



Maricopa County Human Services Department

Maricopa County Emergency Rental Assistance

Maricopa County typically provides approximately \$5 – 6 million in rent and utility assistance annually through a network of ten local Community Action Programs. In response to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors has approved the use of three separate funding streams for rent and utility assistance totaling almost \$120 million.

From July 15 through December 31, 2020, \$27 million of CARES Act funds were used to assist over 6,100 households with 18,000 months of rental assistance paid to landlords.

Beginning April 1, 2021, the County began providing \$41.6 million of federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) 1.0, which includes both rent and utilities.

This Fall, the County will provide an additional \$40 - \$50 million of ERA 2.0 funding for rent and utility assistance.

Federal ERA 1.0 Program

The federal ERA 1.0 program required significantly more eligibility documentation and verification than that of previous CARES funds rental assistance services. Over the past eight months, the Treasury Department has increasingly provided greater flexibility. Understanding the urgency of the community need, the County has continuously improved the efficiency of the ERA 1.0 program administration by implementing the following measures:

- Increased use of applicant attestation and declaration of their COVID impact;
- Allowing income eligibility to be determined using applicant eligibility for other federal programs (e.g. SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, etc.);
- Using the Qualified Census Tracts areas of high poverty concentration to serve as a proxy for income eligibility;
- Reducing the number of quality assurance checks to focus on the most critical and highest error items;
- Established a central customer assistance unit and significantly increasing the number of staff processing applications;
- Completed outreach and assisted applicants who did not complete their initial application; and
- Provided funds for legal information and assistance in eviction cases.

Federal ERA 1.0 Program Eligibility Criteria & Prioritization

Qualifying households may receive up to fifteen (15) months (including retroactive payments) of rental and utility assistance payments for past due, owed, or future months. Utility assistance is available for electric, gas, water, sewer, and trash utilities. To qualify for assistance households must:

- Live in Maricopa County, but not in the cities of Chandler, Gilbert, Glendale, Mesa, or Phoenix; and
- Since March 13th 2020, a household member has qualified for Unemployment Insurance from the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) **OR** the household is experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and
- Household demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability; and
- Household is living at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (\$56,900 for a household of 3).

According to federal guidelines, applications for assistance are prioritized using the following criteria:

- Households living at or below 50% of the Area Median Income (\$35,550 for a household of 3).
 - Households with one or more members that have been unemployed for the past 90 days at time of application and living at or below 80% of the Area Median Income.
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ERA 1.0 Activity Report: March 19 – October 15, 2021

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| Unique households submitted a completed application | 11,214 |
| Unique households submitted a completed utility assistance application | 8,847 |
| Unique households submitted a completed rental assistance application | 8,297 |
| Unduplicated Households Assisted (Paid and Pending) | 4,893 |
| Months of Utility Assistance Provided | 26,896 |
| Months of Rental Assistance Provided | 25,420 |
| Average Utility Assistance Payment per Household | \$ 1,290 |
| Average Rental Assistance Payment per Household | \$ 7,300 |
| Total Utility Assistance Payments | \$ 4,235,987 |
| Total Rental Assistance Payments | \$ 32,459,791 |
| Total Funds Committed (Paid and Pending) | \$ 36,705,779 |