Sending and Receiving Encrypted Emails with HPD
June 2020

The New York City's Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is dedicated to protecting confidential information from being shared with unauthorized recipients and third parties, including HPD partners and members of the public, with whom the agency corresponds. Due to the sensitive nature of some information shared, the agency recommends using encryption tools to prevent the unintentional release of personally identifiable information (PII).

This document provides guidance to partners or members of the public for using encrypted email to share documents that contain sensitive information.

Initiating the Exchange of Sensitive Information

If you need to share documents with PII and have been unable to successfully upload your documents to the Tenant Portal, notify your HPD contact who then will send you an encrypted email to which you can respond. Your HPD contact will first send a regular email from their HPD account alerting you to expect an encrypted email and including instructions on how to respond. Then they will send the encrypted email to which you can reply.
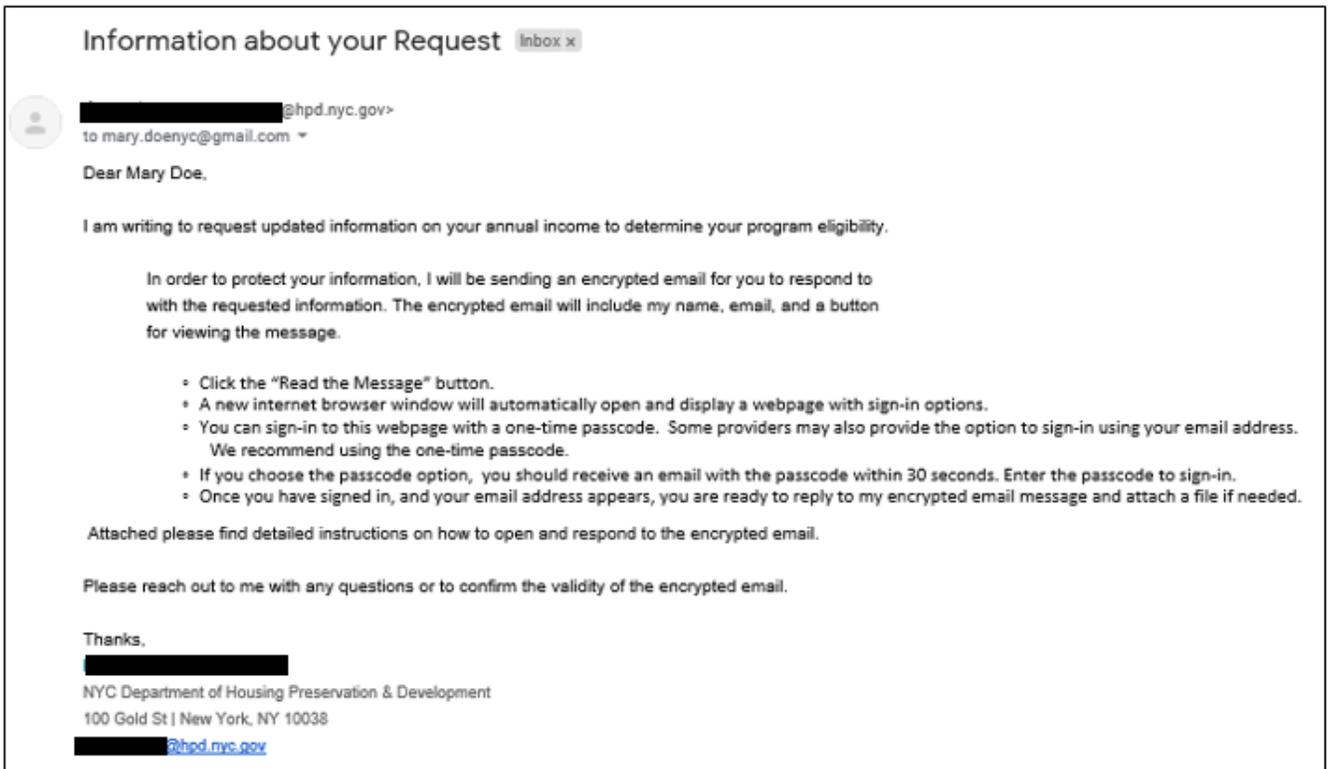
Please reach out to your specific contacts at HPD if you receive an email that looks unusual and want to confirm the validity of any email or associated documentation.

