



Virginia Rent Relief Program

Senate Finance Committee

September 14, 2021

Virginia Rent Relief Program

Virginia is recognized as leading the nation in the deployment of Emergency Rental Assistance funds which are federal funds currently being used for the Rent Relief Program (RRP)

While we are pleased to be leading the nation, we are committed to making the program as accessible as possible

RRP– Strategies to Improve Access

- From the onset, our strategy has been to **screen tenants into** the program providing as much flexibility as US Treasury guidelines will allow
- RRP team working to improve the internal infrastructure of the program streamlining process and procedures
- One of the first states in the nation to launch a grant program to reach historically disadvantaged communities – RRP Outreach and Engagement Grant
 - 13 grantees provide direct one-on-one assistance in applying for rent relief
 - Available to tenants and landlords
 - Pop-up outreach sites at shopping centers to begin the application process
- Partnering with Virginia Employment Commission on conducting outreach to their customers who are losing federal benefits to get them connected to RRP
- Media efforts
 - Ad buys
 - Marketing Toolkit

Virginia Rent Relief Program

OVERVIEW

Virginia Rent Relief Program – The Basics

- The Virginia Rent Relief Program (RRP) is designed to support and ensure housing stability across the Commonwealth during the coronavirus pandemic
- This program has two doors of entry, one for landlords and one for tenants
- The same information is required of both parties, regardless of where the RRP application is initiated
- RRP is offered to tenants and landlords statewide, with two exceptions:
 - Chesterfield and Fairfax Counties have elected to administer rent relief programs at the local level as allowed by Treasury's Emergency Rental Assistance program
 - Applicants are referred to these local programs for assistance and contact information for those programs is provided on all RRP websites

RRP Tenant Eligibility

Three core eligibility requirements of the program:

1. Household's current gross income must be at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)
2. Household's rent cannot exceed 150% of Fair Market Rent (FMR)
3. Households must complete a self-certification of negative financial impact due directly or indirectly to COVID-19

Two Doors, One Program

- Tenants can apply for rent relief through the RRP Support Center online or by telephone
 - Online: applications.deval.us
 - Telephone: 703-962-1884
- Landlords can apply for rent relief on behalf of tenants through Virginia Housing's online portal:
 - www.VirginiaHousing.com/RentRelief

Required Documentation

1. Rental Agreement (valid lease or alternative lease documentation) which must include:
 - Tenant and Landlord's full names
 - Monthly rent amount
 - What is included in the monthly rent (e.g., utilities, Internet, etc.)
 - Term of the lease (i.e., what month and year does the agreement begin and end)
2. Tenant/Landlord Ledger
3. Tenant Income Documentation
4. Landlord's Virginia W-9
5. RRP Landlord/Tenant Agreement

Other Important RRP Information

- Trusted third parties can assist tenants and landlords with completing their applications and receive updates on the application status
- RRP can pay three months prospective rent for eligible tenants
- Landlords and tenants can receive rent relief for no more than 18 months total, with reverification every three months
- Tenants **do not** need to be in arrears in order to receive assistance
- Households receiving a housing subsidy are eligible for RRP assistance
- Individuals who receive Unemployment Insurance benefits do not need to attest to a COVID related negative financial impact
- Households of three or less living in one of 500 “Fact Specific Proxy” zip codes do not need to provide income documentation.
- Households of three or less who access TANF, WIC, SNAP or LIHEAP do not need to provide income documentation

2021 Special Session Budget Language

- Prior to proceeding with an eviction, all landlords (regardless of how many units they own) must first:
 - 1) Inform the tenant of the Rent Relief Program and information on how to reach 2-1-1
 - 2) Apply to RRP on behalf of the tenant unless the tenant has stated they are applying for rental assistance funds.
- Only if the tenant refuses to apply for rental assistance or refuses to cooperate with the landlord applying can the landlord proceed with an eviction.

RRP Results as of August 25, 2021

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Total Households Approved Since July 2020	62,000+
Total Amount Disbursed Since July 2020	\$365+ Million
Average Rent Relief Payment	\$5,413

Useful RRP Links

- FAQs for Tenants: <https://dhcd.virginia.gov/rrp-tenant-faqs>
- FAQs for Landlords: <https://dhcd.virginia.gov/rrp-landlord-faqs>
- RRP Eligibility Self-Assessment: www.dhcd.virginia.gov/eligibility
- Assistance with new RRP applications: www.homeofva.org/get-help/eviction-diversion/

Contact Information

General RRP Inquiries:

rrp@dhcd.virginia.gov

Virginia Housing Inquiries:

RentRelief@VirginiaHousing.com



Questions?