



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

December 23, 2020

Application Period Open for Rental Assistance

New phone line created to handle residents' requests for help

San Rafael, CA – The County of Marin has created a new phone number and email address to guide residents with requests for financial rental assistance during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). Anyone needing help paying rent may call (415) 473-2223 or [email staff](#) to learn more about the [Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#), which is open for applications now.

The new phone line was created to provide specialized aid to individuals seeking rental assistance – regardless of citizenship status – and allow the [Marin County Public Health](#)'s public information line for the COVID-19 emergency to focus on assisting with questions about coronavirus testing, vaccines, and business guidelines.

Call center staff, coordinated through the [Marin County Community Development Agency](#), is comprised of [disaster service workers](#) from the County of Marin and the City of San Rafael. The workers will ask potential applicants a few questions to move toward eligibility for the financial assistance. Applicants will be asked to provide proof of residency and income. Typical documentation includes a photo identification with a Marin County address on it or a utility bill that shows the local address, proof of income (such a pay stub or a bank statement), and a copy of the first page of a rental lease to show proof of residency. Anyone needing help but not possessing the paperwork can work with staff to otherwise provide the necessary information.

The program was started in March 2020 when the Marin County Board of Supervisors [approved a new local relief fund partnership](#) with the Marin Community Foundation (MCF) to address the most urgent safety-net needs. About \$3 million in rental assistance has been disseminated since then, and roughly \$2.8 million more is allotted for the round of funding to cover rental payments from September through January in alignment with the [State of California's eviction moratorium](#).

Under Assembly Bill 3088, no tenant can be evicted before February 1, 2021, as a result of rent owed due to a pandemic-related hardship sustained between March 4 and August 31, 2020, if the tenant provides a

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declaration of hardship. Tenants must pay at least 25% of rent due to avoid eviction for a hardship experienced between September 1, 2020, and January 31, 2021.

Initially, the County and MCF contributed \$500,000 each to the fund, but the money was quickly depleted as residents appealed for help with rent. The County and MCF granted another \$500,000 each in April and received assistance from selected local nonprofits to disseminate the money to the neediest populations. The County also awarded all \$938,000 of its CARES Act Community Development Block Grant funds to rental assistance for low-income families and individuals and local landlords.

During the last round of rental assistance applications, those qualifying for help averaged \$2,000 in payments from the program. In this round, staff is prioritizing assistance for households that have not been able to meet the 25% payment requirement to landlords.

To prevent more homelessness, the Marin County Board of Supervisors passed local eviction moratoriums several times this year before the state enacted its evictions ban. With much of the state under public health sheltering orders, [including Marin](#), widespread financial ramifications tied to COVID-19 have continued and justified the additional local rental assistance program funding.

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