How to Open Encrypted Emails from HPD

Partners and members of the public can open HPD-encrypted emails, regardless of their email service provider (ex: Google, Yahoo, Optimum, etc.). If you need to send PII to your HPD contact, please follow the steps below:

1. **Reach out to your HPD contact and request an encrypted exchange**.
   a. Your HPD contact will send you an unencrypted email that explains how the encrypted exchange proceeds. See *Figure 1*.

Figure 1 Sample Email

Information about your Request Inbox x

@hpd.nyc.gov>
to mary.doenyc@gmail.com ▾

Dear Mary Doe,

I am writing to request updated information on your annual income to determine your program eligibility.

In order to protect your information, I will be sending an encrypted email for you to respond to with the requested information. The encrypted email will include my name, email, and a button for viewing the message.

- Click the "Read the Message" button.
- A new internet browser window will automatically open and display a webpage with sign-in options.
- You can sign-in to this webpage with a one-time passcode. Some providers may also provide the option to sign-in using your email address. We recommend using the one-time passcode.
- If you choose the passcode option, you should receive an email with the passcode within 30 seconds. Enter the passcode to sign-in.
- Once you have signed in, and your email address appears, you are ready to reply to my encrypted email message and attach a file if needed.

Attached please find detailed instructions on how to open and respond to the encrypted email.

Please reach out to me with any questions or to confirm the validity of the encrypted email.

Thanks,

NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development
100 Gold St | New York, NY 10038
@hpd.nyc.gov

2. **You will receive a follow-up email that provides access to the encrypted content from HPD. See** *Figure 2.*

Figure 2 Opening the email.
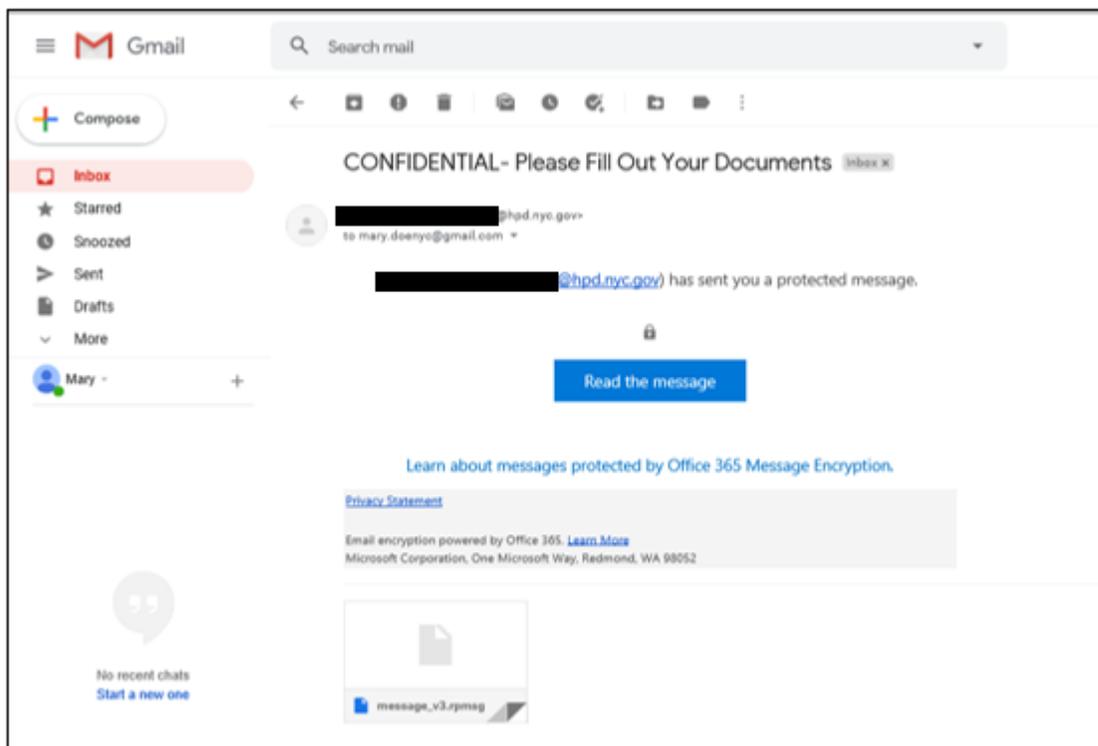
3. **Please open this email and click on the button labeled: "Read the message".**

a. **NOTE:** If you do not see an email from HPD in your Inbox folder, please make sure to check you **Spam** folder with any email that contains **@hpd.nyc.gov**.

