



Frequently Asked Questions - COVID- 19 Rental Assistance Program

1. What is the COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program?

- Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing an unprecedented financial hardship for many Montgomery County residents, the COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program is a program that provides financial assistance in the form of a rent subsidy payment. This program seeks to fill the gaps for those who have lost income during COVID-19.

2. What are the eligibility criteria?

- You must be a Montgomery County resident who has resided in Montgomery County for a minimum of six (6) of the past twelve (12) months;
- You must self-certify that you have had a loss of income or an unexpected increase in medical, childcare, or utility expenses due to COVID-19;
- You are not receiving a subsidy (A) as a participant in the Housing Choice Voucher Program (including tenant-based and project-based vouchers), or (B) in a project-based assisted project where you pay no more than thirty percent (30%) of your annual income as rent;
- You must have documentation from your landlord showing that you are at least one-month delinquent in your rent;
- You must be a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien, which includes an alien who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act (as defined by 8 U.S.C. 1641) (applicants can self-certify);
- You must submit your application and documentation by the required dates and times; and
- You must have a gross household income that does not exceed the program limits in the chart below based on household size. Your household income must remain within the program limits at all times for continued participation.

FY 2020 Income Limit Area	Median Family Income	FY 2020 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD HUD Metro FMR Area	\$126,000	Low (80%) Income Limits (\$)	55,750	63,700	71,650	79,600	86,000	92,350	98,750	105,100

3. **How much is the payment?**
 - Each household is eligible for assistance of up to \$600 per month for a maximum of three (3) months for a total of \$1,800.
 - All assistance is contingent on the availability of funds.
4. **Will individuals who received COVID-19 Rental Assistance have to pay the money back?**
 - No. This is not a loan; it is a grant and will not have to be paid back.
 - However, if we discover that a recipient has falsified documents or has somehow defrauded the program, the money will need to be repaid.
5. **Will I have to pay 2020 taxes on this money?**
 - No, the assistance is not income and will not be taxed.
 - The payment will not affect income for purposes of determining eligibility for other Federal Government assistance or benefits.
6. **How will I get the money?**
 - COVID-19 Rental Assistance will be distributed directly to landlords.
7. **Are there preferences for households with children or the elderly?**
 - No. All households will be treated the same.
8. **Is the process of choosing awardees equitable and fair?**
 - Yes. Under the Montgomery County Code, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, marital status, physical or mental disability, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, presence of children, source of income, sexual orientation, age and family responsibilities.
9. **What documentation is needed?**

Self-Certification of COVID-19 Impact:

- On the Application, you are required to self-certify that you have had a loss of income (e.g., layoff, furlough, or termination from employment) or unexpected increase in medical, childcare, or utility expenses due to COVID-19.
- No other documentation of COVID-19 impact required.

Income Verification:

- On the Application, you are required to self-certify that you have a gross household income that does not exceed the program limits in the chart below based on household size. Income includes, but is not limited to,

wages, unemployment benefits, SSI, child support, alimony, investment income, retirement income (including pensions), income from assets, etc.

- No other documentation of income required.

FY 2020 Income Limit Area	Median Family Income	FY 2020 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD HUD Metro FMR Area	\$126,000	Low (80%) Income Limits (\$)	55,750	63,700	71,650	79,600	86,000	92,350	98,750	105,100

Verification of Residency:

- You must submit a copy of pages from your lease or a current lease addendum/renewal that provides the following information: (1) your current address, (2) the unit occupants, (3) the current rent amount, and (4) you and your landlord’s signature.

Landlord Documentation:

- You must submit documentation from your landlord showing that you are at least one-month delinquent in your rent.
- You must provide documentation that shows your landlord’s name, address, and community name (if applicable).
- You must provide a copy of your landlord’s completed W9 form.
 - If you apply for assistance online, you will have the option to have an email generated and sent to your landlord. The email will contain a link that your landlord may use to upload their completed W9 form and any other required information.
 - If you apply for assistance via a paper application, you should follow the instructions on the paper application.

Other Documents

- Copy of a Maryland’s Driver’s License, Maryland Photo ID, or passport for each adult member. Out-of-State Driver’s Licenses or IDs are not accepted.

10. When can I submit an application?

- You can submit your complete application between Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 10:00 am and Monday, August 31, 2020 at 2:00 pm.

11. What is the application review and approval process?

Applications received by the submission deadline of 2:00 pm on August 31, 2020 will be included in a randomized selection process. Applicants that are selected through this random process and have submitted all required supporting documentation will be considered for assistance. Applications will be reviewed for completeness of application, submission of required documentation, and eligibility. Selected applicants who have submitted complete applications, submitted all required supporting documentation, and are deemed eligible will be qualified to receive assistance.

- If your application is selected in the randomized process, HOC will email you (if you have provided an email address) or send you a letter (via USPS) informing you whether you have been approved or denied. If your application is not selected in the random process, HOC will **not** contact you.

12. If I am denied assistance, can I appeal the decision?

- Yes. Applicants who are denied participation or terminated from the program (“**Appellant**”) may appeal the decision to HOC's Resident Services Director, or his designee. Appeals must be requested in writing and received by HOC within 5 days of the date of HOC's notice of denial of participation or termination of continued participation. Upon receipt of an appeal request, HOC will contact the Appellant within 10 days of receiving the request. HOC will communicate with the Appellant via phone, email, or virtual meeting to determine if the denial or termination was proper. If specifically requested by Appellant, HOC will schedule a virtual interview for a case review and the Appellant shall be allowed to present their case at the review (including presenting documentation, explanations, and clarifications). HOC's Resident Services Director, or his designee, will make a decision and notify Appellant within 10 days. The decision of HOC's Resident Services Director, or his designee, is final and cannot be appealed.
- **The appeals process is to be used to dispute denied participation or termination from the program. It is not an opportunity to submit missing documentation that was required to be submitted as part of the initial application.**
- **If an Appellant is successful in their appeal, their ability to receive assistance will depend on whether any COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program funds are available on the date of the appeal decision. A successful appeal decision does not guarantee receipt of assistance.**