



Alexandria Proposed Citywide COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program

Program Goal: To efficiently and equitably assist Alexandria renters experiencing housing insecurity and financial hardship due to COVID-19 related loss of income. The Rental Assistance Program (Program) is designed to reduce the amount of rent owed that would otherwise have to be repaid in the future by a renter household as the economy recovers. Many landlords are offering repayment plans ranging up to twelve months, depending on the renter household's remaining lease term. Some are requiring that renters pay a percentage of the monthly rent as a prerequisite for a repayment plan. Program payments will be made to landlords for the benefit of the renter household's account. The Program will work with rental properties located within the City's corporate limits and/or with their residents, through DCHS and community-based organizations, including those providing emergency financial assistance to deploy all rental assistance funds ASAP and NLT December 31, 2020. All renters needing relief, and/or landlords offering relief in the form of repayment plans, are encouraged to apply for this assistance, however, determinations regarding funding will prioritize households determined to have the greatest needs as defined by the Program, based on available resources.

Program Budget/Funding: The City Manager has recommended \$3 million initially for the Program from CARES Act funds administered through the State of Virginia. In anticipation of additional funds being secured in the future, the Program design will be flexible and scalable, including the need targeted, the number of households served, the amount of assistance provided, and the duration of the benefit term.

Delivery system: To reach households already pursuing assistance through DCHS and/or community-based organizations, the program will target resources as follows:

- Funding allocation to DCHS assistance programs to supplement resources for eligible households who have applied for, and need, rental assistance (this would be separate from other funding DHCS may receive to aid special populations or households meeting specific income or other eligibility criteria)
- Funding allocation to Community-based Rent Relief Providers (e.g., interfaith emergency network or neighborhood services groups)
- Funding Allocation to Program (to be administered through the Housing Office) based on household referrals from Landlords and/or as demonstrated through executed rental repayment plans

Who is eligible:

- Households who experience documented loss of income directly related to COVID-19 (regardless of legal status).
- Households who were current on rent as of March 31, 2020
- Households who meet the City residency and income eligibility criteria described below (all income, including all relief and financial assistance, regardless of source) are the first-priority group

Subcategories:

- Households who have requested rental payment relief from their landlords, including future repayment agreements*
- Households who have requested or will request emergency rental assistance from the City

- Households who have requested or will request emergency rental assistance from Community-based Rent Relief Providers
- Households who have qualified for the City’s initial CDBG COVID-19 funded affordable housing rental

| Income Guidelines** | Tier 1 - 50% of Virginia Median Income | Tier 2 – 60% of Area Median Income |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Family Size | Monthly Gross | Monthly Gross |
| 1 | \$2,177 | \$4,410 |
| 2 | \$2,847 | \$5,040 |
| 3 | \$3,517 | \$5,670 |
| 4 | \$4,187 | \$6,300 |
| 5 | \$4,856 | \$6,805 |
| 6 | \$5,526 | \$7,310 |
| Asset limit | Must exhaust cash/on hand resources, including savings, to one-half or less of the monthly gross amount for household size (documented through bank statements or other). | |

assistance program who were not served by that program

Who is not eligible, generally:

- Households with a Tenant based voucher
 - Households residing in Project Based Voucher projects
 - Households residing in Public Housing
 - Households receiving other government-based rental assistance
- The above households may be eligible for the portion of rent not covered by other assistance programs. Rental assistance may consider unemployment and other benefits received, as well as a household’s documented extraordinary needs within program parameters. Extraordinary need criteria are TBD.

Assistance Per Household:

- Up to 3 months of assistance
- Up to \$600 per month toward unpaid rent amounts from April 1 forward that are related to COVID 19 (amount reflects estimated per unit per month operating costs to benefit/induce Landlords to work with renters in good faith through the repayment period)
- All rent assistance payments will be made directly to landlords on behalf of renter households, with the renter household’s verification

Coordination:

Database to be developed will verify Program assistance by address to avoid duplication of assistance

Projected number to be served:

- For \$3 million, approximately 1,660 households will be served a maximum allowed total assistance amount of \$1,800.

Outreach and Communications Plan

- For residents: culturally competent messaging; multiple languages (Amharic, Arabic, English, Spanish, other) and multiple formats including social media (Facebook and Twitter), texts, as well as traditional methods (website, etc.)
- Communications with property owners/landlords, including program protocols and documentation required
- Activate informal network of community leaders to help present/explain program to neighbors (e.g., TWU, Casa Chirilagua, tenant associations and FBC/churches, including non-English congregations)
- Outreach or other communication/handout in conjunction with any planned community events (e.g., food distributions, World Central Kitchen, ACPS feeding program, Meals on Wheels, Sheriff and APD community interactions)
- Targeted outreach to underserved populations, including small Landlords and undocumented Alexandrians

Administration and Implementation

- Program needs to be scalable depending on final Budget
- Coordination with existing programs
- Methodology for eligibility determination and documentation of needs processing, including referrals to other resources
- Coordination with other assistance (database)
- Training and staffing, including potential city staff available through EOC
- Methodology for processing of payments
- Transparency in tracking and reporting
- Target for efficient deployment of funds, including client/Landlord contact through determination and payment processing and follow up

The Program will be administered by Housing and offered in coordination with City landlords and renters, DCHS, ARHA and Community-based Rent Relief Providers, including the Emergency Financial Assistance Provider Network.