4. **A pop-up window will inform you that the message is protected and to sign in to view the message. See** *Figure 3.*

Figure 3 Signing in to view the message
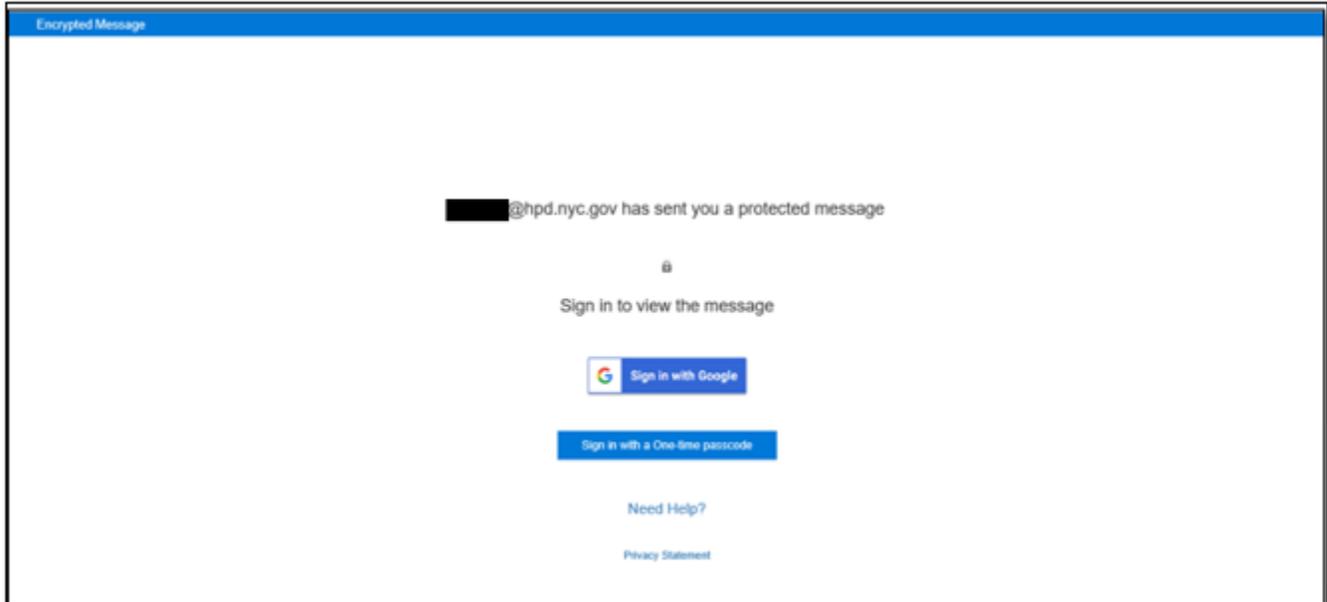
5. **You will be presented with two methods for viewing the message:**
   a. **Sign in with a one-time passcode (preferred method)** – allows the email recipient to read the protected message using a temporary passcode. The passcode can only be used within 15 minutes from its receipt and expire after that period. As it provides complete encryption, **please use this method to view email messages from HPD**.

   b. **Sign in with your usual email service provider (ex: Google, Yahoo)** – To view the message, sign in with your email provider using your password for that provider. However:
      i. **This method is not recommended for viewing messages in a secure manner**. Some parts of the exchange are not guaranteed to be encrypted.
      ii. **Some email service providers do not offer this option.** If your email service does not provide this option, you are still able to view the encrypted message with the one-time passcode.

