



Rental Assistance Program: Frequently Asked Questions

The Rental Assistance Program (RAP) provides financial assistance to eligible Chicago residents who are at risk of becoming homeless. The program is designed to stabilize individuals and families in their existing rental units. You can read more about our program below.

If you do not speak English, interpretation services are available at each of the 6 DFSS Community Service Centers listed below.

Si no habla inglés, servicio de interpretación está disponible en cada de los 6 Centros de Servicios Comunitarios en la lista debajo.

Getting Started

I need help paying my rent. Am I eligible for these funds?

Rental assistance is available to low-income Chicagoans for assistance with rental arrears. Please visit the Chicago Housing Assistance Portal at Chicago.gov/RentHelp to find out what assistance you may qualify for.

What does my income need to be in order to qualify for help?

To find out if you qualify for rental assistance, fill out the triage questions on the DFSS Rental Assistance page. You can find a link at Chicago.gov/fss/RAP

Can I apply for support with a security deposit or application fees?

Yes, in certain circumstances we can provide support for a security deposit, application fee, etc. These instances include:

- Disaster (fire/flood)
- Moved because of financial reasons 2 or more times during the 90 days prior to applying
- Are living in the home of another because of financial hardship
- Have received eviction notice during 21 days after applying for assistance
- Living in a hotel or motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individual
- Living in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than 2 persons
- Exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care
- Experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or dating violence

Please contact a Community Service Center (listed below) for guidance on your situation.



Can I apply for rental assistance for help paying my mortgage?

Rental assistance does not provide support for people who need help paying mortgages. Please visit the Chicago Housing Assistance Portal at Chicago.gov/RentHelp to find out what assistance you may qualify for.

I don't have an eviction notice yet. Can I still apply?

In certain circumstances you do not need to provide an eviction notice. You may be eligible for rental assistance even without an eviction notice if one of these situations applies to you:

- You have experienced a disaster such as a fire or flood
- You moved because of financial reasons 2 or more times during the 90 days prior to applying
- You are living in the home of another because of financial hardship
- You received an eviction notice during the 21 days after applying for rental assistance
- You are living in a hotel or motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals
- You are living in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than 2 persons
- You are exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care such as a hospital, long-term care facility, or jail
- You are experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or dating violence

How much money can I receive from the Rental Assistance Program?

Rental assistance can pay for up to 6 months of rent, but only in qualifying situations. Final determination is made by a case manager, who can help explain what you qualify for.

I live in subsidized housing. Can I receive rental assistance?

Yes, but we can only support payment of rental arrears. We cannot support payment of future rent.

I need rental assistance and I am living with HIV.

If you are a person living with HIV, specific resources are available for you by calling the HIV Resource Coordination Hub at 1-844-HUB-4040.

Required Documents

What documents will I need to provide in the application?

We ask for documentation to verify your identity, social security number, income amount, and proof of housing.



What kind of documentation can I submit for identification?

Each family member over 18 needs to include a valid (current and not expired) Driver's License or State ID. If you do not have a valid Driver's License or State ID, you can submit one of the following:

- Letter from a Domestic Violence center
- Letter that supports where you currently live (you cannot be living in a shelter, but if you are receiving help with housing this can qualify)
- City Key Card
- Military ID
- Proof of Passport

What can I submit for proof of social security number?

Each family member must include documentation to validate their Social Security Number. This can be one of the following:

- Printout from SSA website with full name and SSN shown
- Copy of Social Security card
- Copy of 2019 tax returns with full name and SSN visible
- Paystub from the last 90 days full name and SSN visible

What can I submit to document proof of my income?

The income you declare in the application must be supported through documentation. Please attach any of the following documents that are applicable to your income:

- Public Aid Income Letter with dollar amount (SNAP, TANF, etc)
- Social Security Income/SSI/SSDI Income current award letter
- Pension/Annuity Income
- Paycheck stubs covering the past 90 days, or employer's letter on letterhead giving gross monthly income
- Unemployment benefit documents
- Child support documents
- VA Benefits
- Other wages (self-employed or 1099 contractors)

What can I submit to show proof of housing?

