

Clinton County Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Frequently Asked Questions

ELIGIBILITY

1) Am I eligible for this program?

Eligibility includes being a full-time Clinton County, PA resident renting a primary residence in Clinton County; being 18 years of age or older; demonstrating a loss of income or hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and having a total household income that does not exceed 80% of the HUD Area Median Income limits for 2020.

The following income limits may be adjusted by HUD during the term of ERAP. Current Clinton County 80% Area Median Income Limits are:

1-Person	2-Persons	3-Persons	4-Persons	5-Persons	6-Persons	7-Persons
\$36,350	\$41,550	\$46,750	\$51,900	\$56,100	\$60,250	\$64,440

For households larger than 7 person, contact the Clinton County Housing Coalition for additional AMI limits.

2) I own my home. Does ERAP provide assistance to homeowners?

ERAP does not provide assistance to homeowners. Homeowners should apply to the PA Homeowner Assistance Fund administered by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). Access the PHFA website here www.phfa.org.

3) What income is included when determining my household income?

Income from all household members 18 years and over is included. Income can be determined using your 2020 Form 1040-Federal Income Tax Return or income documents for the past 30 days, such as paystubs, unemployment statement, social security statement, other benefit statements.

4) If I received unemployment benefits, does that count towards my income for this program?

Yes.

5) What types of assistance are eligible under the ERAP?

Past due rents dating back to March 20, 2020 and future rents due for three additional months at a time, provided all past due rents are paid before future rents. Additionally, past due utilities dating back to April 1, 2020 including electricity, gas, water, sewer, trash removal, and bulk energy costs are eligible.

6) Are late fees included in eligible rental expenses?

Yes, late fees up to a maximum of \$100 per household are eligible. As a condition of accepting ERAP assistance, the landlord must agree to waive any late fees due by the tenant over \$100.

7) Do I have to apply for rental assistance to receive utility assistance?

No, you do not need to apply for both types of assistance. You may apply for only the assistance you need.

8) Is there a maximum dollar amount of rental or utility assistance I can apply for?

No, there is no maximum on the dollar amount of ERAP assistance you can apply for.

9) What types of rental properties are eligible for assistance?

Primary residences with proof of valid and current lease, including month-to-month arrangements. If a written lease is not available, the renter and landlord must submit a Certification of Landlord/Tenant Relationship.

Renters that have an ownership interest in the property (including, but not limited to, lease-to-own agreements, lease purchase agreements, lease with option to purchase agreements, or land contracts) are **NOT** eligible.

10) Are leases with family, including immediate family members allowed?

If you or any member of your household is related to the landlord or any employee of the landlord, you must have a valid and current lease, your address must be different from your landlord's address, and you must also provide evidence of a history of past rental payments to the landlord. Examples may include cancelled or cleared checks, credit card statements, or bank statements.

11) Are trailer homes and lots eligible?

Yes, if a tenant rents a trailer home or owns the trailer and rents the lot, you may be eligible for assistance on the rental portion or utility payments. You are still required to have a lease for the rental of the trailer or the lot, or you must submit a Certification of Landlord/Tenant Relationship.

12) If there is no written lease agreement, is the tenant eligible for assistance?

Yes, a Certification of Landlord/Tenant Relationship form is provided and must be completed by both the tenant and landlord if a written lease is not available.

13) Do I qualify if I currently reside in government-funded housing?

Households that receive federal or state rent subsidies (where a percentage of the rent is paid by the household and the balance is subsidized by the government) are eligible for rent assistance unless the monthly rent payment owed by the renter can be adjusted due to changes in income.

(This includes Housing Choice Vouchers and Project Based Rental assistance otherwise known as Section 8 subsidy)

If you have questions about the type of rental assistance you receive, please contact the Clinton County Housing Authority by email to ccha@clintoncountyhousing.com or by telephone at (570) 748-2954.

Even if you are not eligible for rental assistance, you may be eligible for utility assistance for utilities that are not included in your monthly rent.

14) Am I eligible for utility assistance if my landlord pays my utilities?

No, utilities paid by the landlord are considered part of your rent. You may be eligible for utilities that are not covered/included in your rent.

15) Do I qualify if I received or am receiving housing relief assistance through another program?

ERAP funds will not be awarded for rents or utilities that have been or will be reimbursed under any other Federal, State, or Local assistance program. Otherwise, eligible households may qualify for ERAP assistance for eligible expenses that are not covered by another source.

16) Am I eligible for ERAP assistance under a new lease?

Yes, ERAP does not require that you have lived at your current address for any certain length of time to receive rental assistance.

17) Do I need to be a US Citizen to receive ERAP assistance?

No, you are eligible for assistance if you have the identification required by the application.

18) Can I apply if I live with roommates?

Applicant eligibility is based on the household, and all parties to a lease are a household. Therefore, roommates who are on the same lease, must qualify for ERAP assistance as a household. Roommates with separate leases are not the same household and each roommate must qualify independently for ERAP assistance.

APPLICATION PROCESS

19) What documents do I need to provide to apply?

The required documents are listed in the application.

20) Am I guaranteed assistance once I apply?

No, an application is not a guarantee of assistance. Only fully completed applications that provide all required documentation will be reviewed for eligibility.

