



# Frequently Asked Questions

In 2020, the U.S. Congress appropriated funding to the U.S. Department of Treasury to provide emergency rental assistance to households experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Funding was allocated to states, Indian tribes or their Tribally Designated Housing Entities, and territories to provide Emergency Rental Assistance in the form of rental, utilities, and home energy costs assistance to eligible renters. The Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) will administer approximately \$170 million appropriated for the Emergency Rental Assistance program for both the State of New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque.

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## What type of assistance is available?

This assistance is available for those in a lease agreement with a landlord or those who have entered into a lease-purchase agreement. Funding is also available for utility assistance and other expenses related to housing costs (i.e. hotel/motel costs) incurred directly or indirectly, due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

## Am I eligible to apply for Rental Assistance?

To be eligible, a household must be obligated to pay rent on a residential dwelling; and

- Households paying rent under a lease agreement. This includes tenants making lease payments under a lease-purchase agreement;
- Households, where one or more individuals have either: a) qualified for unemployment benefits; or b) experienced a decrease in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due to the COVID-19 outbreak, which include:
  - Job loss;
  - Job furlough;
  - Closure of place of employment;
  - Reduction in self-employment compensation;
  - Job loss and/or wage reduction due to requirement to be quarantined based on a diagnosis of COVID-19; or
  - Other pertinent circumstances leading to financial hardship;
- Households where one or more individuals within the household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability;
- A household income at or below 80% of area median income as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development provided in this link: [http://housingnm.org/assets/content/Income\\_Limits.pdf](http://housingnm.org/assets/content/Income_Limits.pdf);
- Have a current primary residence in a housing unit in New Mexico;
- Have documentation to demonstrate delinquency on rental housing costs, utilities and other costs; and
- Have made their housing cost payments through March 31, 2020.

## Where do I apply for Rental Assistance?

You can apply at [www.RentHelpNM.org](http://www.RentHelpNM.org) beginning April 5th, 2021. Renters across the state are eligible for this program – except for residents of Bernalillo County (outside of Albuquerque city limits), Dona Ana County, and those who live in a pueblo or tribal area. Those two counties, as well as tribal governments, will administer their own Rental Assistance Programs.

- [Bernalillo County Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program](#)
- [Dona Ana County Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program](#)



## How do I apply for rental and or utility assistance?

You can apply through the following method beginning April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021:

1. Web portal at [www.RentHelpNM.org](http://www.RentHelpNM.org); or
2. Download and submit the application by mail to:  
  
DFA Attention: ERAP  
407 Galisteo  
Santa Fe, NM 87501
3. You can also call 1-833-485-1334 to speak to a representative.

## Is there a cap or maximum amount of Rental Assistance I can receive?

Rental Assistance is capped at 15 months of assistance, which is dependent on the individual's situation. Rental Assistance may be dispersed in 3-month increments and depending on the individual's situation, an opportunity to receive additional assistance after submission of updated documents and further review. Priority will be placed on paying past-due or rent in arrears before any other assistance. Restrictions are dependent on the individual's request and personal situation.

Payments will be made directly to the landlord.

## What is Utility assistance?

Utility assistance is defined as assistance to renters to pay past-due bills for electricity, gas, water and sewer, trash removal, fuel oil, wood, and pellets.

Utility Assistance is capped at 15 months which is dependent on the individual's situation and rental past-due amounts. Utility Assistance is only available to renters, not homeowners.

Payments will be made directly to the utility provider.

## What are the documents required to be submitted for Rental and/or Utility Assistance?

In order to validate eligibility and application information, supporting documentation is required to be submitted. Documentation may include but is not limited to:

- paycheck stubs, earning statements
- most recent filed federal income tax return
- profit and loss statement showing the net amount after business expenses
- bank statements
- utility invoices
- receipts for expenses such as wood, pellets, hotel/motel costs etc.
- attestations from landlords, employer, caseworkers, or others with knowledge of the household's circumstances
- IRS form 1099-G
- mortgage or deed or title to the property being rented for lease-purchase situations



- unemployment award letter
- any other documentation as requested by DFA.

Photocopies or digital photographs of documents can be mailed in along with the application, uploaded to the web application portal, or emailed to DFA.

## **When will the Rental Assistance Program be available?**

The program will be open to applicants beginning April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## **How long will the application process take?**

Upon submission of the application and supporting documentation, DFA will conduct a review within 24 to 48 hours. If additional information is needed, a representative will contact you as soon as possible. After a review of the application, you will be notified of the decision via email or mail. If the application is approved, payment will be made within 10 business working days.

## **Will I receive the financial assistance payment?**

The State of New Mexico will either pay the landlord and/or the utility provider directly depending on the financial assistance request. Requests for other financial assistance such as wood, pellets, hotel/motel costs etc., will be reimbursed directly to the applicant with evidence of receipts.