



City's Rental and Utility Relief Program

Mayor Rick Blangiardi announced that the City and County of Honolulu's Rental and Utility Relief Program started accepting applications on April 5, 2021 at oneoahu.org/renthelp from O'ahu households that have been hit hardest financially by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Helping people who are struggling to get back on their feet is a major part of our recovery strategy," said Mayor Blangiardi. "The Rental and Utility Relief Program is one of our most powerful tools to get financial support to people who need the most help paying their rent and household utilities that are in arrears. The program has \$114 million in Coronavirus Relief Fund from the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021. Our goal is to spend every dollar equitably and efficiently in supporting our community and our recovery."

Applications will be accepted at oneoahu.org/renthelp in groups of 8,000 applications. Once the first group of applications has been received, the portal will temporarily close. This will allow the City's community partners to process applications and make timely payments to landlords and utilities.

When the portal accepts the next group of applicants, the program will be open to households making at or less than 80% of the area median income for Honolulu County. This cycle of temporarily closing to process applications and payments will continue until the funding is fully expended.

Program Requirements

The program requires a qualifying household to:

- Show financial harm from the pandemic, such as qualifying for unemployment, job loss, reduction in wages, or increase in household expenses
- Show at least one household member is at risk of losing their housing
- Be below the income limits
- Priority will be given to applicants who qualify:
- With a household income less than 50% of the area median income for Honolulu County;
OR
- If a household member has been unemployed for at least 90 days at the time of application AND is still unemployed at the time of application

Only one person per household should apply. In addition, landlords may apply on behalf of their tenants, with the tenants' permission.

For households that qualify, the program will pay:

- Up to \$2,500 a month in rent and utility arrears
- Up to \$2,000 for future rent payments
- Up to \$500 a month for future electric, water and sewer, and gas bills
- Total payments can be as many as 12 months
- Payments will be made directly to a landlord or utility

The Rental and Utility Relief Program can pay bills going back to March 2020, current bills, or future bills, depending on a household's needs.

The program will accept applications from renters and landlords and comes more than two months before the federal eviction moratorium expires on June 30, 2021. The program does not apply to people behind on their mortgage payments.

The City is managing the Rental and Utility Relief Program with its community partners Catholic Charities Hawai'i and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement.

"We know that our community is still experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that many residents are still in need of assistance," said Catholic Charities Hawai'i President and CEO Robert Van Tassell. "This emergency rental assistance program is meant to keep tenants in their homes and safely sheltered, while ensuring landlords are properly compensated. We thank Mayor Blangiardi and the City and County of Honolulu for allowing Catholic Charities Hawai'i to be a part of this important program."

"The financial effects of this pandemic will likely last longer than the pandemic, itself," said President and CEO of the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement Kūhiō Lewis. "We are privileged to be teaming up with the City and County of Honolulu to help ensure that families are able to stay in their homes without worrying about how their rent and utilities will be paid, until they can get back on their feet."

To support the delivery of the program to residents, the Hawai'i Community Foundation is providing a grant of \$100,000 to Catholic Charities Hawai'i and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement. The Sony Group Corporation, through Friends of Hawaii Charities, is matching that grant with \$100,000 to the organizations.

Chart: Income Qualifications for Current Round of the Rental & Utility Relief Program

- At or less than 50% of the Area Median Income for Honolulu County

Size of Household	Annual Income Limit to Qualify
1 person	Less than \$44,100 a year
2 people	Less than \$50,400 a year
3 people	Less than \$56,700 a year
4 people	Less than \$62,950 a year
5 people	Less than \$68,000 a year
6 people	Less than \$73,050 a year
7 people	Less than \$78,100 a year
8 people	Less than \$83,100 a year