



COVID-19 Rental and Utility Assistance Programs

The Public Health Emergency (Emergency) has put a financial burden on renters in the District of Columbia. This document provides the essential information for emergency rental and utility assistance programs including funding sources, availability of funds, eligibility requirements, and contact information for the Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) administering the application processes. The rental assistance programs are:

I. **Stronger Together by Assisting You (STAY DC) Program** – Replaces CHAP

A. **Overview of the Program:**

1. Renters may apply for up to **12 months of back rent and utility assistance and up to 3 months at a time of future rent** from April 1, 2020 onward, for a total of up to 18 months. Landlords may begin an application on a renter's behalf.
2. The program replaces CHAP, but unlike CHAP, renters are eligible to pay off utility payments for certain eligible utilities.
3. Eligible utility costs include electricity; natural gas; and water and sewer. Costs for cable or internet access are not covered.
4. It is anticipated that applications will be accepted for this program through September 31, 2021.
5. Landlords are now able to start an application on behalf of their tenants [here](#). Renters will be contacted by one of the CBOs below once the landlord application is complete.
6. Payments will be mailed directly to the landlord or utility provider. If a landlord does not wish to participate, funds may be paid directly to the eligible household if approved.
7. Please note: Payments a tenant receives under this program should be included in calculating their gross tax income when filing taxes.

B. **Eligibility:**

1. Assistance through STAY DC is available to District residents who:
 - a) Rent/lease/sublease a home/unit/apartment or limited equity cooperative (LEC) from a housing provider;
 - b) Meet household income requirements;
 - (1) 2020 Annual income equal to or less than 80% of AMI; **or**
 - (2) Recent income (total household income in the last 2 months multiplied by 6) that is equal or less than 80% AMI,
 - c) Face a financial hardship during COVID-19;
 - d) Face housing instability or homelessness; and
 - e) Rent from a housing provider who is NOT an immediate family

member.

2. To be considered to have faced a financial hardship during COVID-19, a tenant or any member of their rental household must have:
 - a) Qualified for unemployment at any time since January 1, 2020;
 - b) Experienced a reduction in household income;
 - c) Incurred significant increased costs due to COVID-19 or during the public health emergency since April 1, 2020; **or**
 - d) Qualified for welfare assistance such as Medicare, SNAP, or TANF.
3. Housing instability includes households who have:
 - a) Past due rent or utility notice(s) since April 1, 2020;
 - b) Received an eviction notice since April 1, 2020; **or**
 - c) Been severely rent burdened (e.g., pay more than 50% of annual household income on rent).
4. This program is open to all District households regardless of current citizenship status. STAY DC does not require a social security number, nor will an applicant's immigration status be needed to verify eligibility.
5. Renters who receive a housing subsidy (e.g. Housing Choice Voucher, Public Housing, Project-Based Section 8, USDA Rural Development) for which their rent is adjusted according to changes in income, are eligible to apply for assistance through the program. However, assistance will only be provided for the amount not covered by other programs.
6. Renters must earn no more than 80% of the Annual Median Income (AMI) to qualify, based on the Income Schedule below:

Household Size	Up to 80% AMI Annually (after taxes)
1	\$ 57,650
2	\$ 65,850
3	\$ 74,100
4	\$ 82,300
5	\$ 88,900
6	\$ 95,500
7	\$ 102,100
8	\$ 108,650

C. Application:

1. The application process is online and can be found [here](#).
 - a) Applicants who need assistance filling out the application should contact the administering CBOs that are listed in the next section.
 - b) This form is also used to determine ERAP assistance eligibility.
2. Overview of documents needed can be found [here](#).

D. Managed by: Department of Human Services (DHS) in collaboration with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), the Office

of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS), and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

E. **Where do the funds come from?**

1. \$152 million come from the federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds allocated to the District under American Rescue Plan that was passed on March 11, 2021; and
2. \$200 million come from the federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds allocated to the District under Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 that was passed in December of 2020.

For more information on STAY DC, please visit stay.dc.gov or dhcd.dc.gov/service/covid-19-rental-assistance.

