

Prince George's County Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program Relaunch Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development seeks to provide economic support to tenants suffering from income loss and Owners/Landlords of multi-family, single-family, condominium and cooperative properties suffering from business losses, as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The following frequently asked questions provide additional information about the Emergency Rental Assistance Program Relaunch:

DEADLINE and ELIGIBILITY

1.) Question: Is there an application deadline?

Answer: Yes. Tuesday, November 10, 2020. It's important to remember that the funds are being distributed on a first come, first served basis. Owner/Landlords are encouraged to apply, timely, and early during the application period.

2.) Question: Is my property eligible?

Answer: Properties are eligible if the Owner/Landlord holds a current rental license from Prince George's County, this includes multi-family buildings, single family homes, condominiums and cooperatives. You can check the Prince George's County Department of Permits, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) rental license database to determine if your rental license is current.

3.) Question: If the tenant received assistance from the first round of emergency rental assistance, is the tenant still eligible for assistance in the second round?

Answer: Yes. A tenant can receive up to a total of six months of rental assistance, cumulatively, meaning that if a tenant has already received three months of rental assistance, the tenant may qualify for an additional three months.

4.) Question: If the tenant receives housing assistance from the federal, state or local government, are they still eligible for this program?

Answer: No. The tenant is not eligible. For example, if the tenant has a Housing Choice Voucher, the tenant will not be eligible for the ERA Program.

5.) Question: When does the Owner/Landlord agreement with the DHCD expire?

Answer: December 31, 2020

TIMEFRAME

6.) Question: How many months of delinquent rent can I apply for on behalf of the tenant?

Answer: The Emergency Rental Assistance is provided for up to 6 months and can be requested as early as April 1, 2020 for rental delinquencies related to COVID-19.

7.) Question: How long and how much funding can be applied to the tenant's rent?

Answer: The maximum period of time is 6 months. The maximum amount of rent for the current month's rent is \$1,800.

8.) Question: What is the timeline for payment after all the documentation is submitted?

Answer: At least 7-10 business days for payment once the Emergency Rental Assistance Agreement is approved.

9.) Question: If a tenant has a rental delinquency prior to April 1st can that be included?

Answer: The Emergency Rental Assistance Program only covers rental delinquencies incurred after April 1, 2020. This means that any outstanding rent for the month of March will not be covered by the Program. When reporting the delinquencies on the Owner Loss and Tenant Certification forms, you should be recording the amount of rent due for each month beginning April 1st and thereafter (instead of the cumulative delinquency). See Answer to Question #15.

APPLICATION

10.) Question: What is a D-U-N-S Number and is it required for completion of the application?

Answer: Yes. Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) provides a D-U-N-S Number, a unique nine-digit identification number, for each physical location of your business. D-U-N-S Number assignment is **FREE** for all businesses required to register with the US Federal government for contracts or grants.

To request your D-U-N-S Number via the Web, please go to:
<https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>. **If one does not exist for your business location, it can be created within 1 business day.**

11.) Question: How will I know if DHCD has all the documentation and information they need from me to process the application?

Answer: Once your application is submitted, you will *not* be able to go back into the Owner/Landlord Portal to make additional changes to your application. DHCD will review your application and contact you via e-mail to inform you of any discrepancies or missing information that will prevent processing your application. It is important that you monitor your e-mail for any messages from DHCD.

12.) Question: If I do not agree with some of the language in the Rental Assistance Agreement, do I have the ability to alter or challenge the agreement?

Answer: No. All of the documents required for participation in the Emergency Rental Assistance Program are non-negotiable. If you do not agree with any of the terms outlined in the Rental Assistance Agreement and the supporting documentation, you will not be able to participate in the program.

13.) Question: When I apply for a specific dollar amount from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, am I guaranteed to receive that amount?

