Future of Housing Checklist

Opening student housing for the next academic term will require professionals to engage in proactive planning around COVID-19, a dynamic issue about which we are still learning. Below is a recommended checklist of items that campus professionals should review as soon as possible.

This list is not exhaustive, rather it represents a working document, which will be added to as we learn more about the virus and associated mitigation strategies, and receive further guidance from public health professionals/entities, including but not limited to, the Center for Disease Control (US).

This checklist of considerations has been curated by the ACUHO-I Future of Housing Work Group. Campus professionals should consult with their local public health officials, campus emergency response team, legal counsel, and senior staff prior to implementation.

1. Establish a process for students to store, retrieve, ship, or dispose of personal belongings to ensure room readiness:
- Identify method to allow individuals to safely return to campus.
- Generate a list of approved moving and storage companies.
- If your policy is to ship items to students, clearly articulate if you will charge students or assume the costs.
- Clearly communicate about what will happen to unclaimed items.

2. Review processes and associated communications plans related to:
- Refunding or discounting housing fees.
- Cancelling future housing.
- Accessing grants, stimulus, and hardship funding.
- Supporting international students unable to return to home country.
- Supporting students who are unable to return home due to unsafe conditions, financial hardship, and other circumstances.
- Complying with country, state or local restrictions.

3. Model different housing capacity scenarios. Models currently being considered by professionals in the field, include but are not limited to:
- Status quo (likely the model you used in 2019).
- Single occupancy (regardless of room type) with community bathroom.
- Single occupancy (regardless of room type) with private bathroom.
- Suite style with private bathroom.
- Apartment style with private bathroom.
- Co-occupancy for students with known immunity to COVID-19 and single occupancy for students not known to be immune to COVID-19 (assumes antibody testing is developed in time).
- In buildings with community bathrooms, model the following:
  - Assigned shower for each resident.
  - Use of every other shower/stall.
  - Sanitizing between users and/or increasing frequency of cleaning.
- Identify alternatives for frequently used over-flow strategies that increase density beyond design (triples, quads).
- Discuss closing floors or buildings due to possible low occupancy.
- Other models will likely be necessary based on your housing stock, anticipated size of your residential student population and local public health conditions.

4. Evaluate your COVID-19 quarantine/isolation capabilities:
- Review your institution's protocol for the management of exposed and ill residents.
- Seek to use a dedicated area/wing away from other residents or identify off-campus location(s) that could be used for quarantine/isolation spaces.

- Consider apartment or suite style rooms, where students have access to their own bathroom, kitchen, and even laundry facilities (if possible).
- Document processes such as how students in quarantine/isolation will receive meals and medications, trash removal, and how these spaces will be sanitized between turns.
- Source PPE (personal protective equipment) for staff members who are immuno- compromised and/or at high risk for exposure.
- Identify additional resourcing needs and supplies for quarantine/isolation rooms (e.g., bio-hazard trash bags).
- Review your institution's process for providing mental health support for students in quarantine/isolation.

5. Prepare and support staff and student leaders:
- Train live-in professionals, graduate hall directors, and resident assistants (RAs) on public health measures; signs; and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Consider whether PPE (and training on how to use it) is needed for live-in, graduate hall directors, RAs and other staff who work most directly with students.
- Consider who can/should continue working remotely given their role and their vulnerability to the virus.
- Recognize the toll of this type of work, and provide resources, including access to mental health providers.

6. Implement mitigation strategies to protect all community members:
- Discuss readiness to return to normal building operations with your senior medical officer and/or environmental health officer.
- Establish a procedure for reporting symptoms.
- Investigate temperature checking, testing, and tracing options, and who will be charged with these duties.
- Promote prevention strategies (hand washing; physical distancing; wearing masks/face coverings, etc.) via multiple communication methods (e-mail, signage, text messages, etc.)
- Provide supplies to encourage prevention strategy compliance (soap; hand-sanitizer; etc.)
- Install plexi-glass barriers (sometimes called "sneeze guards") at all front desks.
- Consider one-way hallways (if possible).
- Rearrange furniture in building entry ways, lobbies, etc. to account for physical distancing (6 feet/2 meters).
- Cancel non-essential activities.
- Consider restricting access to residential buildings to residents and essential staff (no visitors or guests).

7. Initiate discussions with your college/university legal counsel regarding modifications to housing contract(s) to imply risk assumption and address:
- The provision of limited services (e.g., staffing, dining, maintenance, etc.).
- Adhering to physical distancing policies.
- Testing and tracing requirements.
- Housing refund policies.
- Contract cancellations.
- Heightened risk due to COVID-19 in the community.

8. Coordinate purchasing of critical supplies, PPE, signage, and other COVID-related items with campus or local institutions:
- Investigate collaborating with other offices and nearby campuses for bulk ordering.

9. Tap into the current thinking of peers in your region or other regions:
- Many regions have weekly calls with senior housing officers to discuss plans and collaborate.
- Utilize ACUHO-I and other associated community forums to understand how campus units are planning around COVID-19 and return to campus

- This is an important step because of the variability of community spread within any given location/region, and different levels of resources between institution types.

10. Familiarize yourself with official sources of information and guidelines on managing COVID-19 in community spaces:
- CDC
  - Guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting building facilities
    https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html
  - Guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing
    https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/shared-congregate-house/guidance-shared-congregate-housing.html
  - Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Institutions of Higher Education
    https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html
- Johns Hopkins University
  - Phased reopening guide for governors
    https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/pubs_archive/pubs-pdfs/2020/200417-reopening-guidance-governors.pdf
- American College Health Association (ACHA)
  - COVID-19 resources: https://www.acha.org/COVID-19
- Australian Government Department of Health
  - https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-universities-higher-education-and-vocational-education-facilities
- World Health Organization
  - https://covid19.who.int/
- International SOS
  - https://pandemic.internationalsos.com/2019-ncov

11. Familiarize yourself with ACUHO-I COVID-19 resources/page (https://www.acuho-i.org/covid19):
- Straw poll data reports.
- Virtual roundtable recordings & supplements.
- Online community threads.
- Partner resources.
- Library documents.

Have suggestions for other items that should be added to this list? Please e-mail Christopher Silva, Chair of the Future of Housing Work Group, at **csilva@american.edu**.