

Updated: Wednesday, January 12, 2022



**VINCENT K. TIBBS SENIOR BUILDING  
111 WEST STREET, ENGLEWOOD, NJ 07631**

**RECOVERY FAQ  
(FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)  
FOR TIBBS RESIDENTS  
[www.111WestStreet.org](http://www.111WestStreet.org)  
[info@ehahousing.org](mailto:info@ehahousing.org)  
201-871-3451**

*Dear residents of 111 West Street,*

*The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is to provide a consistent method of providing you with answers to commonly asked questions. To ensure you have access to accurate and timely information, a website has been created ([www.111WestStreet.org](http://www.111WestStreet.org)) to house the FAQ document. We will send a text message to the phone numbers in our contact list whenever we post an updated version of the document. Our goal is to be transparent by providing you with answers to your questions based on the information we have on hand. Keep in mind we do not have all the answers, but we are working hard to get you what you need thanks to the generous assistance of government and community organizations along with the many unsung community volunteers. If you have questions or suggestions on how we can do better, please submit them to [info@ehahousing.org](mailto:info@ehahousing.org).*

**Summary Update  
January 12, 2022**

**FEMA funding for the hotels ends April 1, 2022.**

**Residents at the hotels must find housing by March 31, 2022.**

**The Section 8 voucher amount has been increased to approximately \$2,000!**

The Englewood Housing Authority (EHA) has continuously informed the residents that staying at the hotels until 111 West Street is habitable will not be an option given FEMA will not fund hotels indefinitely. As such, EHA and the Bergen Family

Center have been identifying apartments in the community for our residents. Many of our residents have responded positively and have been renting apartments. Our December FAQ stated that we hoped to have only 60 hotel rooms in January. Thankfully, our residents have been working with us to find permanent housing. Therefore, by the end of January, I am happy to report that EHA now hopes to only have approximately 35 hotel rooms by February 1. Unfortunately, many of the residents at the hotels are not interested in moving. Several residents have been offered multiple apartments but have not accepted them. For several months now, staff has made it clear that the hotel is not a long-term solution and is negatively impacting their quality of life.

As we stated for months now, there will come a time when FEMA funding ends. That time has come. **FEMA funding for the hotels ends April 1, 2022.** As such, all residents at the hotels need to find a permanent housing solution before then. Fortunately, all residents have a Section 8 voucher to rent an apartment. The voucher has allowed residents to rent 1-bedroom apartments in the \$1,500 range. In Bergen County, that limits the number of available apartments. This past Friday, HUD has informed us that EHA can now raise the voucher amount for our residents at the hotels to approximately **\$2,000!** This will open many more opportunities and should make moving to an apartment of your choice by the end of March feasible. You do not want FEMA to choose an apartment for you.

However, there is no time to waste. Please continue to work with Janel Johnston from Bergen Family Center who has been extremely helpful in connecting you with housing opportunities. In addition, a staff member will be assigned to you so that all your needs and questions are met. Janel or a staff member will reach out to you directly every couple of days to help you through the process and to point you to available resources. You are always welcome to reach out to them directly as well.

As far as where the rebuilding of 111 West Street stands, EHA is working hard to make 111 West Street habitable again as fast as possible. However, our estimate remains that the building will unfortunately be uninhabitable for approximately 18 months. Last week, EHA received the bids for the new elevator (approximate cost: \$1.2 million). Our engineer is reviewing the responses so that we may award the contract in the next few weeks. However, the new elevators will not be operational for 13-16 months. In the next month, EHA will go out to bid for the replacement of the building's electrical system. Other bids will follow to replace:

HVAC system, hot water system, roof, fire alarm system, EHA’s administrative offices, etc.

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**Photo of 1<sup>st</sup> Floor apartments looking into EHA's offices at the far end:**



1.) Why was the building evacuated?

The City of Englewood inspected the property on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and determined late that evening that the property was no longer safe due to the extensive damage caused by the flooding to the mechanical systems of the building which were all fully submerged in over 12 feet of water. Given the extensive damage, it was ordered that the building must be vacated by September 4<sup>th</sup> end of day for safety reasons. The Englewood Fire Department provided a fire watch during this time-period.

2.) Was everyone evacuated safely?

Thankfully, yes. Residents were transported to hotels or assisted living facilities or were picked up by family/friends.

3.) When will the building be repaired?

Due to the extensive damage to the building, it is likely the repairs will take **1.5 years** before the building can again be occupied by residents. It is too early in the process to provide a better time estimate.

4.) Were the Englewood Housing Authority's offices impacted?

Yes, because our offices are located on the first floor of 111 West Street, they were also flooded. The office has already been completely gutted down to the studs. We are currently working out of remote locations. In addition, 95% of our tools, equipment, supplies and files were destroyed since they were in the basement or in the office, so we are beginning the process of getting back on our feet.

The Englewood Housing Authority (EHA) now has remote offices at the hotels so you therefore have daily access to our staff during business hours. Our staff has been provided with laptops and Internet hotspots so that they can more effectively work remotely.

5.) Why is no one answering the phones in the office?

Since we no longer have our administrative offices, and most of us do not have ready access to desktop phones, we are unable to answer your calls when you contact us. However, please leave a voicemail or email message and we will respond to you as soon we are able.

