

Suffolk County Emergency Rental Assistance Program for COVID-19 Relief

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

To qualify for assistance in the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, residential renters must meet all of the following criteria:

- * Be a Suffolk County resident who is currently occupying a legal permanent housing unit (no hotels, motels, or dorms) within one of the participating Suffolk County Consortium municipalities (see below).
- * Be a Low to Moderate Income Household. All applicant households (except for those in the Town of Huntington) must have a combined gross annual income not exceeding 80% of the area median income (AMI) as determined by HUD. Applicants residing within the Town of Huntington must have a combined gross annual income not exceeding 60% AMI (see chart that follows).
- * Have a fully-executed lease that has been in effect for a minimum of one month at the time of application, and has a term of at least one year.
- * Renter must demonstrate financial hardship as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- * Must not have received other rental assistance from any governmental agency.

WHAT TOWNS ARE IN THE SUFFOLK COUNTY CONSORTIUM AREA?

Applicants **must** reside in a rental unit within the Suffolk County Consortium Selection Area stated below:

- **Town of East Hampton** – and the Village of Sag Harbor
- **Town of Huntington** – entire town
- **Town of Riverhead** – entire town
- **Town of Shelter Island** – excluding incorporated villages
- **Town of Smithtown** – and the Village of the Branch
- **Town of Southampton** – and the incorporated Villages of Sag Harbor, Southampton, Westhampton Beach and Westhampton Dunes
- **Town of Southold** – the entire town

DO I HAVE TO HAVE COVID-19 TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THIS PROGRAM?

No, you just need to have lost income because of COVID-19.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

Visit (LINK) to apply for rental assistance. After the closure of the application period, a lottery system will be used to provide grant assistance, in order to provide equitable access to all renters residing within the Consortium area.

DOES THE LANDLORD NEED TO APPLY AS WELL AS THE TENANT?

No, only the tenant should apply. Suffolk County Community Development Office (SCCDO) will request the Landlord to provide documentation and sign a program agreement prior to assistance being provided.

HOW LONG DOES THE EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE LAST?

Emergency rental assistance will take the form of a one-time payment of 100% of one month’s rent, up to a maximum of \$2,500.

WILL THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COVER TENANT UTILITIES?

Only if the utilities are an existing part of the tenant’s contracted lease payment.

WHAT IF I DO NOT HAVE A LEASE?

You are not eligible if you do not have a lease. You can request that your landlord sign a lease extension, but rent must remain the same.

ARE THERE INCOME GUIDELINES?

The maximum combined allowable annual income for applicants shall not exceed 80% of the area median annual household income (AMI) as determined by HUD. Applicants residing within the Town of Huntington cannot exceed 60% AMI. Such amounts are set forth below.

Household Size	Maximum Combined Allowable Annual Income (60%AMI)	Maximum Combined Allowable Annual Income (80%AMI)
1	\$53,200	\$70,900
2	\$60,800	\$81,050
3	\$68,400	\$91,200
4	\$75,950	\$101,300
5	\$82,050	\$109,400
6	\$88,150	\$117,500
7	\$94,200	\$125,600
8 or more	\$100,300	\$133,700

HOW LIKELY AM I TO GET HELP?

Funding is very limited and we will not be able to help everyone. Your chances for receiving assistance are dependent upon the number of renters who apply.

HOW LONG WILL THIS PROGRAM LAST?

This is a program designed specifically to address those affected by COVID-19's impact on the economy. Available funds are limited.

AM I ELIGIBLE IF ALREADY RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM ANOTHER RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

No, this program cannot provide additional assistance if you already receive rental assistance through Section 8, or any similar program.

WHAT IF I LOST MY INCOME BEFORE COVID-19 OR MY INCOME LOSS IS UNRELATED TO COVID-19?

You would not be eligible. This program is only available to tenants who lost income due to the impacts of COVID-19.

WHAT IF I APPLY BUT MY LANDLORD DOES NOT RESPOND TO SCCDO OR IS NOT WILLING TO AGREE TO THE FUNDERS' TERMS?

Unfortunately, we need participation from your landlord to provide assistance.

WHAT IF I WAS ALREADY BEHIND IN RENT PRIOR TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC? CAN I STILL QUALIFY FOR ASSISTANCE?

Existing rental arrears do not disqualify a tenant from eligibility so long as they meet all other eligibility criteria. Landlords must agree to postpone any eviction proceedings until at least 30 days after receipt of payment from the Emergency Rental Assistance program.

WHAT IF I HAVE RECEIVED AN EVICTION NOTICE?

You may be able to receive funds through DSS or other sources. Call 311 for a wide variety of resources.

WHAT IF PAYMENTS THROUGH THIS PROGRAM ARE PROVIDED AFTER THE RENT DUE DATE? WILL THE ASSISTANCE AMOUNT BE INCREASED TO COVER THE LATE FEES?

All effort will be made to provide rental payments in a timely manner, but landlords must agree to waive all late fees that may have accrued during the period for which emergency rental assistance is received.

DOES THIS PROGRAM LIMIT THE NUMBER OF TENANTS THAT ONE LANDLORD CAN HAVE APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE?

No.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION WILL THIS PROGRAM REQUIRE FROM THE LANDLORD?

Landlords will be required to provide a copy of the deed to the subject property, and to sign a preliminary Landlord Agreement form (provided by SCCDO). If the tenant and property are approved for assistance the Landlord will also be required to sign final Program Agreement form and a VAWA lease addendum, as applicable (both forms to be provided by SCCDO).

ARE THERE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE PROPERTY ITSELF?

In most cases the landlord will be required to certify that the property doesn't have outstanding code violations and meets all health and safety standards. In some instances SCCDO may be required to visit and certify the condition of the property. Properties for which code violations cannot be remedied or meet other property condition requirements may be ineligible to receive assistance through this program.