

Kansas Creates Rental Aid Program to Help Reduce Evictions, Pay Landlords

By: Megan Stringer, Wichita Eagle

Kansans who might have trouble paying their rent because of financial difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic can now apply for up to \$5,000 in rental assistance from the state.

Gov. Laura Kelly announced the Kansas Eviction Prevention Program last month. The state allocated about \$35 million in federal funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES, Act in attempt to reduce evictions across the state.



“Keeping Kansans in their homes and businesses has been a top priority for my administration since the pandemic began,” Kelly said in a statement. “Through this program, we will provide support to tenants and landlords experiencing pandemic-related financial stress, ensure families and businesses stay put, and keep Kansans safe and healthy.”

Landlords and tenants can apply for the funding through a joint online process at kshousingcorp.org. Applicants who are approved will receive no more than nine months worth of assistance and \$5,000 per household.

The program funds are limited, according to the governor’s office. The state will process applications in the order it receives them until assistance runs out.

If the state approves an application, it will offer the assistance directly to the landlord, who would then apply the payment to the tenant’s account and waive any late fees for that month, according to the program website.

Other eligibility requirements include:

- Renters missed one or more payments since April 1 in relation to the coronavirus pandemic
- Tenants must demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on their employment or income
- Tenants’ household income is at or below 85 percent of the state median income, or \$63,920 for a household of four
- Neither the renter nor the landlord received monthly rental assistance from another organization for the same month in which they requested state aid

Kansas Creates Rental Aid Program to Help Reduce Evictions, Pay Landlords *Continued*

The state office overseeing COVID-19 recovery efforts in Kansas recommended the program, which the State Finance Council approved. The Kansas Housing Resources Corporation will administer the details of the funds.

“As more Kansans are doing online learning and teleworking, being able to stay in your home has never been more important,” said Ryan Vincent, executive director of the state housing resources agency, in a statement.

Advocates across the country have raised concern that evictions will be on the rise this fall, after expanded \$600 unemployment benefits and a federal eviction ban expired at the end of July. Kansas has since enacted an extra \$300 in unemployment payments that applicants receive retroactively for about a month.

A state moratorium on evictions in Kansas expired at the end of May. Kelly briefly reinstated that ban for two weeks in August and called on Congress to act to provide more relief funding for people experiencing financial hardship during the pandemic.

Various organizations in Sedgwick County offer rental assistance as well. Contact the Center of Hope, Wichita Sedgwick County Community Action Partnership or United Way of the Plains for details.

More information on the program, application and eligibility is available online at kshousingcorp.org/eviction-prevention-program.

Educate Maintenance Staff About Reasonable Modification Requests

By: Fair Housing Institute



Apartment maintenance staff may receive reasonable modification requests because of their direct contact with residents. Therefore, it's important that they are educated on how to respond to such requests.

Residents may discuss their needs for reasonable accommodations or modifications with maintenance employees prior to mentioning their needs to anyone in leasing or management. For example, if a maintenance

employee is in a resident's apartment fixing the sink, the resident may tell the employee that she is having difficulty using her shower and needs a grab bar installed as soon as possible.

Understandably, a helpful maintenance employee may offer to immediately take care of it without even mentioning it to the office staff.

Management should have a reasonable accommodation/modification policy in effect describing the appropriate process that this type of request should follow. The first question is whether this request by the resident is merely a work order or a request for a modification because of the resident's disability. If this is a request because of a disability, then the next question is: Who pays for this modification?

Educate Maintenance Staff About Reasonable Modification Requests

Continued

Many management companies of conventional properties have a policy that management will install and pay for a modification that costs less than a specified amount (i.e., \$200). If so, then this request would merely need to be put in writing and completed.

The important part of the process is getting the documentation of the request and keeping a record that the reasonable modification was completed. The process should require the resident to put the request in writing, either in the form of a work request or on a reasonable modification request form. When a modification request is communicated to a maintenance employee, he/she needs to inform the office of the request so the office can follow up.

There are a large number of possible requests for reasonable modifications. Through role-playing, in-house training and online training, apartment maintenance employees should be educated to recognize the kinds of requests that may be related to disabilities and to give the proper response. Obviously, it's better to be prepared for the inevitable reasonable modification request and ensure that maintenance employees will respond appropriately than to wait for a costly mistake to occur.

A guide to Kansas elections: What to know about Bollier, Marshall and the US House races *By: KC Star Staff and KCUR*

Kansas and Missouri voters — those who haven't already voted by mail — will face a long list of decisions Tuesday. Kansans will pick a new U.S. Senator and Missourians, a governor. All 12 of the states' U.S. House seats are on the ballot, along with state lawmakers, county commissioners and prosecutors.

To help you out, we've put together this election guide for Kansas.



WHEN: Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Kansas. If you're in line at closing time, you're entitled to vote.

WHERE: In Kansas, you can go to [VoterView](#) at the Kansas Secretary of State site to find your polling place.

WHAT: You'll need government-issued ID no matter where you vote. Check [here for details in Kansas](#). If you come to the polls without proper ID, the state has procedures for casting provisional ballots that will allow you time to produce a valid ID.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR KANSAS ELECTIONS:

Washington, D.C., or Topeka: No matter the seat of power, you deserve to know who is on the ballot and what their views are.

A guide to Kansas elections: What to know about Bollier, Marshall and the US House races *Continued*

U.S. Senate: Doctor vs. Doctor

Democrat Barbara Bollier is a state senator (who left the Republican Party in 2018) from the ritzy Kansas City suburb of Mission Hills. She's also a retired anesthesiologist.

Republican U.S. Rep. Roger Marshall has spent two terms in Congress for the vast 1st District. He's a retired obstetrician from Great Bend. Find out [how the candidates feel about President Donald Trump and economic issues](#), and where they stand on [pressing health care issues](#) — including the coronavirus. We also talked with voters about [cultural issues](#). And if you're looking for a quick comparison, just [go here](#).



1st Congressional District: Battle for Farm Country

The Big First values its seat at the table in the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, which is instrumental in the every-five-year farm bill. So it's little surprise two people with farming backgrounds are vying to replace Marshall.

Democrat Kali Barnett is a music teacher in Garden City. Republican Tracey Mann was the former lieutenant governor during the short-lived Jeff Colyer administration. [Learn more about their platforms here](#).



2nd Congressional District: GOP's Young Gun vs. Topeka's Mayor

The seat for this district, which includes Lawrence and Topeka, came open when incumbent Steve Watkins lost his primary.

For the Democrats, there's Topeka Mayor Michelle De La Isla, who lived in New York City and Puerto Rico before moving to Kansas. For Republicans, 32-year-old Treasurer Jake LaTurner is seen as a rising star. [Find out more about their thoughts on major issues](#).



3rd Congressional District: Battle For The Suburbs

Democratic U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids took over this largely suburban Kansas City district in 2018, and has mostly hewed to a moderate stance in Washington. Former Cerner executive and ex-state GOP head Amanda Adkins emerged from a crowded primary.

The coronavirus forced [both of them to address health care](#) this year, and we [compared their stances](#) on what else is at stake.



A guide to Kansas elections: What to know about Bollier, Marshall and the US House races *Continued*

4th Congressional District: The Establishment vs. The Newbie

Republican Ron Estes replaced now-U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in this district in 2017, and he's now looking for his second full term. He's up against Democrat Laura Lombard, a political newcomer, but someone well-versed in the world of government contracting.

[Here's a full breakdown](#) of this race.



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