undertaking in response to this virus can and are negatively impacting the employment and income of some of our residents, which can also affect a person's housing stability. Housing is an essential resource and, like our public utilities, it cannot be shut off during this time of need.

In order to ensure that our residents are housed and protected, I am asking everyone to follow these guidelines:

1. No homeowner should face foreclosure or renter be evicted or face threats of eviction, during this state of emergency and for the first 90 days of recovery, except where such actions must be taken as a matter of personal and physical safety.
2. No one should incur accrued interest, late fees, or new debt in order to remain in their homes during this crisis, be it for rent or home mortgages.
3. Creditors and landlords must do everything in their power to keep people housed as we work to contain the virus and reduce the rate of infection. We must commit to the same principles during recovery, when households will likely remain in vulnerable economic circumstances.

4. Homeowners and tenants also have the responsibility to communicate with their mortgage holders or landlords if they are unable to make scheduled payments and to explore payment arrangements or deferrals with them. They are also urged to seek out and utilize the public resources that they may qualify for to assist them in maintaining housing.
5. Lastly, our local, state, and federal government must increase efforts to ensure our people are housed safely and affordably. That means making assistance programs easy to access remotely during this period of social distancing. The City of Lewiston is offering loan forbearance to our residential borrowers, property tax extensions to property owners, and general assistance to assist those with limited income in maintaining housing. Lewiston General Assistance can be accessed by calling our social services office.

I call on other communities and policymakers across the state to promote these values and guidelines.

We are in this together, and I thank everyone for your support during this challenging time.

Mayor Mark Cayer