6. **To use the one-time passcode:** Click on the button labeled "Sign in with a One-time passcode." See *Figure 4*.
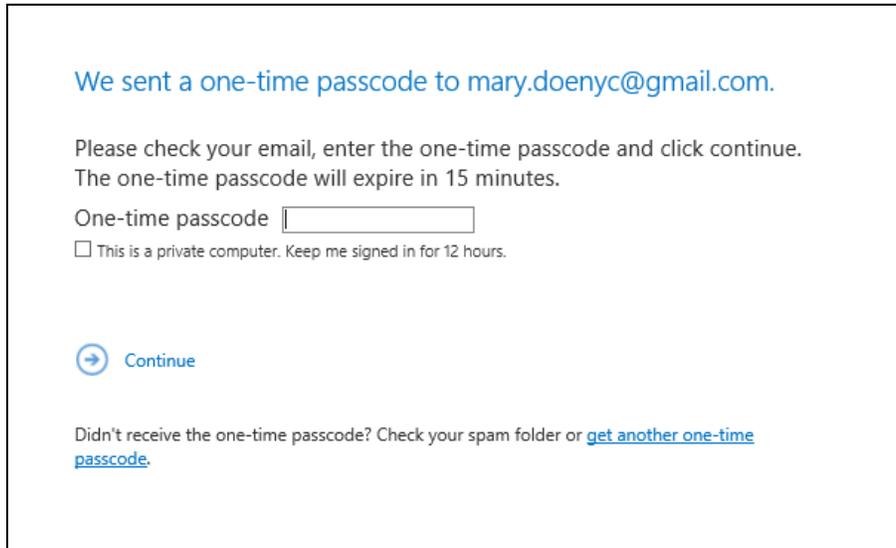
Figure 4 Sign in with a One-time passcode

7. **A pop-up window appears. See *Figure 5*.**
    a. Microsoft Office 365 has sent you a one-time passcode.
    b. Check your email account to retrieve the passcode.
   c. Please do not delay. Recall that the passcode must be used within 15 minutes from **its receipt**.

Figure 5 Passcode Request Window

8. **Go back to your email account and look for an email message coming from Microsoft Office 365.**
    a. You may need to refresh your email homepage to see the one-time passcode notification in your Inbox folder. See *Figure 6*.
    b. If the notification does not appear in your Inbox, check your spam folder for mail from **Microsoft Office 365**.

Figure 6 Sample GMail Home Page
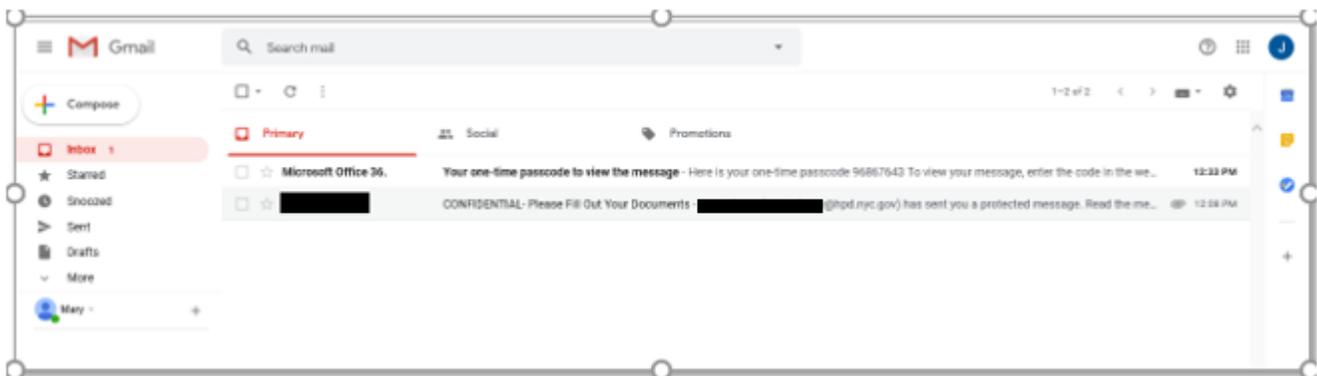
9. **Open the message. You will see that Microsoft Office 365 provides a temporary numerical passcode**:

Figure 7 One time passcode message
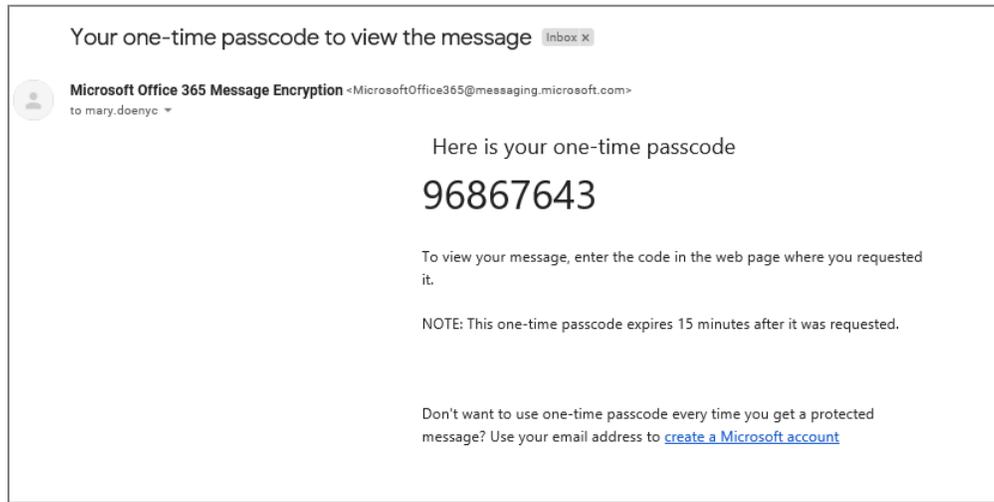
10. **Copy the one-time passcode and paste it to the passcode request window. Then press "Continue"**:

