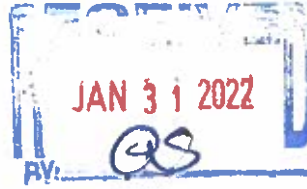




Breaking Barriers to Justice

January 28, 2022

Chris Bruns
Pike County Housing Authority
838 Mason Street
Barry, IL 62312



RE: **New Stream of Rental and Utility Assistance for Tenants Available from the Illinois Department of Human Services**

Dear Chris Bruns,

Effective immediately, the Faith Based Unit of IDHS is coordinating rental assistance to Illinois residents through direct payment to landlords for up to **twelve (12) months of past due rent and three (3) months of future rent.** Tenants may also request payment assistance for **past-due utility bills** that will be issued directly to the housing provider or service provider.

If you have a tenant in need of rental or utility assistance, please refer them to:

Stephanie Pointer
312-405-2979
Stephanie.pointer@illinois.gov

or

LaTanya Law
733-394-1050
latanya.law2@illinois.gov

Tenants may request assistance once they have fallen behind on rent or believe they will fall behind, before an eviction case is filed in court. IDHS-FBU's program serves both private tenants and tenants in public housing and subsidized housing programs. Please note that IDHS can only cover the tenant's share of the rent, not the subsidy the PHA covers. It is important that PHA provides clear statement on the amount owe by tenant that does not include the subsidy.

Tenants will be asked to provide ID, lease, and income statements. If a tenant is requesting utility assistance, they will also need to provide their most recent bill. Clear, legible photographs, scans, or copies of the required documents will be accepted.

You may refer your tenants in need to **Land of Lincoln's Eviction Hotline at (855) 601-9474** if they require further legal assistance.

Sincerely,

Kimberly K. Neu
Housing Staff Attorney
Western Regional Office

WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

111 E. 4th Street
Suite 330
Alton, IL 62002

(618) 462-0029 PHONE
(618) 463-1101 FAX
alton@lincolnlegal.org
efileWRO@lincolnlegal.org

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Dorothy O. Cook
Community Law Center
8787 State Street
Suite 201
East St. Louis, IL 62203

(618) 398-0574 PHONE
(618) 398-0681 FAX
admin@lincolnlegal.org

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Illinois Department of Human Services
Housing Help: Emergency Rental and
Utility Assistance Program
Application Guide

Updated 8.27.21

I. PROGRAM

The Illinois Department of Human Services' (IDHS) Housing Help Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program seeks to engage agencies to provide rental and utility assistance to unemployed and under-employed low-income individuals and households impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The goal of the Housing Help is to allow community-based agencies to provide direct assistance to clients in need using IDHS approved eligibility forms and screening materials.

II. HOUSING AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE

Assistance can be provided for 12 months in rental and/or utility arrears. Rent and/or utilities can be paid back to March 13, 2020. Rent or utilities owed prior to March 13, 2020 do not qualify under this program.

An applicant may qualify for an additional 3 months of assistance in prospective (future) rent "if necessary, to ensure housing stability for a household." When providing forward rent, assistance can only be given for 3 months, though households can subsequently reapply for additional assistance. To the extent that households have back rent owed, agencies should first prioritize reducing an eligible household's rental arrears before assessing the need for forward rent payment.

Agencies can make payments directly to landlords or utility companies on behalf of renters. If a landlord refuses to accept the rental assistance, Agencies can give the assistance directly to the renter, who can then make payments to the landlord or utility provider; however, there needs to be a reasonable attempt made and documented in the client's case file, that the Provider tried to contact the landlord, and the renter has to provide an affidavit attesting to the landlords' lack of participation and the steps taken to contact the landlord.

The following qualifies as documentation of making reasonable effort to obtain the cooperation of landlords and must be included in the applicant's case file:

- a request for participation is sent in writing, by mail, to the landlord, and the landlord does not respond to the request within 14 calendar days after mailing;
- the grantee has made at least three attempts by phone, text, or e-mail over a 10 calendar-day period to request the landlord's participation; or
- the landlord confirms in writing that they do not wish to participate. The final outreach attempt or notice to the landlord must be documented.

III. ROLE OF PARTNER AGENCIES

Agencies participating in IDHS' Housing Help Program are required to provide direct assistance to eligible individuals and households in the form of rent/utility payments.

Agencies are required to collect documentation and maintain a case file for each individual that receives assistance. Proof of eligibility and case files should be stored at the participating agency for monitoring and auditing purposes (case files and documentation can be stored electronically or in hard copy form). A complete case file includes the application, all required documentation to confirm eligibility, client consent, and applicant affidavit.