6.) Where do the repairs stand?

The elevator replacement was publicly bid and the bid opening was held on Friday, January 7<sup>th</sup>. The engineer is reviewing the submissions. EHA hopes to award the contract in the next few weeks. The engineer is currently working on the bid specifications. EHA anticipates to bid for the replacement of the electrical system in the next month.

7.) Will the rehabilitation of the building take into consideration the possibility of future flooding?

EHA has proposed moving all or most of the mechanical equipment from the basement to locations above the floodplain. This will include relocating mechanical equipment that was lost during the flood, i.e.: elevator equipment, fire suppression equipment, electrical panels, heat and hot water equipment, generator equipment, hallway air conditioning, security camera equipment, etc. Although this is an unprecedented event, with these proposed changes, future floods should not impact the long-term habitability of the property.

8.) Who will pay for the repairs to the building?

We are currently working with our various insurance companies and will also be working with FEMA and HUD to cover the costs of rehabilitating the property.

9.) Given electricity has been shut off, what do I do with the contents of my refrigerator/freezer if I can't get in the building?

Our staff has gone into every apartment and discarded the contents of the refrigerators and freezers and any perishable food items that may have been left out so that they do not rot in the apartments.

In addition, to prevent mold, all apartments, corridors and ducts were wiped clean per the recommendation of an industrial hygienist.

10.) When can I enter the apartment to gather up personal effects?

Please reach out to Sonja Alston to schedule a time to enter the 111 West Street.

11.) Can anyone get into my apartment?

No one will enter your apartment without permission unless they are accompanied by a housing authority employee.

12.) Is there building security?

Yes, the building has a monitored security alarm system.

13.) Do I continue to pay rent while I'm displaced?

No, you will not pay rent while the building is shut down. You will receive a refund for the month of September.

14.) Do I need to complete the annual income recertification?

No, not at this time.

15.) Have you towed my car from the parking lot?

As you are aware, the cars in the parking lot were all severely damaged or totaled. We have not towed away any of the cars. There are 5 cars remaining at the property that need to be towed away by the owners.

16.) My apartment is on the first floor but I didn't purchase renter's insurance. Do I have any options to get money to replace my personal property?

Our insurance does not cover personal items. Most residents filed a claim under FEMA. Please note that although you may have received funding from FEMA, it may not be only a one-time payment. EHA encourages you to reach out to FEMA to ask for additional assistance beyond what you have already been provided.

17.) Should I cancel/suspend subscriptions being delivered to the building?

Yes, you should cancel or suspend subscriptions to newspapers, magazines, recurring deliveries of medication, etc.

18.) Do I need to cancel cable?

We have asked Spectrum to suspend basic cable and Internet service to the building so there should be no charge to you while you are away. However, we cannot suspend your phone service nor your premium channels. Therefore, please reach out to your provider to cancel or suspend the service directly. For example, there are 30 residents that have phone service with Spectrum that we cannot cancel. You must call yourself.

Regarding cable equipment, tenants on the first floor with damaged equipment will be billed for the equipment. Tenants on the other floors need to return their equipment so as not to get charged.

19.) Do I cancel my landline phone?

Please contact your phone service provider for options. Note, if you are moving to a new apartment, you may want to transfer that number to your new dwelling.

20.) Where do I get my mail?

Your mail is being held at the Post Office located at 55 Smith Street in Englewood. You should also consider submitting a change of address either online or in person at any Post Office to have your mail forwarded to a new address.

21.) What are my housing options?

Given the length of time the building will be uninhabitable, we have issued all residents a Section 8 voucher which can be used to rent an apartment. You can choose to rent an apartment in Englewood with the voucher but you can also choose to rent an apartment anywhere within the U.S. When you rent an apartment, the lease is typically for a year so you will need to stay there for the lease term. However, you will be at the top of the wait list for the next vacancy at 111 West Street should you wish to move back.

In addition, several local housing authorities have provided us access to their vacancies. We have had several residents already move to these apartments. Please let us know if you are interested in future vacancies.

22.) How can we access additional social services while we are displaced?

Bergen Family Center (BFC), located in Englewood, is collaborating with the Englewood Housing Authority to provide mental health counseling, housing search and other services during these stressful times.

23.) What are our options regarding covering the cost of food while I'm in the hotel?

Breakfast is being provided by the hotels. If you need assistance with food, please speak to a staff member or someone from Bergen Family Center. No one will go hungry.

Moreover, the Crowne Plaza Englewood has included microwaves in every room so that you may prepare or heat meals.

24.) Will there be assistance to help me replace my furniture?

FEMA provided assistance to the first floor residents.



25.) I have doctor's appointments coming up, how will I get there?

Access Link NJ Transit

1-800-955-2321

Hearing impaired 1-800-772-2287

24 Hour Access 973-275-5555

Bergen County Community Transportation

201-368-5955

American Cancer Society (for Cancer patients)

1-800-277-2345 ext. 5

NJ FIND A RIDE

1-877-652-1148 or dial 2-1-1

Information service that finds agencies that provide transport

26.) How will the Bergen County Board of Social Services handle recertification for food stamps and Medicaid if they cannot come to 111 West Street?

Please reach out directly to the Bergen County Board of Social Services with any questions.