



SAFE HARBOR HOUSING PROGRAM

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS – *What Changed?*

All of the state rental assistance programs funded with Cares Act Funds have been consolidated.

Previously there were several programs with different application information and eligibility requirements. There is now one program being administered by several partners. Everyone who applies will be required to answer the same questions and meet the same eligibility criteria.

Tenants no longer need to demonstrate that their financial hardship is COVID related.

The state has adopted a public health lens and determined that keeping people housed prevents tenants from becoming homeless, moving into overcrowded/congregate settings, and reduces the risk of exposure to COVID.

Tenants can now self-attest to income and lack of required resources to cover rent.

The level of documentation required to demonstrate income eligibility was determined to be onerous and difficult to obtain given COVID restrictions and business closings. Rhode Island, like a number of other states, is now processing applications using a self-attestation of income and need.

There is no longer a cap on the dollar amount of eligible rental arrearages.

Previously, landlords/tenants were eligible for up to \$5000.00 dollars of assistance. Going forward, landlords/tenants are eligible for total rental arrearages owed from March through December 2020.

The number of months of eligible rental arrearages has been increased.

Previously, landlords/tenants were eligible for 5 months of arrearages. Going forward, landlords/tenants are eligible for up to ten months.

Assistance is now available for one “forward” month of assistance.

Previously, there was no mechanism to pay rent coming due. Now, for those tenants/landlords who are processed during the month of November, December’s rent can be included in the payment if the tenant attests that they will not have the resources for the upcoming month.

There are now multiple forms of acceptable documentation. (See below)

By tenant:

1. Government issued ID to verify residency
(Driver's license, passport, state issued ID, municipality/city issued ID)
2. Verification of tenancy
(lease, utility bill, landlord/tenant statement, rent receipts with address)
3. Affidavit self-certifying income, not receiving other rental assistance for these same arrearages with capability for electronic signature
4. Verification of past due rent
(notice of nonpayment, letter from landlord, eviction notice) (can also be provided by landlord)

By landlord:

1. Proof of ownership
(mortgage or mortgage bill, tax bill, water/sewer bill, home insurance bill, real estate tax bill)
2. Landlord W9
3. Landlord bank account information including a canceled check
(or letter from bank confirming account info)
4. If we have not received it from the tenant, verification of non-payment of rent
(notice of nonpayment, letter from landlord, rent ledger)

How do I access/apply for the program?

Individual tenants or landlords should access the program and apply online using the Safe Harbor application available at: <https://www.uwri.org/2-1-1/safe-harbor-housing-program/>

What if I have a scheduled eviction hearing?

Staff will be present in the Garrahy and Kent County Courthouses stationed at tables outside the rooms being used to hear evictions. Prior to your hearing, tenants and landlords may check with staff to determine where they are in the application process. Staff will provide documentation to the landlord/tenant that can then be used to demonstrate to the court that they have applied or been approved for rental assistance.

What if I already have a judgement of eviction? Am I still eligible?

Yes. A tenant and landlord can enter the program if they already have a judgment of eviction and the parties agree to continue that pending eligibility and acceptance into the program. Those applicants will be given priority within the system in order to keep the tenants in their homes.