

# Frequently Asked Questions

## FOR COVID-19

### IS THE NHC OFFERING ANY LEASE REDUCTIONS FOR HOUSES THAT ARE CLOSED?

Yes, the NHC is reducing the lease payment for chapters whose houses are closed for the duration of the academic year. This reduction equals one and one-half months of budgeted reserves and one month of budgeted operating expenses.

### WHAT REFUNDS HAVE YOU SEEN LHCs GIVING TO CHAPTERS?

The amount we have seen varies by LHC and depends on each LHC's finances as well as how many more payments the chapter needs to make. Most LHCs are reducing the lease payment by at least one month and some on a quarter schedule are offering reductions equaling two months.

### WHAT SHOULD WE CONSIDER WHEN DETERMINING REFUNDS?

We recommend evaluating the following questions and possibilities when considering what lease reduction the LHC might be able to offer. While discussing these as a board, please work to be as fair as possible to the chapter during this time as it is also considering what refunds/credits it can give to its members.

- What remaining expenses does the LHC have from now through the summer?
- What are the planned summer projects? Can they be postponed?
- Can the LHC savings account be utilized to cover expenses while offering a reduction to the chapter during this unprecedented time?
- What happens if the houses don't open in the fall as planned?
  - While we don't know what the future holds with this virus, we have to prepare ourselves that things will not go back to normal as quickly as we want them to. The LHC should consider this when having conversations with the chapter about finances.

### **CAN WE CONTINUE WITH SUMMER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS?**

We strongly recommend LHCs hold on their summer capital improvement projects given the current uncertainty we are in as well as the unknowns of how long and how hard COVID-19 will continue to impact us. It is the NHC's recommendation that the funds planned for summer projects be held at this time for future essential expenses. In a few months, when hopefully more is known, capital projects could be considered for rescheduling during a fall or winter break. If too large for that timeframe, planning now for next summer is encouraged.

### **WILL ANY PORTION OF THE FRANCHISE FEE BE REFUNDED?**

No, national dues and fees are not being refunded. Your headquarters staff is continuing to assist our chapters and LHCs by providing support, resources and education during this time.

### **WHAT CAN WE DO TO LOWER OUR EXPENSES WITH THE FACILITY CLOSED?**

- **Trash pickups:** Look to see if you can decrease the number of trash pickups, possibly to once a month.
- **Utilities:** Make sure that your house is closed as you would for the summer with blinds closed, small appliances unplugged and thermostats set at appropriate temperatures. Consider talking to your providers of cable, internet and telephone to see if there are options for bundling or other cost savings they can offer.
- **Landscaping:** Work with your landscaper to limit flower plantings until campus is opened.
- **Summer maintenance:** Review all summer maintenance, evaluate what is priority and determine a timeline of when you need to make decisions to execute on the priority items.

### **THE FACILITY IS CLOSED. WHAT CLEANING SHOULD WE BE DOING NOW?**

We recommend doing a safety check in the entire house to make sure all trash has been removed and food disposed of from all fridges. We suggest doing a thorough cleaning of high-touch areas and waiting to schedule deep cleans until prior to the women's return.

### **SOME MEMBERS COULDN'T MOVE THEIR BELONGINGS OUT. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?**

Many of our members had to move out very quickly which caused some not to be able to remove all of their personal items. We recommend the LHC monitor state and national recommendations and work with the chapter to determine when it is safe for members to move the rest of their belongings out. LHCs should be flexible during this time and allow the belongings to stay in the facility, free of charge. If items will be allowed to remain over the summer, we do recommend the LHC work with the chapter to inventory what items are remaining and have each member sign a statement indicating what she is leaving and her understanding that the chapter and LHC are not responsible for potential damage. This is because the summer months are not included in the current lease with the chapter or the residential agreement with the member.

### **WHEN IT IS SAFE TO MOVE OUT, WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?**

When it is time to coordinate a move-out, the LHC should work with the chapter to determine appropriate dates and times for the move-out to occur. Our recommendations for the process are as follows:

- The chapter should offer move-out shifts spanning no more than 2-3 hours in length. Each member will sign up for one shift and should only have one to two helpers. We suggest each shift have a total of no more than 10 people.
- Try to schedule the women moving out in different sections of the house and no roommates moving out at the same time.
- While in the facility, keep as much distance as possible and don't allow congregating in the common areas. In between shifts, wipe down high-touch areas.

### **IS THE HOUSE DIRECTOR ALLOWED TO STAY IN THE FACILITY?**

Yes! The house director does not need to vacate the property during this time. Pearl Stone Partners, which is the employer of all our chapter-level employees, has connected with each house director about their job responsibilities during this time. One thing to keep in mind is that the house director shouldn't be using the commercial kitchens unless they have certifications to do so, which may mean they need additional small appliances. Be sure the LHC checks in with the house director to make sure they are doing OK.

## **WE ARE LOOKING INTO OUR BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-21. WHAT CHANGES SHOULD WE CONSIDER?**

While things are uncertain right now, the NHC is doing its best to prepare for whatever might come in the fall. Because of this, the NHC will create three different budgets for review and consideration:

1. Created with opening in the fall as normal
2. Created with a decrease in occupancy of 50%
3. Created with a delayed school start and no revenue coming in

## **OUR FACILITY HAS A COLD DORM/SLEEPING PORCH. WILL WE NEED TO CHANGE ANYTHING ONCE MEMBERS RETURN?**

While we don't know what will happen by the time we return, we want to be as prepared as possible for any changes that might need to take place. Cold dorms/sleeping porches might need to be revised to comply with any social distancing recommendations that might still be in place this fall. Consider now how you might adjust these spaces and how many beds you may lose if everyone needs to sleep at least 6 feet apart. Also consider how many day rooms you have and what your occupancy would look like if those were converted to traditional rooms during this time.

## **WITH CONVENTION CANCELED, WILL THE NHC OFFER ANY OPPORTUNITIES ONLINE?**

Yes! More communication will be coming in early summer. Be on the look-out for some virtual options for connecting and training!

## **WHERE CAN WE FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM HEADQUARTERS ABOUT COVID-19?**

Please monitor the Alpha Chi Omega website for up-to-date information related to our [COVID-19 response](#).