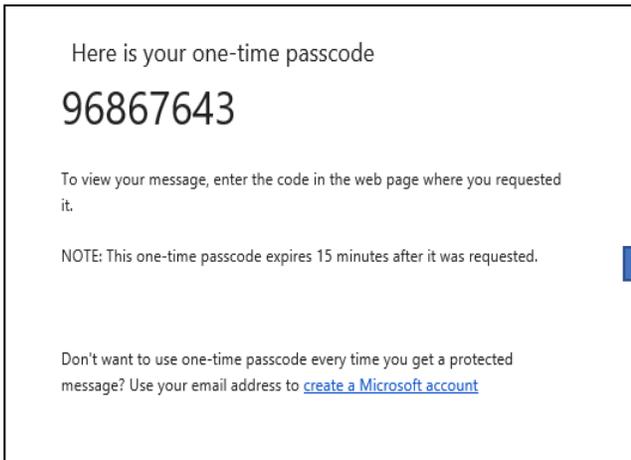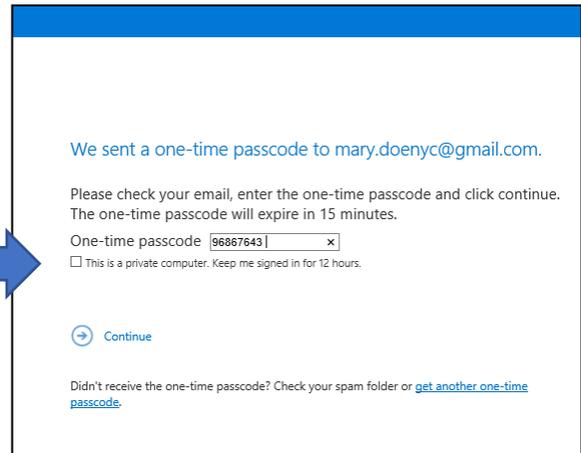*Figure 8 One-time passcode Window*   *Figure 9 Passcode request Window*


11. **If you did not receive the one-time passcode**:

   a. please make sure to check your spam folder in your email account.

   b. You can also go to the passcode request window shown in *Figure 5* and click on get another one-time passcode.

12. **You will be able to view HPD's email message**.

    a. If the email message contains a document attached to the encrypted email, once you download and open the document, it will no longer be encrypted.

    b. Note that – as the recipient of the encrypted message – you are only able to reply to the message. **You will not be able to forward the message to another party or print the email message**. This is to ensure that the information stays with you.

