

ARKANSAS COVID-19 FRESH START HOUSING STABILIZATION PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Fresh Start Program?

The Arkansas Fresh Start program will provide rent payment assistance for Arkansans who have fallen behind on their rent due to the health and economic impacts caused by the Coronavirus. It will also help landlords who have lost revenue due to the inability of tenants to stay current on their rent payments.

The program is designed to help renters and landlords benefit from the moratorium on evictions enacted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

When can renters apply for help?

The program is expected to start in early November.

How long will the program be open?

The program will last as long as funds are available in each county. Assistance is available on a first come, first served basis.

How is the program being funded?

Some of the funds are federal CARES Act funds which are coming through the Arkansas State Legislature and Governor Asa Hutchinson's office. Additional funding is being provided by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission through the Community Development Block Grant.

Who is offering the program?

The network of Arkansas Community Action Agencies will be offering the assistance. Information about local agencies will be posted at this website when the program opens.

How much assistance can I receive?

Eligible applicants may receive benefits of up to 2.5 months of rent. The amount of monthly rent assistance shall not exceed the fair market rental value ("FMRV") as

determined by Housing & Urban Development (HUD) for the dwelling occupied by the applicant.

Does my landlord have to do anything for me to participate?

Yes, your landlord must sign an agreement to accept payment and to comply with other program requirements regarding not evicting tenants for nonpayment of rent while the CDC moratorium is in effect.

Who receives the rent payment—does it come to me or to my landlord?

Benefits may only be paid directly to landlords of those applying for assistance.

Who is eligible for assistance?

To qualify for assistance under the program, applicants must meet each of the following criteria:

- Be a full-time Arkansas resident.
- Be a renter with an income at or below 80% of the area median income as determined by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For instance, a family of 3 can earn up to \$43,900.
- Either have an eligible rent expense that was incurred on or after March 18, 2020, that is past due or a notice of pending eviction, or have been evicted within the previous thirty (30) days.
- Complete the CDC Moratorium Declaration stating that they are unable to make rent payment(s) owed because of the public health emergency due to unemployment, illness, or another COVID-19 related issue, as outlined in the CDC Moratorium Declaration.

What if I owe more than 2.5 months of rent?

If the amount of assistance provided by the Fresh Start Program is less than the total amount owed to the landlord, the tenant will have to agree to continue making efforts to pay that balance, as well as future rent owed.

What if I'm in the process of being evicted?

If any applicant has already received a notice of eviction, benefits under the Fresh Start Program will provide an amount up to one month's rent as necessary to pay a security deposit at a new dwelling, and 1.5 months of rent for the new dwelling. The new landlord must agree to accept payment from the program.

Applicants for this assistance—the security deposit and 1.5 months of rent—will be required to:

- a. have been evicted within the previous 30 days,
- b. be currently homeless or staying with family or friends due to having no other housing options,
- c. provide a statement from the new landlord agreeing to rent to the tenant and accept payment from the program, and
- d. complete the [CDC Eviction Moratorium Declaration](#).

What other rental assistance might I qualify for?

There are other agencies throughout Arkansas that provide rental assistance. [Download the list](#) (sorted by county) to learn more.

What documents will I need to apply for assistance?

- One form of ID for the applicant – Driver’s license; state- or city-issued ID card; Social Security card; ITIN document from IRS; utility, doctor, or auto insurance bill showing name and address of applicant; property tax payment receipt; automobile registration; Consular ID; U.S. or foreign passport.
- Information about your past due rent – late notices from landlord; number of months and amount owed — and/or eviction notice.
- Copy of your lease or rental agreement, or rent receipts.
- Proof of gross income for all adults in the household for the month before you are submitting this application (self-declaration accepted, when applicable).
- Basic demographic information for all household members (name, relationship to applicant, DOB, race/ethnicity, employment status, disability status, and education level).
- Signed CDC Moratorium Declaration — download a copy [here](#).
- Landlord contact information – name, address, phone number(s), email address.
- A Landlord Form will be required from an applicant’s landlord. After an applicant has been assigned a caseworker, the caseworker will send the applicant’s landlord the Landlord Form for completion. A landlord must agree to accept payment from the Arkansas Fresh Start program and other stipulations as outline on the Landlord Form. If a landlord declines to sign the Landlord Form, the application will be denied. An applicant who is subsequently evicted can reapply for assistance after finding a new residence.