



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Urges Spanish- and Chinese-speaking Pennsylvanians to Apply for Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Human Services (DHS) joined officials from the Governor's Latino and Asian Pacific American Affairs Commissions to share information on the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) with Spanish- and Chinese-speaking Pennsylvanians and to urge all Pennsylvanians at risk of eviction or utility shutoffs because of COVID-19 to apply for assistance. ERAP can help people who are facing eviction pay past due and upcoming rent or pay utility bills or other costs necessary to help them be safely housed.

“ERAP is an unprecedented investment in the stability, well-being, and economic recovery of Pennsylvanians facing housing instability as a result of the pandemic. ERAP makes evictions preventable, and our goal is to share this information with every Pennsylvanian who could potentially benefit – including Pennsylvanians who do not speak English as their primary or preferred language,” said Kathy Possinger, Special Advisor to the Secretary, Department of Human Services. “Evictions should be an absolute last resort. Rental assistance is available to all eligible Pennsylvania households regardless of citizenship or immigration status. I urge people to take advantage of the help that is available and apply for ERAP now.”

“I cannot over-emphasize how important it is to help our communities and to continue to bridge the gap of services and opportunities to help serve those that are facing financial disparity due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Luz Colon, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Latino Affairs. “I’m confident through the partnership with our stakeholders and the Department of Human Services, we will accomplish our goal in reaching our communities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.”

“Housing is one of the most bottom-line needs for people’s sense of security and belonging. Pennsylvania is home for all its residents, and ERAP is here to help. Housing services and assistance should be equitable for everyone, regardless of their skin color, language, or citizenship or immigration status,” said Stephanie Sun, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs. “We appreciate that the ERAP application form has been translated into 6 languages, including 5 commonly-used languages in the Asian Pacific American community in Pennsylvania, and more language versions are being explored. The Governor’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs is working closely with the Department of Human Services and stakeholders and is supporting with community outreach and engagement to make sure ERAP is accessible and helpful for diverse community members, especially vulnerable populations with low English proficiency.”

Tenants can apply for assistance directly, and landlords can apply for this assistance on behalf of eligible tenants. Pennsylvanians can learn how to apply in their county of residence online at www.dhs.pa.gov/ERAP. Applications are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Cambodian, Russian, and Vietnamese. All county ERAP agencies have the ability to provide language services to anyone with limited English proficiency.

Applicants do not need to know their eligibility in order to apply for ERAP. County ERAP administrators will work to determine eligibility as quickly as possible. An applicant's citizenship or immigration status is not relevant to eligibility determination, and applicants are not required to disclose their citizenship or immigration status in order for their application to be processed.

To qualify for assistance, a household must be responsible to pay rent on a residential property and meet each of the following criteria:

- One or more people within the household has qualified for unemployment benefits, had a decrease in income, had increased household costs, or experienced other financial hardship during or due directly or indirectly to the COVID-19 pandemic; AND
- One or more individuals in the household can show a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability; AND
- The household has an income at or below 80 percent of area median income, which varies by county. [Income limits by county are available on the DHS website](#). Resources (like bank accounts and cars) are not relevant to ERAP eligibility.

Households may be eligible for up to 18 months of assistance to cover past-due or future rental and/or utility payments. The amount of a household's monthly rent or utility bills does not preclude eligibility, but the amount of ERAP assistance provided to a household is determined by program administrators at the county level. Assistance can be provided to a tenant for future rental payments, and for unpaid rental or utility arrears that were accrued on or after March 13, 2020, on a residential rental property.

Applicants will need to provide the following information: head of household's personal information; income information for all household members 18 and older; rental lease and amount owed; landlord's name and contact information. If applying for utility assistance, applicants must provide utility expenses and utility provider information. While an applicant must provide a form of identification in order to apply, a specific form of government-issued identification, like a social security number, is not required. All income and residency information on the application is confidential.

A tenant does not need a landlord's permission to apply and use this assistance, but landlords and tenants are strongly encouraged to work cooperatively to secure this stabilizing assistance. If a rental lease is not formally documented by an applicant or their landlord, a statement from the landlord is acceptable as proof of rental agreement, and ERAP administrators will work with landlords to obtain the relevant documentation needed.

For more information on ERAP, including a media kit and promotional materials in English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Cambodian, Russian, and Vietnamese can be found [here](#). For more information on state allocation program data and information on how to apply, visit www.dhs.pa.gov/erap.

NOTE: Video of this press conference for use in coverage of ERAP, including statements in Spanish and Mandarin Chinese, and are available to download [here](#).

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