Figure 10 Unencrypted Email Message
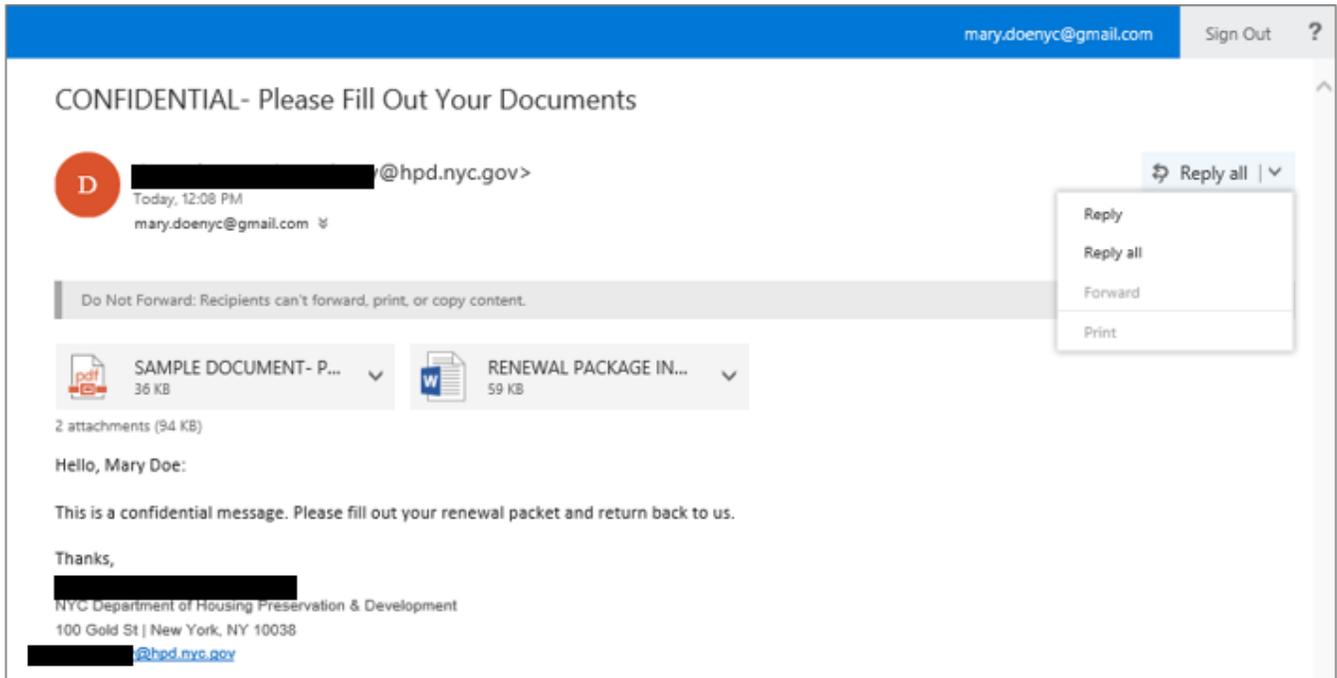
13. **In order to maintain encryption protection, please make sure to click "Reply" in the same encrypted email to respond to HPD's message**.

