

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Table of Contents

- 1 Program Eligibility
- 2 Application Process
- 2 Amount & Type of Assistance
- 3 Other FAQs

Program Eligibility

Who is eligible to receive assistance through this program?

To qualify, you must be a Santa Clara County resident who:

- Has been financially impacted by the pandemic;
- Is at-risk of losing your housing; AND
- Makes less than 30% of the area's median income (see income table below)

Household Size	Max yearly Income <i>(before taxes)</i>
1	\$34,800
2	\$39,800
3	\$44,750
4	\$49,700
5	\$53,700
6	\$57,700
7	\$61,650
8	\$65,650

How is income calculated?

Household income is the combined gross income (income before taxes) of all adult household members.

What if my income is irregular, or I have no income?

Applicants with no income can complete a self-attestation certifying that they have zero income. Applicants with irregular income may provide documentation of their total annual income in 2020 or may extrapolate annual income based on their last two months of income.

How do you define a household? For example, what if I rent a room or live with other families?

A "household" is defined as a group of people who live in the same home, depend on the same income, and share the same food. If there are multiple families or individuals living in the

same home who do not share their income or food, they may be considered a different household.

Do I have to be the leaseholder to apply?

You do not need to be the leaseholder or have a formal lease to apply. We will work with you to identify alternative forms of documentation to demonstrate your proof of residency.

What type of proof/documentation will I need to provide? What happens if I can't provide documentation?

Households will need to submit [basic documentation](#), such as identification for all adult members of the household, address verification, income verification (i.e. paystubs), a lease, and proof of the COVID-19 related loss of income. We also will accept alternate documentation for those who are paid in cash or have other non-traditional sources of income, or who may not have a current lease.

Our goal is to make this process as easy as possible and will work with every tenant to explore alternatives on a case-by-case basis.

I am an undocumented resident. Does that affect my eligibility for assistance? And Will it be considered a "Public Charge"?

Assistance will be provided to all who meet our eligibility and prioritization criteria, regardless of immigration status. In addition, the assistance provided through this program is temporary disaster aid administered by a private nonprofit from a combination of private and public donations; it is not a public benefit, general assistance, or income maintenance program.

Am I eligible if I've received rental assistance from other sources?

It depends on the source of assistance and how much assistance you received. Funding from this program can not be used to cover rent that's been paid by another assistance program (i.e. if you received assistance from the statewide CA COVID-19 Rent Relief program). However, if other assistance programs only covered a portion of your rent, this program may be able to help cover the remaining need.

If you have received other forms of assistance, please call or email us (408-926-8885 or info@preventhomelessness.org) so we can provide guidance for your specific situation.

Does my landlord need to agree to participate in this program?

No. Through the application review process, we will be reaching out to your landlord to encourage their participation in this program. However, if a landlord does not agree to participate, we will provide assistance directly to the tenant.

Application Process

What are the different ways I can apply for assistance?

- You can fill out an online application by visiting PreventHomelessness.org.
- Residents needing assistance can:
 - Call our referral line (408-926-8885) or email info@preventhomeslessness.org
 - Contact one of our [40 community partners](#) who are available to provide residents with hands-on assistance (in dozens of languages).

How long will it take to process my application and rental assistance payment?

We will do our best to begin processing your application in three to four weeks, but due to the high volume of applications, our response time may be delayed. Actual processing time will vary depending on the time needed to ensure required documentation is complete and rental information is verified.

Most applications will be processed within 30-45 days, depending on individual circumstances and the current volume of applications.

What can I do to expedite processing of my application?

Due to the high volume of applications, it may take several weeks before we can begin processing your application. However, there are many steps you can take when preparing your application to help facilitate a speedy review:

- Review the [list of required documents](#) and collect any documents that were missing in your application to have ready for review, if needed;
- Include your landlord's contact information when submitting your application.
- Fill out the [COVID-19 Declaration Form](#) and submit it to your landlord.
- Tell your landlord that you applied for rental assistance through HPS-CV and encourage them to check their email for a notice about the application and follow the link and instructions to submit their information.

How will my info be used /secured?

Our application database features advanced technology that will help keep your information secure. In addition, we've set up internal procedures to ensure that each applicant's data is kept confidential and not accessible by any unauthorized individuals (including law enforcement or immigration authorities).

