



Contact:

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Communications@dca.ga.gov

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The Georgia Department of Community Affairs Expands Eligibility of Rental Assistance to Entire State

Georgia Rental Assistance Program broadens access to funds to support landlords, tenants in bringing rent balances and utility payments current

ATLANTA (August 26, 2021) – The state of Georgia received \$552 million in federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA1) under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and an additional \$437 million in federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA2) under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 from the U.S. Treasury. These funds are being administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) through the Georgia Rental Assistance Program (GRA). The funds are used to provide relief to individuals, families, and landlords whose finances have been negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of August 9, 2021, GRA is now providing rental and utility assistance to tenants, landlords, and utility providers statewide.

Based on guidance from the U.S. Treasury, counties or cities with over 200,000 people received separate funds to set up rental assistance programs. Previously, GRA did not administer funds to those local jurisdictions and applicants could only apply through their local municipalities' programs. Regardless of zip code, tenants and landlords who have fallen behind on rent or utility payments due to the pandemic can apply for up to 18 months of rental and utility assistance through GRA to bring past-due payments current. The program has expanded access to funds to the entire state to provide relief to as many Georgians as possible.

"We are living in a pandemic that has impacted Georgians in many different ways," said Tonya Cureton Curry, DCA Deputy Commissioner of Housing. "Having these rental assistance funds available from the U.S. Treasury is an unprecedented opportunity to bring landlords and tenants current on rent and utility payments. DCA is working closely with all local jurisdictions and the U.S. Treasury to provide funding to those in need across the state as we want to continue supporting as many Georgians as possible."

This is the second expansion of the program since its inception. In May 2021, based on evolving federal guidance, GRA expanded eligibility to include renter households that receive a monthly federal subsidy, such as a [Housing Choice Voucher](#). Only the tenant's portion of the rent will be eligible for reimbursement and subject to existing program guidelines and limitations.

The program, made possible through the U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance funding, is available to all tenant households whose finances have been negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and who meet the following criteria:

- Those who qualify for unemployment or have experienced a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Those who demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability, and



- Those who have a household income at or below 80 percent of the [Area Median Income \(AMI\)](#), with priority given to households below 50 percent of the AMI, or
- Rental households that receive a monthly federal subsidy (e.g. Housing Choice Voucher, Public Housing, Project Based Section 8). Program eligibility is limited to the tenant’s portion of the rent.

“We know many Georgians are still facing rental and utility arrearages due to the pandemic and we want to help these individuals, families, and landlords,” added Curry. “Regardless of your situation prior to the pandemic, GRA eligibility is based on your current situation. We want to help keep Georgians in their homes and we encourage those behind on rent and utility payments to apply today at [GeorgiaRentalAssistance.ga.gov](#) or by calling [833-827-RENT](#).”

GRA is now providing funding to tenants and landlords in all 159 Georgia counties. Individuals, families, and landlords whose finances have been negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic can visit the online portal at [GeorgiaRentalAssistance.ga.gov](#) to apply for rental assistance. Program assistance is also available by calling or texting [833-827-RENT](#) and resources are available in English, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.

For more information and FAQ, visit the online portal [GeorgiaRentalAssistance.ga.gov](#).

About the Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) partners with communities to build strong and vibrant neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas through community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, DCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions and promote volunteerism. DCA also helps qualified Georgians with low and moderate incomes buy homes, rent housing and prevent foreclosure and homelessness. For more information, visit [www.dca.ga.gov](#).