II. **Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)**

A. **Tenant Benefits:**

1. Depending on the availability of funds, renters may apply ERAP assistance to cover:
 - a) Rent arrears that are overdue by at least 30 days, as well as associated late fees and court fees necessary to keep the tenant in their housing.
 - (1) The total amount of assistance to a tenant may not exceed five times the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for the Metropolitan area based on unit size and zip code, established by HUD. FMR schedules by zip code can be found here: [DC Fair Market Rent](#).
 - (2) The cap of five times the fair market rent may be waived in any of the following circumstances:
 - (a) Applicant lives with 6 or more individuals and reasonable alternatives to the housing arrangement are not available;
 - (b) Individual living in the unit has a disability or extended illness and losing housing poses a serious threat to health or safety; or
 - (c) The applicant is applying during the Emergency or within 180 days thereafter.
 - (3) **During the Emergency and for 180 days thereafter, ERAP may pay for an arrearage equal to as many months of rent as the total number of months that the Emergency has been in effect.**
 - b) Security deposit and first month's rent. The maximum payment is the actual value of the security deposit and/or first month's rent.
2. A renter may apply for ERAP twice within a twelve-month period since the date of the first application, during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, and within 60 days after the expiration of the Public Health Emergency.

3. ERAP will make its payment directly to the landlord, court, or U.S. Marshals Service. No money will be given directly to tenants.

B. Eligibility Requirements:

1. Renters must be District residents and must owe their housing provider rent.
2. ERAP does not require a social security number nor will an applicant's immigration status be needed to verify eligibility for the program.
3. Renters must earn 40% of the Median Family Income (MFI) or below. The MFI for DC varies based on household size. See the income chart below (reflecting annual income after taxes).

Household Size	40% MFI Annual Salary
1	\$35,280.00
2	\$40,320.00
3	\$45,360.00
4	\$50,400.00
5	\$55,440.00
6	\$60,480.00

C. Application:

1. Application Process: Tenants should contact one of the CBOs listed in the next section, complete an online application [here](#), or apply through stay.dc.gov and their application will be considered for ERAP as well, if eligible.
2. Documents needed:
 - a) Proof of residence in DC at the time of application;
 - b) Unit's household income and assets;
 - c) Number of bedrooms in the unit occupied by the applicant;
 - d) Number of people in the applicant's household; and
 - e) Facts and circumstances surrounding rent arrearage, security deposit, or first month's rent, including that the applicant unit is responsible for payment.
3. In certain circumstances, residents may self-certify if they are unable to provide supporting documents (e.g., bank statements, birth certificates, SSN cards, proof of income, etc.).

D. Administering CBOs:

1. Catholic Charities
 - a) Call for appointments: 1st and 3rd Monday of the month 9 a.m.–11 a.m.
 - b) Office: (202) 338-3100
 - c) Website: www.catholiccharitiesdc.org
2. Housing Counseling Services, Inc.

- a) Appointments Only: Call from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. on the first business day of each month at (202) 667-7339
 - b) ERAP Recorded Information Line: (202) 667-7339 or www.housingetc.org
3. Salvation Army- National Capital Area Command (NW office)
 - a) Call for appointments: 2nd and 4th Monday of the month
 - b) Office: (202) 332-5000
 - c) Website: www.salvationarmynca.org
 4. Salvation Army- Solomon G. Brown Social Services Center (SE Office)
 - a) Office (202) 678-9771
 - b) Call for appointments: 2nd and 4th Friday of the month
 - c) Website: www.salvationarmynca.org
 5. Virginia Williams Family Resource Center
 - a) Appointments are scheduled on the 3rd Wednesday of each month starting at 9 a.m. by phone call only
 - b) Office (202) 312-5510 or Fax (202) 312-5598
 - c) Website: www.community-partnership.org
 6. The United Planning Organization
 - a) ERAP Scheduling: (202) 231-7922
 - b) Website: <http://www.upo.org/>
 7. The Greater Washington Urban League
 - a) Call for appointments: 3rd Monday of the month
 - b) Office: (202) 265-8200
 - c) Website: www.gwul.org

For more information on ERAP, please visit <https://dhs.dc.gov/service/emergency-rental-assistance-program>, [DHS's FAQs on Emergency Rental Assistance](#), or email erap.program@dc.gov.

III. **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) & Utility Discount Program (UDP)**

Please note, major utilities will not disconnect services during the Emergency.

A. **LIHEAP Benefits:**

1. Residents may receive one-time energy bill assistance between \$250 and \$1800. Benefit is based on household size, total household income, heating source, and type of dwelling.
2. Customers who receive assistance with their energy bills through LIHEAP are automatically eligible to receive a free Home Energy Kit from the DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU). Home Energy Kits include six energy-efficient LED light bulbs, a smart power strip, and a bathroom faucet aerator, and will help reduce energy use and a recipient's carbon footprint. The Home Energy Kits can be requested [here](#).

