



Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 – Rental Assistance Program
Updated 07-01-20

What is the Rental Assistance Program?

The Rental Assistance Program is part of the City of Tacoma's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is for Tacoma households who have experienced loss of employment or reduction in wage due to COVID-19 and are at or below 50% Area Median Income for Pierce County. Qualifying households are eligible to receive a one-time award of up to \$1,000 per household, which is paid directly to the landlord.

Why did the City establish a Rental Assistance Program in response to COVID-19?

The Rental Assistance Program is part of the City of Tacoma's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is intended to help stabilize individuals and families who are experiencing economic hardship because of COVID-19 impacts and cannot afford part or all of their rent.

Who is eligible for the Rental Assistance Program?

To apply for the program participants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Households located in the Tacoma city limits
- Households who have experienced loss of employment or reduction in wage due to COVID-19.
- Households at or below 50% Area Median Income for Pierce County

Landlords with mortgages from the Federal Housing Administration, Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac will not be eligible to receive payment under this program.

Are undocumented individuals eligible for the City's Rental Assistance Program?

Anyone who is able to demonstrate that they meet the requirements for the program is eligible. Those requirements are:

- Households located in the Tacoma city limits
- Households who have experienced loss of employment or reduction in wage due to COVID-19.
- Households at or below 50% Area Median Income for Pierce County

In keeping with the City's Welcoming Cities Policy, we will not be tracking or providing information to Immigration and Customs Enforcement about immigration or citizenship status.

How do you apply for the Rental Assistance Program?

People interested in applying for funds should visit www.cityoftacoma.org/covidrent to submit an online application. Funding will be awarded on a lottery basis. The application will be open for one week and closes on July 15, 2020. After that time, we will process the applications we have received and open for additional rounds if funding allows.

Some funds have also been set aside for direct referrals by community agencies that are helping to address inequities faced by people of color in our community. If you are a service provider that would like to make a direct referral, please contact LASA at communityengagement@lasawa.org.

For people requesting special accommodations for language barriers or trouble accessing the online link, please call 253-582-5230 Monday through Friday from 10am – noon.

Why is the City using a lottery system for the distribution of funding?

The City recognizes that people may have varying schedules that allow them to access the application at differing times of day, in order to allow all members of our community access to this opportunity we have chosen a lottery approach over a ‘first come, first served’ approach.

Why did the City designate at least 45 percent of the funding for individuals and families of color?

While we recognize COVID-19 is affecting all people, we also know that people of color are disproportionately represented in our populations that experience homelessness and household instability, and are being disproportionately impacted by the virus and the economic stress the virus is causing.

The decision is supported by data from the SPARC (Supporting Anti-Racist Communities) report on persons experiencing homelessness in Pierce County, which shows that 26.3% of individuals in the HMIS system identify as black or African American and 16.6% identify as multi-racial (a total of 42.9%); and recently released data from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, that shows 14.6% of cases of COVID-19 are individuals identifying as Hispanic and 4.7% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, both disproportionate representations considering the percent of the Pierce County population.

How much money was allocated for the Rental Housing Program?

The program is funded from the housing trust fund, which has redirected \$1.2 million to respond to COVID-19 to help build community resiliency and stabilize households.