Reporting: Detailed reports will be due on the 10th of the month following the month of service. **Duplication:** Organizations must be able to utilize the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) database that allows agencies to identify addresses that have already received assistance from IHDA.

This application guide provides:

- Eligibility Criteria
- Acceptable Documentation
- Housing Help Application
- Client Consent & Applicant Affidavit

IV. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for assistance for IDHS' Housing Help Program.

1. Illinois residency.
2. Financial hardship due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
3. Recipients cannot exceed 80% AMI. Area Median Income Calculator. Priority will be given to applicants with household income below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or those who are unemployed and have been unemployed for 90 days. Go to: Income Limits | HUD USER Select Illinois ⇒ Select a County ⇒ Select View County Calculations
4. Cannot already have received assistance for the same time period from any City, State or County program stemming from the CARES Act or the American Rescue Plan Act. This includes state funding from the Illinois Housing and Development Authority (IHDA) programs: Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA) and the Illinois Rental Payment Program (IRRP). This also includes City of Chicago funding from the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grants and the Rental Assistance Program (RAP). Also includes the Cook County COVID-19 Recovery Grants and Cook County Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance program.

V. ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION

1. Proof of Identity

- State ID or Driver's License, Temporary Visitor Driver's License (TVDL) for Undocumented (Non-Visa Status) Individuals
- City or County ID (Chicago City Key ID)
- Passport
- Matricula Consular, Consular Identification
- School ID

2. Proof of Address

- State ID or Driver's License, Temporary Visitor Driver's License (TVDL)
- Utility Bill
- Lease
- Mortgage statement
- Bank Statement
- Paystub

3. Proof of Income

- Most recently filed taxes
- Most recent paystub
- W-2
- Affidavit

4. Proof of COVID Financial Hardship *on or after March 13, 2020*

Provide documentation and/or an affidavit that indicates one of the following hardships:

- Loss of household income (has anyone in the household experienced a loss of job, reduction in hours or unable to find employment *on or after March 13, 2020*)
- Healthcare/medical bills *incurred on or after March 13, 2020*
- Childcare costs because of school closings *on or after March 13, 2020*
- A past due utility or rent notice or eviction notice,
- Unsafe or unhealthy living conditions, or any other evidence of risk of housing instability or homelessness as determined by agency

5. Type of Assistance

- Utility Payments
All payments for housing-related expenses must be supported by documentary evidence such as a bill, invoice, or evidence of payment to the provider of the service.
 - Valid utility bill dated on or after March 13, 2020 for any of the following: electricity, gas, phone, internet, water (including disconnection notices).
- Rental Payments

Agencies should obtain, if available, a current lease. If a household does not have a signed lease, documentation of residence may include evidence of paying utilities for the residential unit or an attestation by a landlord. Evidence of the amount of a rental payment may include bank statements, check stubs, or other documentation that reasonably establishes a pattern of paying rent.

- A lease covering March 13, 2020 through now. Rents can be paid back to March 13, 2020.
- Rental receipts
- Letter from landlord stating that the individual is renting the property + a valid city, state or county issued documentation of property ownership from on or after March 13, 2020. Agency should verify property ownership through the local county resource. For example, in Cook County you can locate a Property Tax bill that lists the name and address of the homeowner on this site:
<https://www.cookcountytreasurer.com/setsearchparameters.aspx>
- Follow up phone call from the agency + a valid city, state or county issued documentation of property ownership from on or after March 13, 2020. Agency should verify property ownership through the local county resource. For example, in Cook County you can locate a Property Tax bill that lists the name and address of the homeowner on this site:
<https://www.cookcountytreasurer.com/setsearchparameters.aspx>

Unresponsive Landlords

In order to provide the payments directly to the renter the following qualifies as documentation of making reasonable effort to obtain the cooperation of landlords and must be included in the applicant's case file:

- a request for participation is sent in writing, by mail, to the landlord, and the landlord does not respond to the request within 14 calendar days after mailing;
- the grantee has made at least three attempts by phone, text, or e-mail over a 10 calendar-day period to request the landlord's participation; or
- the landlord confirms in writing that they do not wish to participate. The final outreach attempt or notice to the landlord must be documented.