Answer: Applying for funding through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program does not guarantee you will be awarded the full amount. Your application is subject to review by DHCD and funding availability. Following DHCD's review, you will be e-mailed a notice of approval with the dollar value of the approved rental assistance, along with the Rental Assistance Agreement which is non-negotiable. You must indicate acceptance of the final amount of assistance, as determined by DHCD, to receive payment.

14.) Question: If utilities are included in the rent, will the ERA Program still make the rent payment?

Answer: The ERA Program does not pay utilities, only the rent.

15.) Question: I have multiple rental properties; do I have to fill out an application for each property?

Answer: No. Owners/ Landlords should complete one application for all properties. However, the Owner/Landlord must complete separate Owner Losses Reports for each building or rental property where losses are being claimed. Each Owner Losses Report must be accompanied by a complete set of documents for each tenant, including the 1st and Signature Pages of the lease and the Rent Ledger for calendar year 2020.

16.) Question: Is there any restriction on collecting the balance of the rent from the tenant?

Answer: If you accept payment from DHCD on behalf of the tenant, you are agreeing to waive any outstanding rent payments *for a period of sixty days, immediately prior to the first day of the Rental Assistance months*. For example:

Example 1: A tenant has past due rent from January 1, 2020 through August 2020. Where an Owner is approved for rental assistance payments for the months of April – August 2020, the Owner must waive the outstanding rents for the months of February and March. (Please note that the waived past due rents may not be related to COVID-19).

Example 2: A tenant has past due rent from March 1, 2020 through October 2020. Where an Owner is approved for rental assistance payments for the months of May – October 2020, the Owner must waive the outstanding rents for the months of March and April. (Please note that the waived past due rents may not be related to COVID-19).

Owner/Landlord shall not accept any other payments for the Owner Losses or Prior Defaulted Rent. Prior Defaulted Rent is that rent inside of that 60-day lookback window.

17.) **Question:** It appears under 4.3.3 that a housing provider cannot file for eviction for missed rent during the assisted period and the 2 months they have waived, however it says nothing for the 90 days after the assistance period. Has that been removed from the agreement?

Answer: The language regarding the 90 days is still in the agreement. Please see below:

4.3.3 Not take any self-help measures, declare tenant in breach of lease for non-payment, or file any court, administrative, or other proceeding, to recover rent for (i) tenant default underlying the Owner Losses, as identified at Owner Losses Report, or (ii) any Prior Defaulted Rent, or (iii) Tenant Holdover action **for a period of ninety days** following receipt of the rental assistance payments. Owner shall withdraw or dismiss any previously-filed proceeding relating thereto.

18.) **Question:** If a housing provider intends to seek assistance for less than the maximum of 6 months allowed, must they still waive 2 months of rent? E.g.: a resident only owes 3 months rent, is the housing provider allowed to apply for 3 months rent or must they waive 2 months and seek assistance for 1 month of owed rent?

Answer: In order to allow for consistency, the housing provider must still waive any delinquent rent (for a period of 60 days) prior to the first month of assistance. We understand that there will definitely be instances where the landlord is only eligible for 2, 3 or 4 months rental assistance. However, the same conditions would apply regardless of the amount of rental assistance sought or received.

OTHER

19.) **Question:** Some communities have run across an issue where they don't have the rental license in place because the County did not inspect communities during the pandemic. They paid and submitted their paperwork on time but technically, their rental licenses have

expired through no fault of their own. Is there a remedy for this issue? Will they need to provide documentation showing where they filed for the license and the license is pending due to COVID-19?

Answer: In the interest of time, DHCD would suggest that the housing provider include the rental license information but also upload the documentation showing that they filed for the license and the license is pending due to COVID. Additionally, the provider should reach out to the Prince George's County Department of Permit, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) to find out the status of their rental license paperwork?

20.) Question: Will funds received from the County's Emergency Rental Assistance Program be taxable by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)?

Answer: Funds received through the ERA Program may be considered income to the tenant and may be subject to taxes by the IRS. Please consult with your tax preparer/advisor for more information.

Additional questions? Please submit questions to: ERAPLandlord@co.pg.md.us