

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1 WHAT IF I CAN'T PAY MY RENT DURING THIS TIME?

We value our residents and always strive to maintain open lines of communication. The best thing you can do is communicate with your property manager about your situation. Your property manager may ask you to provide documentation from your employer or other documentation showing that you have been impacted by COVID-19. Providing documentation and maintaining frequent communication with your property manager will help you get the answers you need.

AAGD has encouraged our members to waive late fees, work out payment plans, and take other actions to help keep residents in their homes.

The City of Dallas passed The Mortgage and Rental Assistance program, which will offer \$6.1 million in rental and mortgage aid. Assistance will provide up to \$1,500 for a maximum of three months per eligible household. To qualify for the pre-screening process, applicants must be City of Dallas residents who lost their jobs or were furloughed due to COVID-19. The program is expected to open during the first week of May.

Q.2 CAN I BE EVICTED FROM MY RESIDENCE DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS?

The Texas Supreme Court has suspended evictions in Texas until April 30. There is also an eviction moratorium for certain properties under the federal CARES Act until July 24. Some local ordinances may also affect the eviction process.

Despite these moratoria, someone may still face eviction if they pose an imminent threat of physical harm to others or

are engaging in criminal activity.

During this time, residents may still be issued a notice to vacate by the property manager for non-payment of rent. A notice to vacate is an indication that the rental property owner intends to pursue an eviction if rent is not paid (or for other lease violations). An eviction proceeding will usually occur if you fail to respond to notices/requests to contact your Property Manager.

Please note, the Dallas City Council passed an ordinance on April 22 requiring landlords to provide Dallas residents who have been impacted by COVID-19 with a notice of proposed eviction before issuing a notice to vacate. Learn more about the ordinance and your obligations as a resident here ([link to white paper](#)).

Properties covered by the CARES Act are prohibited from delivering an NTV or charging late fees or otherwise proceeding with an eviction for the non-payment of rent during the moratorium, which ends on July 24. The CARES Act further requires owners to provide the resident with a 30-day NTV. Properties covered by the CARES Act have either federally backed financing or participate in federal housing assistance programs.

Remember, even though evictions are halted during this time, residents must continue to pay rent. Paying your rent protects you as a renter under Texas law. Please communicate with your property manager if you think you might not be able to pay your rent.

Failing to pay your rent hurts our ability to continue operating and maintaining the property where you live. Ultimately it may also hurt your credit or result in an eviction once that process is reinstated.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONT.

Q.3 WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I RECEIVE A "NOTICE TO VACATE"?

If you receive a "Notice to Vacate," you should talk to your property manager to discuss your situation and see if any accommodations can be made during these difficult times. The Apartment Association of Greater Dallas is encouraging its members who are able to:

- Waive late fees
- Work with residents on payment plans
- Take other steps to help residents who have been economically impacted or otherwise affected by COVID-19

A notice to vacate is the first step in the eviction process and is required under state law before any eviction case can be filed with a Justice of the Peace court. After it is issued, the court will schedule a hearing to consider facts in the case. Courts may accept these filings during this time but will not schedule hearings or act on them until after the Texas Supreme Court moratorium ends on April 30. There could be further eviction trial delays for properties covered by the federal CARES Act or certain cities that have enacted ordinances affecting the eviction process.

Q.4 WHAT IF I CAN'T PAY MY UTILITY BILLS DURING THIS TIME?

Many utility providers are waiving late fees, reducing down payments, and extending due dates for payments. Your bills will continue to accrue, but your services will not be disrupted. Please be sure to check with your utility to provider on options they are offering at this time.

Q.5 WHAT IF I'VE LOST MY JOB AND NEED TO FILE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT?

The CARES Act (federal legislation) includes provisions to enhance and expand eligibility for unemployment benefits. [Apply for state unemployment benefits Online here.](#)

The CARES Act:

- Adds \$600 per week for four months on top of existing state unemployment benefits.
- Adds up to 13 weeks of additional unemployment benefits to those already enrolled but who are nearing the end of benefits.
- Expands the program to include a number of workers not normally eligible to receive unemployment benefits. This includes:
 - o Freelancers
 - o Independent contractors/gig workers
 - o Self-employed
 - o Those with limited work history
 - o Employees who are still employed, but whose hours have been reduced

Q.6 WHAT ACCESS IS THERE TO AMENITIES AND RESIDENT SERVICES?

During this crisis, rental communities are following CDC recommendations to practice social distancing and take measures to limit spread of the virus.

As a result, your property may:

- Close select or all amenities
- Ask you to pay rent Online
- Close office to non-employees
- Limit repairs to emergency situations only

Our goal is to keep our residents safe, and implementing these measures helps us protect you and the employees who work on-site at the property.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONT.

Q.7 WHERE CAN I LEARN ABOUT RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS?

Please see the resources section for a list of organizations that offer rental assistance. Many community non-profits also offer emergency financial assistance with additional needs, including utility or medical bills.

Q.8 WHAT IF I HAVE TO SELF-ISOLATE IN MY APARTMENT?

To avoid unnecessary contact, or maintenance staff entering your unit, consider notifying the management that you are undergoing self-isolation or quarantine.

- Avoid close contact with other people and pets.
- Maintain respiratory hygiene (use tissues, cover your mouth when sneezing or coughing).
- Keep your apartment clean and organized to maintain a healthy environment. Clean regularly and sanitize often using items like Lysol spray and Clorox wipes on “high touch” surfaces including countertops, tabletops, door-knobs, nightstands, bathroom fixtures, toilets, refrigerator handles, kitchen faucets, light switches, TV remotes, cell phones, computer keyboards and tablets.
- Do not leave your unit unless it’s an emergency. Do not use common areas.
- Postpone non-essential maintenance requests.

Q.9 WHAT IF I HAVE TO MOVE/APARTMENT HUNT DURING THE PANDEMIC?

- Practice basic prevention—Take the usual precautionary measures, including not shaking hands, washing your hands after your visit is concluded, not touching your face and not touching surfaces, especially in common areas. Use hand sanitizer.
- Consider virtual tours
- Inquire about safety measures in place—Apartment communities are incorporating additional measures during this outbreak, such as deep-cleaning and disinfecting high-traffic surfaces. They may have closed or limited access to common rooms, gyms and laundry rooms. They may be stationing hand-sanitizer around the building. Finally, inquire how was the unit you plan to rent sanitized.
- Vet your moving/van rental company—Before scheduling your move, inquire what sanitation procedures your moving company has in place. Ask for movers to wear gloves to avoid contaminating your belongings. Alternately, consider moving your belongings yourself to minimize exposure, but make sure to inquire about sanitation procedures your moving van rental company has in place.