Illinois Department of Human Services

Housing Help: Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program

HOUSING HELP APPLICATION

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Phone Number _____

Address _____

Gender: (circle one) Male, Female, Nonbinary, Intersex, other, choose not to answer

Race/Ethnicity: (circle one or more) Latinx, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Arab, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White

Country of Origin _____

Native Language _____

Has the household received housing assistance for the same time period from any City, State or County program stemming from the CARES Act or the American Rescue Plan Act. This includes state funding from the Illinois Housing and Development Authority (IHDA) programs: Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA) and the Illinois Rental Payment Program (IRRP). This also includes City of Chicago funding from the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grants and the Rental Assistance Program (RAP). Also includes the Cook County COVID-19 Recovery Grants and Cook County Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance program. **Yes/No**

Did the applicant receive a federal stimulus check? Yes/No

Landlord/Property Manager Name _____

Landlord/Property Manager Telephone and/or Email _____

Household Size _____

Household Income \$ _____

Source of Income _____

Percentage of Household AMI _____

Type of Financial Hardship (circle one or more)

- Loss of income (loss of job or reduction in hours)
- Increased healthcare/medical bills
- Increased childcare costs
- Other _____

Type of Assistance Requested

- Rent
 - Amount of monthly rent _____
 - Months requesting assistance _____
 - Amount of outstanding rent _____
 - Amount of rental assistance requested _____
- **Utility Assistance (List each utility bill and amount separately)**
 - Amount of outstanding utility bill #1 _____
 - Months requesting assistance _____
 - Amount of utility bill assistance requested _____
 - Amount of outstanding utility bill #2 _____
 - Months requesting assistance _____
 - Amount of utility bill assistance requested _____
 - Amount of outstanding utility bill #3 _____
 - Months requesting assistance _____
 - Amount of utility bill assistance requested _____

CLIENT CONSENT

I _____ (applicant name), am an applicant for rent and/or utility assistance through the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Housing Help Program. I understand that as the applicant, I am responsible for the accuracy of the information I am providing to the organization assisting me.

The organization administering the emergency funds is _____ and they will make the determination of approval depending on the successful submission of this application and availability of funds.

I confirm that the organization assisting me in submitting this application has reviewed all the information with me and I (Consent/Do Not Consent) to the submission of this application.

By asking for utility assistance, I authorize IDHS to verify my information and contact my utilities/fuel suppliers for verification or additional information and to exchange information contained in or otherwise used regarding my application and participation in Housing Help. If I am determined eligible, this will allow IDHS to provide assistance to my household, aligned with program protocols.

Client Signature _____ Date: _____

If client is not present due to COVID-19 social distancing the representative must read the above statement and obtain verbal consent.

I, _____ have obtained Verbal Consent
Name of organizational representative

Signature of organizational representative _____

Date _____ Name of Organization _____

APPLICANT AFFIDAVIT

I _____ (applicant name), understand that completing this application does not guarantee approval for emergency funding as funds are limited.

If my application is approved, the organization that assisted me is responsible for notifying me in a timely manner. I have also been informed that the adjudication process may take up to 60 days. Furthermore, I confirm that I have been given the name and contact information of the staff completing my application in case I have any questions or concerns. I attest to the following:

1. I have experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19.

- Loss of income (loss of job or reduction in hours)
- Increased healthcare/medical bills
- Increased childcare costs
- Other _____

2. My household income is \$ _____ weekly/monthly/yearly.

3. I have not received housing and utility assistance for the same time period from any City, State or County program stemming from the CARES Act or the American Rescue Plan Act. This includes state funding from the Illinois Housing and Development Authority (IHDA) programs: Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA) and the Illinois Rental Payment Program (IRRP). This also includes City of Chicago funding from the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grants and the Rental Assistance Program (RAP). Also includes the Cook County COVID-19 Recovery Grants and Cook County Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance program.

4. I understand that knowingly and willingly making a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in this affidavit may result in an attempt to recoup the monetary value of the emergency assistance provided.

I swear or affirm that the information I have provided here is true and correct to the best of my personal knowledge and belief.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Affidavit to be signed in presence of staff or by providing verbal consent by applicant. If client is not present due to COVID-19 social distancing the representative must read the above statement and obtain verbal consent.

I, _____ have obtained Verbal Consent
Name of organizational representative

Signature of organizational representative _____

Date _____ Name of Organization _____

Faith Based Organizations

Organization Name	Address	Phone	Email
AFC-CDC	7859 S Ashland Ave, Chicago, IL 60620	872-818-3294	Rentalassistancefccdc@gmail.com
Allen Metro	10946 S Lowe, Chicago, IL 60628	773-568-1200	
Bridgewater	401 E Park Street, Champaign, IL 61820	217-850-7628	appointments@bridgewater-sullivancommunitylife.org
Great True Vine	5936 W Division, Chicago, IL 60651		gtvhousinghelp@gmail.com
Metro Community Outreach	5856 S Wabash, Chicago, IL 60637	773-667-6020	Gmmbc4@gmail.com
Mt. Carmel	5141 S Damen Avenue, Chicago, IL 60609		
Quad City	1634 7 th Street, Madison, IL 60260	618-876-4043	quadcitycdc@gmail.com