



**City of Oakland
Keep Oakland Housed
COVID-19 Renter Relief Program
Frequently Asked Questions**

June 18, 2021

Q1: What is the Keep Oakland Housed COVID-19 Renter Relief Program

A1: The Keep Oakland Housed COVID-19 Renter Relief Program is a rental assistance program that provides assistance to support eligible tenants impacted, directly or indirectly, by COVID-19 with rental arrears and rent payments.

Q2: What is the purpose of the Renter Relief Program?

A2: The purpose of the Program is to prevent homelessness and increase housing stability in Oakland by assisting those most at risk of losing their home and becoming homeless or displaced as a result of COVID-19 health and economic impacts.

Q3: What is the source of funding for the Renter Relief Program and how much funding is available?

A3: The Renter Relief Program is funded by the U.S. Department of the Treasury through the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program. The City of Oakland received \$12.8 million in round one of ERA, of which \$11.6 will be available to cover rental assistance. The City anticipates receiving a second round of ERA funding and is planning for its release later in 2021.

Q4: Who is eligible for rental assistance?

A4: To receive assistance, applicants must be:

- An Oakland resident; *and*
- A household of one or more individuals obligated to pay rent on a residential dwelling; *and*
- At least one or more individuals living in the household has:
 - qualified for unemployment OR
 - experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19; *and*
- At least one or more individuals living in the household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability¹; *and*
- Household income at or below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI); *and*
- Currently reside in the residential unit for which rent is owed

Q5: Is the Renter Relief Program still taking applications?

A5: The Program is currently closed to new applicants. The Platform to receive applications was opened on April 1 and closed on May 17, after receiving a surge of more than 2,000 applications. The Platform will be reopened at a later date when more resources become available.

Q6: Who is administering the Oakland Renter Relief Program?

A6: The City of Oakland is the federal grantee and directs the program through its four non-profit partners who administer the direct rental assistance:

- Bay Area Community Services
- Catholic Charities of the East Bay
- Centro Legal de la Raza
- Eviction Defense Center

The City anticipates expanding the network of agencies in summer 2021.

Q7: What happens after an application has been submitted?

A7: Applications are reviewed for eligibility by staff at the participating agencies, in order of priority based on highest anticipated vulnerability. If there is anything missing or incomplete in the application, staff reach out to the applicant to help in completing the application.

Q8: Who does the assistance payment go to?

A8: In most cases the payment is made directly to the property owner or, in the case of a verified sublet or share, to the primary tenant. Under certain circumstances, payment may be made directly to the applicant.

Q9: How much assistance can a household receive?

A9: A household may receive up to \$15,000. The actual amount is dependent on the amount of arrears owed and whether the household receives support with prospective rent as well as past due rent. The average payment as of June 15, 2021 was \$8,700.

Q10: Is Oakland's Renter Relief Program tracking results in terms of geographic and racial equity?

A10: Yes, the program has done targeted outreach to many high-need communities and is tracking characteristics of those applying for and receiving assistance including race and ethnicity, zip code, income and family size. As of June 15, 2021, 42% of those assisted are Black, 30% are Latinx.

Q11: Is Oakland assisting people living in affordable housing?

A11: Yes, Oakland has set aside \$1.3 million to cover gaps for affordable housing providers and tenants. This is anticipated to assist 46 properties and nearly 300 households. For this part of the program, applicants may have incomes up to 50% of the Area Median Income.

Q12: Is Oakland's Program the same as the State of California?

A12: No. The State of California's program will only cover past due rent and will provide 80% of the arrearage if a property owner is willing to forgive the other 20%. Oakland's program covers up to 100% of past due rent for eligible households and may cover an additional three months of prospective rent. To reduce duplication with the State, Oakland is serving those with extremely-low incomes (at or below 30% of the Area Median Income) and other potential applicants have been directed to apply to the State for assistance. For the state program,

contact https://housing.ca.gov/covid_rr/index.html or contact the State Call Center 833-430-2122 or local partner 833-687-0967 for assistance.

Q13: Is Oakland’s Program the same as Alameda County’s?

A13: No. The cities of Oakland and Fremont received a direct allocation from the U.S. Treasury to cover their cities. People living in Oakland are not eligible for the Alameda County program. Oakland and Alameda County’s programs are similar; however, Oakland has targeted its resources to households that are Extremely Low income (30% of Area Median Income or below) while the County program targets those below 50% AMI and may serve households up to 80% AMI. The County is only covering past due rent while Oakland’s program may cover some prospective rent as well.

Q14: How can I learn more?

A14: Contact the Oakland Housing and Community Development Department by calling (510) 238-6182 or emailing HousingAssistance@oaklandca.gov, or visit: www.oaklandca.gov/resources/housing-resources-erap-emergency-rental-assistance

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