



An Update from the GBAA on The Alabama Rent Relief Fund



Emergency Rental Assistance Alabama

LANDLORDS: Are some of your tenants behind on their rent?

RENTERS: Can't pay rent or utility bills?

Emergency Rental Assistance Alabama is here to help. COVID-19 has affected residents across the state. We have emergency funds available to help Alabama renters pay rent and utility bills (including past due rent and utilities).

The online and phone system opens for applications from landlords and tenants on March 1, 2021 at 8 a.m. Central Time.

Both landlords and tenants can use this website to create an account and submit their application. If you need assistance completing an application, our customer service staff can complete the application with you by phone by calling 1-833-620-2434 (toll free).

Emergency Rental Assistance Alabama can help renters with the following costs starting as far back as March 13, 2020 (this means you could potentially request assistance for up to 11 months of past due bills):

- Past due, current and up to 3 months of expected rent costs
- Past due, current or up to 3 months of expected utility and home energy expenses
- After the initial 3 months of forward assistance, you can apply for 3 additional months of assistance if funds are still available

Landlord Application

For Landlords applying for unpaid or future rent on behalf of tenants:

- All payments must be used to satisfy the tenant's rental obligations.
- The tenant must sign the application.

What can I do before March 1st to get ready?

- Identify which units and households you think qualify.
- Reach out to your tenants with language barriers or tenants with disabilities to make them aware of the program.
- Confirm that the households you have identified meet the eligibility criteria noted below, gather documentation for the household and have it scanned and ready.
- Seek the household's signature for the application and have it scanned and ready

Tenant Application

For households applying directly for unpaid or future rent or utilities: If your landlord is willing to participate, you can either apply directly and the system will prompt your landlord for information, or you can work with your landlord to apply on your behalf using the LANDLORD application.

What can I do before March 1st to get ready?

- Look at the "Do I Qualify?" list below and see if your household qualifies.
- Gather your required documents.
- See if you are in a priority group and, if so, be sure to plan to apply, or contact the call center to have them help you apply, BEFORE March 15.
- Reach out to your neighbors to let them know about the program, too.
- Let your landlord know you are planning to apply and they will need to sign off, too.

Payments

All payments will be made directly to the landlord and/or utility provider unless they do not agree to accept the payment. If they do not accept payment, the payment will be made directly to the tenant AFTER 21 days of outreach to the landlord and/or utility provider to confirm their refusal.

Do I Qualify

- Households must have income at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), as defined by AHFA.
- AND One or more of the tenant household members have:
 - Qualified for unemployment benefits; OR
- Attest in writing that due to or during the pandemic, they:
 - Experienced a reduction in household income,
 - Incurred significant costs, or
 - Experienced financial hardship

- AND Households must also demonstrate they:
 - Are at risk of homelessness or housing instability by providing an eviction notice or past-due utility or rent notice;
OR
 - Live in unsafe or unhealthy housing conditions
- The unit you are renting must be your primary residence and be located within the State of Alabama.
- Any unpaid rent or utility bills you apply for can go no further back than March 13, 2020.

Prioritization

For all applications received by March 15th, AHFA will first review and commit funds to applicants who meet one of the two priority groups below:

- Have incomes at or below 50% Area Median Income, OR
- Households where one or more household members are unemployed as of the date you apply for assistance, AND one or more household members (this can be the same household member) were unemployed for 90 days prior to the date you apply for assistance.

Legal Disclaimers

- Falsification of documents or any material falsehoods or omissions in an Application to this program, including knowingly seeking duplicative benefits, is subject to state and federal criminal penalties. Landlords and tenants are particularly put on notice that 18 U.S.C. §1001 provides, among other things, that whoever knowingly and willingly makes or uses a document or writing containing any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or entry, in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of the United States will be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned for not more than five years, or both.
- This program has specific eligibility requirements and not all households may be eligible
- Funds may not still be available by the time a household applies
- Other program limitations may also apply – please see www.ERAAlabama.com for details.

Questions?

Call Center

1-833-620-2434

Monday-Friday

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. CST

Help is available in multiple languages

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