Figure 11 Replying to an Encrypted Message
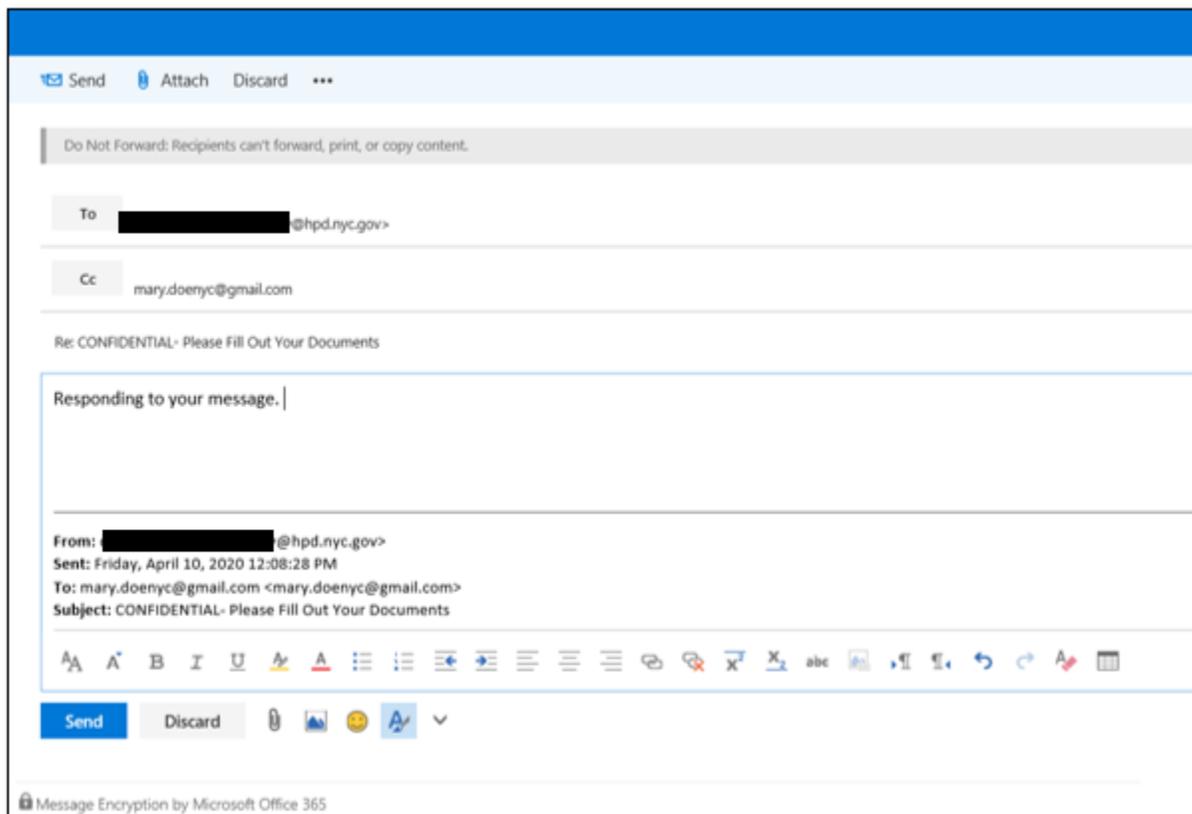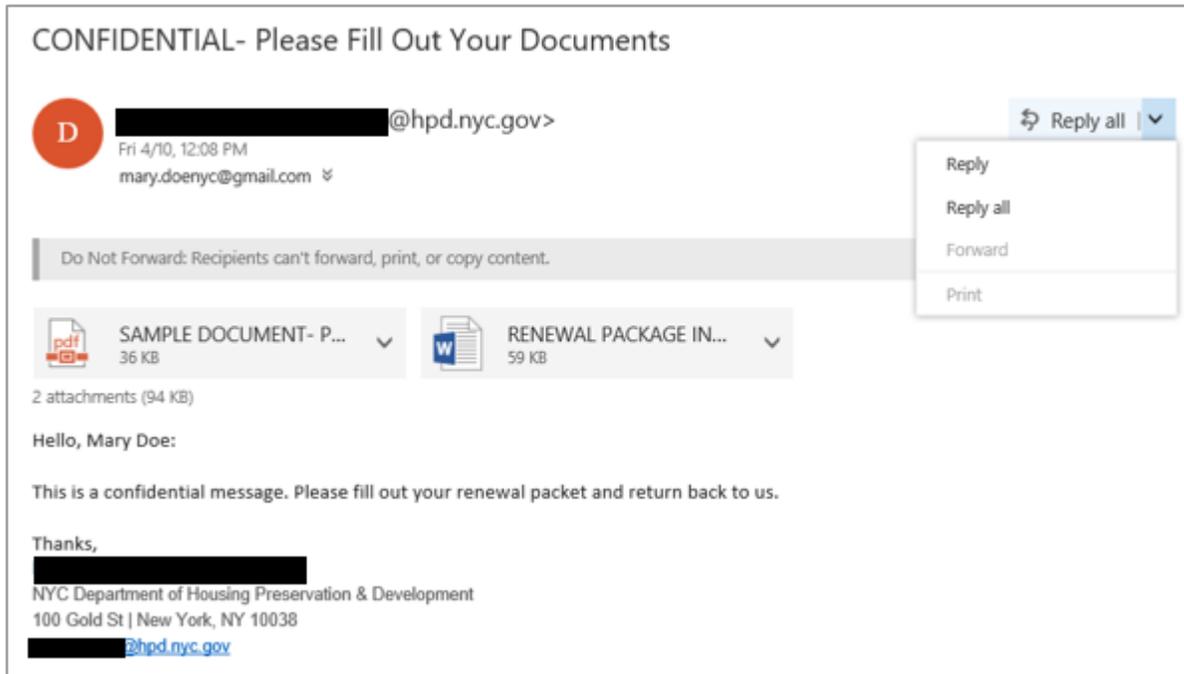
14. **To insert documents from your computer into the encrypted message**:

   a. Click on "Attach" [Attach icon] or the paperclip icon [paperclip icon]

   b. To send a message, type your message in the body of the email and press "Send" [Send icon] .

   If you want to delete the email, click on "**Discard".**

15. **Please reach out to your specific contact at HPD if you have any questions.**

Sending an Encrypted Email

We encourage you to encrypt any of the emails you send to HPD in order to best protect your information. This will look different for every email provider, and between a computer or a mobile device, but you should look for "Encrypt" before sending the email if possible.

If you are unable to encrypt the email you send to HPD, we encourage you to not include any sensitive or personal information in the email, and instead request options for sending that information to us. The HPD staff member will respond with the best way to either communicate or submit your document, including the tenant portal at www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms, faxing, or mailing the documents.