Applicants who receive a notice of incomplete application with instructions to provide missing information must successfully provide all necessary information to move their application forward. Funding will not be reserved for incomplete applications. Applicants who fail to provide all required information or are found ineligible based on the program's requirements will not receive assistance.

Applications that could be considered eligible may not receive assistance if funding is no longer available under the program.

21) How are applicants prioritized?

Applications will be reviewed and approved after a complete application, including all supporting documents, is received.

Eligible applications for rental arrears or with household income at or below 50% of area median income may be processed on a priority basis.

22) Will I be notified if I am deemed ineligible for assistance?

Yes, you will be notified if you are ineligible, and the reason will be provided.

23) The status of my COMPASS application says "pending landlord/property manager acceptance" what does this mean?

The Clinton County Housing Coalition is waiting on your landlord/property manager to accept your application. Please contact your landlord to request that they accept your application.

24) Do I have to tell my landlord that I applied for this program?

No, but telling your landlord may expedite the review process. The Clinton County Housing Coalition will attempt to contact your landlord to request their cooperation in the eligibility process.

25) Can a landlord apply on behalf of their tenant(s)?

Yes. However, landlords must notify tenants that they have applied on their behalf and the tenant must sign the application.

26) What if my landlord does not complete the landlord verification and does not agree to the terms of the program?

If your landlord does not provide the appropriate verifications after three attempts to obtain the information, you may qualify to have the rental assistance paid directly to you. In these instances, you must pay the funds to the landlord yourself. You must provide documentation to the Clinton County Housing Coalition once payment is made.

27) If I receive rental assistance through this program, can I still be evicted?

Before a landlord can receive a rental payment, they must certify that they will not evict the household for nonpayment of rent for any periods prior to and including the months of assistance received through the ERAP program.

28) What should I do if I realize I made a mistake in my application after submission?

Please submit an email to erapinfo@clintoncountyhousing.com using the subject line “ERAP APPLICATION CORRECTION.” Explain the error and provide the correct information. Be sure to include your application number, your first and last name, and complete address in the email.

29) What can I do while I wait to receive a response to my application?

Notify your landlord that you have applied for assistance under ERAP.

We also recommend that you check your email inbox frequently (at least daily), including the spam folder, to make sure you are seeing, and responding to, any communications that may have been sent by the Clinton County Housing Coalition.

PROGRAM DETAILS

30) If I am eligible, what assistance will I receive?

You can receive your actual past due rent or past due utility payments beginning April 1, 2020. You may also be eligible for future rents in 3-month increments. In total, you cannot receive more than 12 months of rent and/or 12 months of utility assistance for each type of utility assistance needed. Rental assistance for up to 15 months may be available if it is deemed necessary to maintain housing stability and funding is available. You will be required to update your application to verify you still meet eligibility requirements.

31) Is there a maximum amount of assistance I can receive?

Yes. Assistance may be provided for a total of 12 months, or up to 15 months of rental assistance if it is determined this level of assistance is required to maintain housing stability and funding is available.

32) Can I be reimbursed for rent already paid to my landlord?

No. Payments are made directly to the landlord for past-due rent, current rent due, or future rent payments.

33) How will I receive the assistance?

Typically, applicants will not receive payments. The assistance will be paid directly to your landlord or applicable utility company who will apply the payment to your account. However, if your landlord or applicable utility company does not cooperate, then we can pay the assistance to the applicant, and it is their responsibility to then pay the assistance to their landlord and utility company and provide documentation to the Clinton County Housing Coalition once payment is made.

34) How will this information be used or shared?

Your Personally Identifiable Information will be protected and used only to establish program eligibility and ensure duplicate payments are not made.

35) Am I required to pay back the assistance?

Only if you falsified documentation required by the program, received duplicate benefits, or if you received assistance for future rent payments and you moved before the date on which any future rent you received is due to your landlord. If this occurred, you will have to repay the assistance.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

36) I have been approved to receive rental assistance. How will I know whether my landlord has received the benefit on my behalf?

Both you and your landlord will receive notification that the rental payment has been made. However, you may want to speak directly to your landlord to confirm payment has been applied to your rent.

37) I was notified that the assistance was paid to my landlord. My landlord now claims that they never received assistance and is seeking to have me evicted. What should I do?

Please contact the Clinton County Housing Coalition to verify that payment was directed to the correct address or account.

38) What happens to the rental assistance paid to my landlord if I decide to terminate my lease and move before the end of the paid rental assistance time period?

Your landlord will be required to repay any rental assistance which cannot be applied to your current lease due to termination of the lease by either party.

LANDLORD SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

39) I received an email stating my tenant applied and I have been asked to submit an application. Am I required to apply to receive rental payments under the program?

No, but it is encouraged that landlords complete their portion of the application confirming information provided by the tenant and making certifications not to evict the tenant for lack of rental payment.

40) Can a landlord apply on behalf of their tenant(s)?

Yes. Landlords must notify tenants that they have applied on their behalf.

41) Why do I need to provide a W-9?

The W-9 provides correct tax identification number for possible reporting of income to the IRS. It also ensures correct name and address for payment purposes.

42) Are late fees included in eligible rental expenses?

Yes, late fees up to a maximum of \$100 per household are eligible for MRAP assistance. All late fees more than \$100 must be waived.

43) If there is no written lease agreement, is the tenant eligible for assistance?

Yes, a Certification of Landlord/Tenant Relationship form is provided and must be completed by both the tenant and landlord.