

Chester County Emergency Rent and Utility Assistance Program (ERAP)

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated June 10, 2021

Q: How long does it take to receive payment after an application is approved?

A: Once an application is approved, it will take two to three weeks for payment.

Q: What are the eligibility criteria for the ERAP program?

A: This program serves individuals and families that are obligated to pay rent and meet the following three criteria:

- Qualify for unemployment or have experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship during or due, directly or indirectly, to COVID-19.
- Demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- Have a household income at or below 80 percent of the area median (income limits are subject to change per guidance from the federal government).

Q: The ERAP guidelines require households to be at or below 80% of area median income. How do I find the income limits?

A: The limits, which are subject to change based on guidance from the federal government for the entire Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical area, are posted at <https://chesco.org/DocumentCenter/View/17974>.

Q: How do I access this program?

A: Contact 2-1-1 and navigate the menu to select:

- 2 for Homelessness and Housing Crisis
- 2 for Chester County
- 2 for Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Q: I plan to contact 2-1-1 for referral to a provider for this program. Is there anything I can prepare for my application?

A: Please refer to the [ERAP Applicant checklist \(lista de verificación del solicitante\)](#) for a list of documentation that you can begin organizing.

Q: Who are the providers administering this program in Chester County?

A: They include:

- Friends Association
- Housing Authority of Chester County
- Human Services Inc.
- Open Hearth Inc.
- Oxford Area Neighborhood Services Center

Q: How many months of rent and utility assistance payments can be reimbursed?

A: Eligible individuals and households are eligible for up to 15 months of ERAP assistance.

Q: Is there a maximum amount of financial assistance that can be received?

A: No.

Q: I have many months of back rent and utility payments. How far back can this program address reimburse past due payments?

A: The ERAP payments can reimburse past due notices back to March 2020.

Q: What utilities are eligible for reimbursement?

A: The following utilities may be reimbursed if they are paid by the tenant:

- Electric
- Gas
- Sewer
- Water
- Fuel (Propane or Oil)
- Trash

Q: I received rental assistance from CARES funding in 2020. Am I still eligible for this program?

A: As long as you meet ERAP eligibility requirements and the previous rent or utility assistance does not duplicate any earlier rent or utility payments from the CARES or other relief programs, you may be qualify for benefits.

Q: Are homeowners eligible for ERAP assistance?

A: No, but the American Rescue Plan Act provides homeowner assistance. Please monitor updates from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency for homeowner relief.

Q: Do you have to be a U.S. citizen to receive rent and utility assistance?

A: No, there are not citizenship requirements.

Q: Does the program have Spanish-speaking staff?

A: Yes.

Q: I have questions about the status of my application. Whom should I contact?

A: Please contact the provider that received your application. If you do not receive a response within two weeks or ten business days, send an email to ccdcd@chesco.org with the following information:

- Your name
- Phone and email address
- Name of provider you are working with
- Date of application submission
- Last date of contact with your provider

Q: Will payments be made directly to the approved individuals or households?

A: No, payments will be made to property owners/landlords and utility providers.

Q: Can a property owner/landlord call 2-1-1 directly to receive rental assistance?

A: No, however a property owner/landlord and a tenant can make the call together.

Q: Are there prioritization criteria for assisting eligible households?

A: DCD grantees shall provide priority of assistance to eligible applicants including:

- Households with individual(s) that have been unemployed for the 90 days prior to application for assistance and households with income at or below 50 percent of the area median.
- Households with housing- and utility-related arrears that could result in imminent eviction or utility shut-off.