



Allegheny County, City of Pittsburgh

## **Emergency Rental Assistance Program**

### **FAQs for Landlords**

#### **Why is the program changing?**

ERAP funds were meant to prevent evictions due to the hardships of the pandemic, but the program was not intended to be long-term. The federal government hasn't allocated more money. We are making changes to the program so that we may provide resources to as many people as possible as the program winds down.

#### **What do these changes mean for applicants?**

Applicants who have been approved and are currently receiving rent or utility assistance through ERAP will be able to request up to three additional months of rent payments (March, April, and May). The March payment may be requested now. The April and May payments may be requested beginning on March 15, 2022. The maximum number of months for which an applicant can receive assistance is 15 months.

Applicants who have submitted their application but haven't yet been approved will still be processed. Past rent or utility bills will be paid if they qualify for ERAP and funding remains available. Once approved, they can request three additional months of rent payments up until May 2022.

#### **Can people still apply for assistance?**

Yes, but they need to apply now and should make every effort to provide all of the documentation and information required at the time of the application as it is the best opportunity for the individual to receive assistance.

New applications will still be accepted through March 31, 2022. Past due rent and utility payments will be made if the individual qualifies for ERAP and funding remains available. Once approved, the person can request three additional months of rent payments starting from the date the application was submitted. Payments will be made if funding remains available.

#### **Why can't I apply?**

ERAP was created by the federal government which made it tenant-facing. Eligibility is deterred for the tenant, and not the landlord. As a result, we must collect certain documents and certifications from the tenant in order to be able to meet the federal requirements for the program. Landlords are permitted to initiate applications on behalf of their tenants, but we will need to interact with the tenant before any payment can be made.

## **Am I prevented from evicting a tenant if they have applied for ERAP?**

You cannot evict a tenant for unpaid rent for any months that ERAP pays. Other than that, there is no restriction on the ability to pursue an eviction due to participation in ERAP. We encourage landlords to work with their tenants, especially if they are already approved for ERAP.

## **I've started eviction proceedings. Does that make any difference to this process?**

While ERAP was intended to prevent evictions, it is not directly related to that process. We are recommending that tenants contact organizations that can help depending on where they may be.

One resource is Mediation Pittsburgh. The program requires the landlord's participation and so you may be contacted to determine if you'd be willing to participate. Of course, Neighborhood Legal Services is an option for tenants if an eviction filing has been made. We also encourage individuals to drop by the Housing Stabilization Center at 415 Seventh Avenue in downtown Pittsburgh. Drop-in hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

## **If an applicant has already asked for three additional months of rent payments, can they request three more?**

Yes, but they may only receive a maximum of 15 months of assistance that has been allocated for the program. Obviously, they can't re-request March, April, and May 2022.

They can find out if they've reached the 15-month maximum by logging into their account. The system won't allow anyone who has reached that threshold to apply for future months.

## **Why are people who are in the program having to recertify their information?**

This was a requirement put in place by the federal government. The process is simple and just asks that the person review the information they had previously provided and confirm that the information remains correct.

## **My tenant says they logged in to check on the status of their application, but they don't understand what it means. Can someone help?**

Yes, they can call ACTION-Housing at 412-248-0021 or email [rentalassistance@actionhousing.org](mailto:rentalassistance@actionhousing.org). Due to high participation in the program, response time for a call back is 7-10 days. You should expect a response to your email within 5 days.

As noted, email provides a quicker response. We ask that individuals be patient. If someone has reached out, they will get a response. They do not need to send multiple emails – in fact, emailing multiple times delays response to everyone.

If the person is expecting a call back, please ask them to be sure that their voicemail is set up and that the mailbox is not full. In many instances, case workers are unable to leave a voicemail when returning calls to applicants. Again, we ask that everyone be patient. If someone has reached out, they will get a response. Calling multiple times delays response to everyone.

### **My tenant says they were approved for ERAP but have not received a payment. What should they do?**

Continue to check on the status of the application and provide any documentation that is being requested. You, the landlord, may also need to provide information, so make sure that the entire application is complete.

Remember, individuals can always check on the status of their application by logging in with the username and password that was created when they applied: <https://acdhsrrp.alleghenycounty.us/CITIZEN/Security/Disclaimer>.

### **How are you going to pay me when my tenant is approved for assistance?**

If you provided banking information, you will receive a deposit directly into your account from ACTION-Housing between 2 to 10 days after you receive the award letter.

If you requested a check, those are cut daily, but may take up to 15 days to be received after you receive the award letter.

### **When should I expect payment?**

Payments are processed daily, but there are thousands of applications moving each week, so please allow for some time once you provide the needed documentation. Once you receive the award letter, you should receive payment between 2-10 days for deposits and up to 15 days for checks.

### **How much money did the ERAP program get?**

ERAP funding came in two phases. In the first phase, about \$74 million was distributed. In the most recent phase, ERAP II, approximately \$63 million will have been paid out. Through a claw back of unused funds in other areas of the state, the program has also received an additional \$6 million in funding for the program. We are also asking the federal government for additional funds from other communities that are not seeing the same need as Allegheny County.

## How can I learn about how the money has been used?

ERAP funding has been used to keep thousands of families in their homes during the pandemic. As of January 2022, nearly 30,000 individuals and families had applied for ERAP because they were behind on rent. For more data about applicants and payments:

[https://tableau.alleghenycounty.us/t/PublicSite/views/ERAPPublicv2/Home?%3Aembed=y%3Adisplaycount=n%3AshowAppBanner=false%3Aorigin=viz\\_share\\_link%3AshowVizHome=n#1](https://tableau.alleghenycounty.us/t/PublicSite/views/ERAPPublicv2/Home?%3Aembed=y%3Adisplaycount=n%3AshowAppBanner=false%3Aorigin=viz_share_link%3AshowVizHome=n#1)

## Are the drop-in centers still available to help applicants?

Yes, the drop-in centers will remain open until at least April 30, 2022, with the potential for an extension. [Drop-in center hours and locations.](#)

## How will I know if funding is no longer available?

We will make a public announcement when all funds are spent. We will also communicate with individual applicants via e-mail.

## What if I have questions about these changes to the program?

If your question isn't answered in these FAQs, ACTION-Housing and its partners will be available to answer questions. You can call 412-248-0021 or email [rentalassistance@actionhousing.org](mailto:rentalassistance@actionhousing.org). Due to volume, responses are taking anywhere from 5-10 days at this point, but e-mail is the option for a faster response.