Amount & Type of Assistance

What type of assistance can I receive?

All eligible applicants can receive assistance paying off accrued back rent.

Based on funding availability and their level of need, applicants may also receive:

- Assistance with future rent payments for up to the next 3 months.
- Direct financial assistance to help cover other basic needs, such as food, utilities, etc.

How much of my rent will this program cover?

Eligible tenants can receive up to 100% of their accrued back rent (the exact amount will depend on the tenant's individual situation). Assistance with prospective rent payments will be based on funding availability and the applicant's level of need.

What if I have unpaid utility bills or other housing-related costs?

Applicants in need of additional help (beyond rental payments) can also qualify for direct financial assistance which can be used to cover utilities and other critical needs.

What if my landlord does not agree to participate? Will that affect my eligibility and/or the amount I can receive?

Landlords who agree to participate in the program will be paid directly by the Homelessness Prevention System. If a landlord does not agree to participate in this program, we will instead provide assistance directly to the tenant.

The amount of assistance will be the same regardless of whether or not the landlord agrees to participate in the program.

Why are rental payments made directly to the landlord, instead of the tenant?

This program utilizes federal emergency rental assistance funding, which requires us to attempt to make rental payments directly to the landlord. We will work with households to collect all of the information necessary for us to reach out to and engage directly with the landlord. However, if a landlord does not agree to participate, we are able to provide assistance directly to the tenant.

How will assistance be paid?

Rental assistance will be paid via check.

Will the financial assistance be considered taxable income?

For tenants, these payments are considered emergency assistance, which are typically not considered as taxable income. However, if you have any questions when it comes to filing your taxes, please be sure to consult with a tax specialist.

For landlords, these payments will be treated as ordinary rental income with the same tax liability as if had been paid directly by the tenant.

How will I know if the assistance is paid and make sure that my landlord applies the payment to my outstanding rent?

In order to receive a direct rental payment, landlords will be required to sign an attestation that the money will be used to apply to the tenant's rental arrears. Once assistance has been approved, tenants will receive a Notification of Financial Assistance that documents the months and amounts of rental assistance provided.

Other FAQs

Where does the funding for this program come from?

This program utilizes a combination of public funding and private donations. Most of the funding comes from the federal government in the form of Emergency Rental Assistance funding approved as part of the federal stimulus package adopted in December 2020.

Is the Homelessness Prevention System COVID-19 Response related to the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief program?

These are two separate and distinct programs:

- The Homelessness Prevention System - COVID-19 Response is a locally administered program focused on Extremely Low-Income households in Santa Clara County.
- The CA COVID-19 Rent Relief program is a statewide initiative that serves low-income residents across the state.

While they are separately run programs, they are coordinating with one another to refer Santa Clara County residents to the right front door. The other similarity is that both programs are leveraging federal emergency rental assistance dollars.

Why are there two separate rent relief programs running concurrently? Why do the programs have different eligibility criteria?

The State of California, County of Santa Clara and City of San Jose all received direct allocations of federal emergency rental assistance funds. After the State of California announced its rent relief plans, the County and City decided that it was important to target its local funding towards addressing the needs of the lowest-income and most vulnerable residents in need of rent assistance. And as a result, we have developed a local program designed to complement the broader statewide rental assistance effort.

Can I apply to both programs? How will I know which program I should apply for?

No. In order to avoid duplication of benefits, in Santa Clara County, each program targets residents in different income brackets.

- Extremely low income residents should apply to the Santa Clara County Homelessness Prevention System - COVID-19 Response.
- Very low income and low income residents should apply to the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief program.

You can find a chart detailing the income levels for each category at [SCCRentHelp.com](https://www.sccrenthelp.com).

What if I'm not sure how much exactly I make in a year?

Estimate your annual income, and use the income level chart available at [SCCRentHelp.com](https://www.sccrenthelp.com) to determine which income bracket you fall into, and thus which program you should apply to. As part of the application process, we'll help you confirm your actual income; and we've also made arrangements with the State program on how to process applicants who may have ended up applying to the wrong program.

Where can I get info/help regarding the State program?

For more information and to apply to the State's rental assistance program, visit [HousingIsKey.com](https://www.housingiskey.com) or call 833-430-2122. Those resources can also help connect you with one of the State program's local partners, who can provide assistance with filling out an application.