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Emergency Rental Assistance Program Winding Down Operations *New Applicants Must Apply by March 31 to be Eligible for Funding*

PITTSBURGH – Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh today announced changes to the joint Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) as the federal and state funding committed to the program begins to wind down. Accordingly, new applications will not be accepted after March 31, 2022. To date, over 12,000 households have received rental assistance totaling over \$79.9 million through the program. Along with utility assistance, \$84,734,659 has been paid to date.

ERAP funds were meant to prevent evictions due to the hardships of the pandemic and came to the county and city 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. An additional \$6 million in funding was recently awarded to the program as well as unused funds in other areas of the state were redistributed. County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and City of Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey, along with county and city stakeholders and partners, continue to advocate for additional funds, including requesting the reallocation of federal funds to Allegheny County not used by other communities.

The program will remain in place so that if substantial additional funds are made available, the structure can quickly be used to distribute those funds as appropriate. The public application portal will close at the end of March, but partners will continue to process applications that have been submitted and pay remaining funds.

Here's how individuals will be impacted:

- If a person's application has been processed and they are currently receiving rent or utility assistance, they will be able to request up to three additional months of rent payments (March, April and May) if the request doesn't exceed the allotted 15 months max for the program and funding is available. March payments may be requested now. April and May payments may be requested beginning on March 15, 2022.
- If a person's application has been submitted, but they haven't received any rent or utility payments, their past rent or utility bills will be paid if they qualify for ERAP and funding is

available. They can then request three additional months of rent payments, up until May 2022. Those additional payments may be requested beginning on March 15, 2022.

- If a person hasn't applied yet, apply now. New applications will be accepted through March 31, 2022. Past due rent and utility payments will be made if the person qualifies for ERAP and funding remains available.

Individuals who have not yet applied are encouraged to gather all required documents so that review of their completed application can begin quickly to take advantage of remaining funding. Applicants will need to show proof of income, which can include documents such as paystubs or W2s and proof of residency, which is generally a lease. Individuals are also encouraged to have documentation that shows risk of being evicted, such as a notice that their rent or utilities are in arrears.

The last rental payments made for any applicant who applied by March 15, 2022 will be the May 2022 rental payment.

Applicants seeking funding for past due utility bills will be paid if they qualify. Additionally, team members will be connecting applicants with other longer-term programs that can provide assistance when ERAP funds have been expended. This includes Low-Income Energy Home Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Low-Income Household Water Assistance (LIHWAP), and the Dollar Energy Fund.

Eligibility has not changed. Applicants are eligible if they have been financially impacted by the pandemic, including provable loss of income or employment, COVID-related increases in expenses such as medical bills or care of a household member, or the inability to get back to work for those laid off prior to March 2020.

Residents can apply online at <https://covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us>, but will need a valid email account to apply. Applicants will create a username and password so that additional information may be provided, and so the status of the application can be checked on at any time.

For those who do not have access to the internet, there are [drop-in centers available around the county](#) where internet access and computers are available for applicants to use. Centers may also have staff available to answer general questions and help scan in and upload documents. Visitors are asked to follow all COVID protocols and are encouraged to contact the organizations about dates and times that the center is open and available to them.

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program is being administered by the county Department of Human Services (DHS). ACTION-Housing is the program manager and has partnered with organizations across the county for outreach as well as assistance and services to residents who may be eligible for the program.

In order to further explain the changes to participants and interested parties, ACTION-Housing has scheduled two virtual town halls to provide information. The information for both follows:

Friday, March 4, 2022 at 12 PM

[Webinar Link](#)

Passcode: 901287

Monday, March 7, 2022 at 7 PM

[Webinar Link](#)

Passcode: 334169

For those without internet, tapes of the webinar town halls will be available afterwards at the drop-in centers.

Additional information including frequently asked questions regarding the changes, complete eligibility guidelines, a list of necessary documents, and the drop-in center locations are currently posted on the site at <https://covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us>

To date, the program has received applications from 29,566 households and awarded an average of \$6,554.15 per award for 3.4 months of expenses. Of those, 55 percent are from households of a single

adult. Thirty-one (31) percent of heads of households are 25-34 years of age, 53 percent are Black and 66 percent are female. Eighty-five (85) percent of heads of household are non-Hispanic/non-Latino.

Of eligible households, 54 percent have no other earned income, 88 percent fall into the below 50 percent of AMI, and the median household monthly income for those application is \$1,080 as compared to the median household monthly income for households in Allegheny County of \$5,082.

Additionally, 61 percent of households had someone who had experienced a loss of income and had expenses increase due to the pandemic; 64 percent of households had someone who had been unemployed for more than 90 days; and 57 percent of households had other financial hardships due to the pandemic.

Data and statistics related to ERAP are available online at the [DHS analytics page](#).

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