B. **LIHEAP Eligibility Requirements:**

1. The renter must be a District resident;

2. The utilities must be in the renter’s name; and
 3. The renter must owe \$250 or more on a utility account.
- C. **UDP Benefits:** Assists low-income District residence in reducing their utility costs. Residents may receive up to \$475 per year on electric bills (\$300 per year if heat is not electric heat); up to \$276 during the winter on gas bills, and over \$400 annually on water and sewer bills.
- D. **UDP Eligibility Requirements:** To qualify, the utility bills need to be in the beneficiary’s name, and they must meet the following income guidelines for FY 21 (October 1, 2020-September 30, 2021) that have been established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Household Size	Maximum Annual Income
1	\$37,575
2	\$49,137
3	\$60,698
4	\$72,260
5	\$83,822
6	\$95,383
7	\$97,551
8	\$99,719

- E. **LIHEAP & UDP Application Process:**
1. DOEE is not accepting appointments in-person at this time.
 2. To apply:
 - a) [Apply online here](#); or
 - b) [Print this application](#) along with copies of the documents listed below and mail it to “Attn: Energy Assistance 1200 First Street NE, 5th Floor Washington DC 20002”.
 3. The following documents needs to be included when mailing the application:
 - a) Service disconnection notice or a letter from the utility company that states the service has been disconnected (if applicable);
 - b) Most recent utility bills (or a copy);
 - c) A government-issued photo ID;
 - d) Proof of income for everyone in the intended recipient’s home who receives income; and
 - e) Social Security cards for everyone in the intended recipient’s home.
- F. **Managed by:** DC Department of Energy and Environment
1. 1207 Taylor Street NW (Serves Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6)
 2. 2100 Martin Luther King Ave SE (Serves Wards 6,7, and 8)

For more information on LIHEAP or UDP, please visit <https://doee.dc.gov/liheap> or <https://doee.dc.gov/node/9402>.

IV. **“202 Assist” Program**

- A. **Eligibility Requirement:** Renter must be a Ward 8 resident.
- B. **Application:**
 - 1. The tenant must complete an application: <https://www.lh4us.org/forms>.
 - 2. The tenant must email the completed form to LHAdmin@lhndc.org and attach the Rental Assistance Application.
 - 3. The subject line for the email should be “202Assist – [Tenant’s Last Name] – [Tenant’s Phone Number in format 2021234567]”.
 - 4. Renters can also apply by phone at 202-373-1050 between the hours of 10am and 3pm.
- C. **Administering CBOs:** Lydia’s House and Housing Counseling Services are assisting the John Wall Family Foundation (JWFF) in identifying qualified applicants and dispersing rent relief.
 - 1. Lydia’s House – (202) 373-1050
 - 2. Housing Counseling Services – (202) 667-7713
- D. **Available Funds:** Former Washington Wizards All-Star guard John Wall, in collaboration with the JWFF, launched the “202 Assist” program in late May 2020 as a one-month fundraising effort. The program raised \$554,360.

For more information on the “202 Assist” Program, please visit <https://202assist.com/>.

V. **Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)**

- A. **Program Overview:** HPP supports eligible families (30% of Median Family Income or below) to prevent episodes of homelessness through case management, mediation, financial assistance (including up to 4 months of rent arrears), and connection to housing resources.
- B. **Application process:**
 - 1. Virginia Williams Family Resource Center (VWFRC) conducts Assessments for Homeless Services via phone at (202) 526-0017. (The VWFRC is closed for in-person interviews throughout the public health emergency.)
 - 2. Families and individuals seeking access to homeless services may also call the DC Shelter Hotline at (202) 399-7093 from 8 am-12 am, Monday-Sunday, or call 311 after hours.
- C. **Administering CBO:** Virginia Williams Family Resource Center (VWFRC) - the central intake for the District's coordinated homelessness assistance system for families with children. VWFRC is NOT a shelter.
 - 1. The VWFRC is open Monday- Thursday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

2. The telephone number is (202) 526-0017.

VI. Rental Payment Plan Options

Landlords are required to develop a rent payment plan for renters that experience a financial hardship directly or indirectly caused by the Public Health Emergency. For more information on rent payment plans, please see "[OTA's COVID-19 Tenant Rights and Resources Guide](#)" on the OTA's website.

For questions about any of the services the OTA provides, please contact us at 202-719-6560. For up-to-date information and resources regarding COVID-19 and DC Government operations, please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov).

(202) 719-6560



www.ota.dc.gov