In order to be eligible for Rental Assistance, you must document your housing and imminent risk of homelessness. You will be asked to upload both of the following:

- Notarized 5-day eviction notice from property owner/manager
- Current lease that shows you can still live in your current residence for another 6-12 months or more

If you don't have a lease or eviction but qualify through a special circumstance, we would ask for one of the following:



- Letter from landlord stating intention to renew lease for another 6-12 months
- Domestic violence affidavit form
- Letter documenting recent discharge from hospital, institution system of care, or corrections
- Documentation of displacement due to fire or flood
- Notarized letter from lease-holder documenting end date of housing (if doubled up)
- Receipt for stay in a hotel or motel when the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals
- Lease showing you are living in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons
- Documentation showing that you moved because of financial reasons two or more times during the 90 days prior to applying for Rental Assistance

I don't have income, so I don't have any proof of income. Can I still apply?

If you do not have any proof of income, you can complete a No-Income Affidavit. You would still need to provide documentation on how you will sustain rent moving forward.

What documentation does my landlord need to provide?

Landlords need to fill out the following forms and upload them to the application for you to be considered for Rental Assistance:

- Property Owner/Manager Agreement Form
- Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification
- Signed Property Owner Affidavit on property management company letterhead & attach a business card, or signed proof of management company's agreement with property owner
- Client Payment Agreement (only if you owe 6 months or more of rent)

Getting Help With the Application

Who can I contact for help filling out the application?

A case manager is assigned to your case once you submit your application and can support you with updating any documents submitted that do not meet the program requirements. If you need help with the initial application, you can contact your nearest Community Service Center:

- **Englewood Community Service Center**
1140 West 79th Street, Chicago, IL 60620, 312-747-0200
Apply in person: Daily, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Garfield Community Service Center**
10 South Kedzie Avenue, Chicago, IL 60612, 312-746-5400
Apply in person: Daily, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



- **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Center**
4314 South Cottage Grove, Chicago, IL 60653, 312-747-2300
Apply in person: Daily, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **North Area Community Service Center**
845 West Wilson Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640, 312-744-2580
Apply in person: Daily, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **South Chicago Community Service Center**
8650 South Commercial Avenue, Chicago, IL 60617, 312-747-0500
Apply in person: Daily, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Trina Davila Community Service Center**
4312 West North Avenue, Chicago, IL 60639, 312-744-2014
Apply in person: Daily, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Moving Through the Rental Assistance Application Process

I have submitted my application. What happens now?

We accept applications during the open periods listed on our website. Once the application period closes, our staff reviews applications on a priority basis. You will be notified when your application is being processed.

How do I check on the status of my application?

Once you apply, you can check the status of your application by logging in and checking the 'Application Status' at the top of the page.

How long should I expect to wait after applying before I find out if I have been approved?

The time between applying and approval depends on your situation and how quickly you and your landlord provide accurate documentation to support your application.

I was denied rental assistance. What can I do?

If you are denied rental assistance but believe you are eligible, you may appeal your denial. You will receive a denial letter that outlines the appeals process. After you receive the denial letter, you have 10 days to appeal. Follow the instructions on your denial letter to appeal.

My income has changed since I first applied. How do I report this?

If your income changes after you submit your application, you should update your application by logging back into your application and changing it on the 'Head of Family' or 'Family Member' tab, depending on who experienced the change. You will then want to delete the old documentation and upload your new documentation on the 'Upload' tab. After doing this, please re-sign on the signature page and submit. This will not change your initial submission date but is required for our records.



I was notified that I am eligible for assistance, but now I'm being contacted to participate in a housing inspection. Why do I need a housing inspection?

We perform housing inspections to ensure compliance with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's standards for rental assistance. Your unit must pass inspection in order for you to receive financial assistance. Housing inspections are completed by our partner agency All-Chicago.

Where does rental assistance funding come from?

The DFSS Rental Assistance Program obtains its funds from the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). The program is subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Due to COVID-19, the DFSS Rental Assistance Program has received additional funding from the Community Services Block Grant through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Please note all requirements are subject to change and this page will be updated as regulations and requirements are revised.