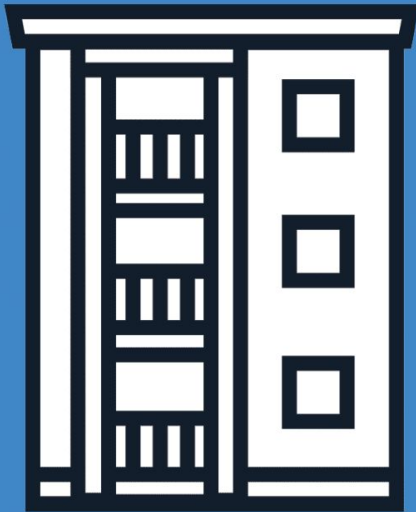


CITY OF BOSTON: RENTAL RELIEF FUND



RENTAL RELIEF FUND

Supports Bostonians at risk of losing their rental housing due to COVID-19.

To learn more about eligibility and how to apply, visit boston.gov/rental-relief

*Mayor Walsh established the Rental Relief Fund to help Bostonians at risk of losing their rental housing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This fund is administered and managed by the Office of Housing Stability (OHS) in partnership with nonprofit housing agencies, and **opened for new applications on October 19, 2020.***

What does the Rental Relief Fund do?

The Rental Relief Fund assists City of Boston residents who are experiencing difficulty paying their rent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It pays up to \$4,000 in rental assistance for overdue or future rent.

Rental payments are sent directly to landlords by one of the fund's three partner agencies. Please use this application to apply. If you encounter difficulty completing the online form, please contact the Office of Housing Stability to complete via phone.

Who is eligible to receive rental assistance?

Applicants must:

- be a resident of the City of Boston and have rented a unit on or before March 1, 2020,
- be economically impacted by COVID-19,
- be at risk of eviction
- not be a recipient of mobile or project based voucher
- not be a full-time student, and
- Have a verified household income at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is this program for?

The City of Boston Rental Relief Fund is designed for income eligible renters in Boston who have been economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and need help paying their rent. Qualified residents will earn less than 80% of [Area Median Income \(AMI\)](#) annually, which is approximately \$73,000 for a two person household.

What counts as being economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Economic impact due to COVID 19 includes:

- Losing your income due to a shut down of employer operations
- Working fewer hours due to employer reduction
- Loss of childcare and/or school closures due to COVID-19
- Job loss because of increased risk to COVID-19
- Job loss because of caring for an ill or quarantined family member with COVID-19

How is this program funded?

The City of Boston and the Department of Neighborhood Development are using federal funds for the Rental Relief Fund.

How can residents utilize these funds?

Eligible households can receive up to \$4,000 to preserve their tenancies or access new permanent housing in the City of Boston by paying at least a portion of their first and last month's rent and security deposit.

How does assistance get distributed?

Due to federal requirements, payments made through the Rental Relief Fund will be made directly to your landlord on behalf of the tenant. Both parties will be notified once the payment is made.

If I apply for assistance, am I guaranteed to receive it?

No. We anticipate that we will receive many applications for the Rental Relief Fund. Unfortunately not every applicant will receive assistance. We have a limited amount of funding available at this time and will issue payments until funding is exhausted.

How do you decide who gets assistance?

Applications will undergo a preliminary review after they are submitted. Following this initial check for eligibility and complete materials, applications will undergo a final verification with one of the fund's three partner agencies. During the final verification process, staff at partner agencies will verify AMI eligibility, conduct a calculation of need, and request required documentation from the applicant's landlord/property manager.

What documentation will I need to provide?

- Copy of signed lease or tenant agreement (Sample tenant agreement available [here](#))
- Photo documentation for the head of household
- Documentation of unemployment benefits (if applicable)

I live in public housing or receive a Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8). Am I eligible?

No, recipients of the Housing Choice Voucher program are not eligible. Please reach out to the Boston Housing Authority to do a recertification if you have lost income due to COVID-19.

I live in a LITHC sponsored rent restricted affordable housing unit. Am I eligible?

Yes, applicants who live in designated affordable housing are eligible as long as they do not receive a federal rent subsidy such as a Housing Choice Voucher.

One or more of my family members is undocumented. Am I eligible?

Yes, you are eligible. Immigration status does not affect eligibility.

What about residents that don't meet the criteria for the Rental Relief Fund?

We know we cannot help every resident in the City of Boston impacted by COVID-19. The staff at the Office of Housing Stability are ready to help residents find other sources of funding or support from the state and federal government, or local and national nonprofits. Please call the Office of Housing Stability at 617-635-4200 or email housingstability@boston.gov.

What if I received notification that I am not eligible, but I believe that I am?

Your notification email will include an overview of the documentation you can provide to verify eligibility. Please submit these verification documents to the Office of Housing Stability (email: RRF@boston.gov) within 5 days of receiving the notification that you were ineligible.

What legal protections are in place for tenants impacted by COVID-19 related events?

While there is currently no law suspending rent payments, on April 20th Governor Baker signed "An Act Providing a Moratorium on Evictions and Foreclosures during the COVID-19 Emergency." This law placed a moratorium on filing or the completion of any non-essential evictions and was extended until October 17, 2020. Please be advised that you are required to notify your landlord in writing if you are unable to pay rent due to loss of income from COVID-19.

Further, the CDC has issued a federal eviction moratorium for which you may qualify. More information and the required declaration form that invokes the order can be found [here](#).

If you have received a legal notice from your landlord asking you to vacate your rental unit, please visit this [website](#) for more information on how to timely respond.



We are also working with our nonprofit partners and advocates, including Greater Boston Legal Services, to develop a plan to support households once the State of Emergency is lifted. We continue to lobby the legislature to support the Right to Counsel in Eviction Cases and An Act to Protect Elderly Tenants bills currently pending on Beacon Hill. OHS is committed to ensuring that City of Boston tenants have access to all of the legal resources available and encourage tenants to contact our office at 617-635-4200 or email housingstability@boston.gov with any questions.

I have lost my job due to COVID-19, how do I apply for unemployment benefits?

If you have not yet applied for unemployment assistance, please visit the Mass.Gov site for [Important Employment Information](#) to apply. The fastest way is to apply online, but if you need assistance, you can also fill out the contact form [here](#) or call 617-626-6800 or 877-626-6800 (Spanish and Portuguese assistance available). There is also a [step-by-step guide](#) on how to apply. In this [FAQs for Job Seekers](#), you can find out more about the expansion of unemployment benefits through the CARES Act to cover the self-employed, independent contractors, “gig” workers (i.e. car-share drivers) and others.

Is rental assistance from the Rental Relief Fund considered a benefit by the public charge test?

No, the Rental Relief Fund is not considered in the federal “public charge” test. Assistance from the Rental Relief Fund is not one of the “cash” or “non-cash” benefits listed in the public charge rule.

The Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Advancement has a guide of resources regardless of immigration status at boston.gov/immigrants. We also encourage residents with concerns about the public charge test to connect with Greater Boston Legal Services at 617-371-1234 and MA Law Reform Institute at 617-357-0700.