

Gov. Pritzker Announces \$1.5 Billion in Housing Assistance for Illinois Renters and Landlords Hit Hardest by COVID-19

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CHICAGO – After leading the nation in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, in ensuring the state’s most vulnerable residents had a roof over their head, Governor JB Pritzker today announced that applications for the second round of rental assistance funding are now available to help Illinois residents who have experienced economic

hardship due to the pandemic. The Illinois Rental Payment Program (ILRPP) will deploy multiple rounds of funding totaling \$1.1 billion dollars to Illinois renters and landlords in an effort to prevent evictions. An additional \$400 million in rental assistance will be provided by larger municipalities. The state will also be standing up a separate program to support homeowners with \$400 million in mortgage assistance.

Governor Pritzker also signed HB 2877 into law establishing a new structure to efficiently distribute rental assistance to Illinois residents and provide for sealing of eviction records until August 1, 2022.

“It was clear when we implemented last year’s housing relief programs that the need was far greater than the dollars allocated to our state. That’s why I’m pleased to announce today that Illinois is expanding rental relief to \$1.5 billion, nearly 4 times the amount that was available last year,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “The Illinois Rental Payment Program will ensure more than 120,000 household renters see relief, with more renters potentially being touched in the future, too. Any eligible resident who rents their home, is behind on payments, and experienced financial hardship in the pandemic is eligible to apply for up to \$25,000 of rental assistance paid directly to their housing provider or landlord.”

ILRPP builds on the state’s comprehensive rental assistance program launched by the Pritzker administration last year, delivering over \$329 million in housing payment grants to over 56,000 renters and homeowners across the state. Overall, the new rental programs are expected to assist more than 120,000 households. In addition, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is overseeing the Help Illinois Families program and Utility Disconnection Avoidance Program, which has prevented disruption in utility service for thousands of Illinois households using \$280 million in federal and state assistance.

“At a time when so many are facing financial hardship and uncertainty, it was critical that the government provide assistance to keep families in their homes. That’s why I strongly supported this funding for rental assistance in our federal COVID relief packages,” **said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)**. “I encourage anyone struggling to pay rent to see if they qualify for this assistance.”

HB 2877

HB 2877 creates the COVID-19 Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program Act, providing additional protections for renters and homeowners and establishing an even stronger framework for rental assistance programs. Signing HB 2877 reaffirms the

Pritzker administration and General Assembly's commitment to housing stability, as it creates a program to effectively administer rental assistance to struggling household and temporarily enhances eviction sealing and foreclosure protections.

"Families suffering from financial hardship should not have to worry about losing their homes. I'm proud to have taken action, with my colleagues in the General Assembly, preventing evictions and providing funding for the rent assistance working families need. Legislation like House Bill 2877 will give people experiencing housing distress the means to keep a roof over their heads as they seek better opportunities as the economy recovers from the pandemic," **said Majority Caucus Whip Omar Aquino (D-Chicago).**

"It is critical that vulnerable households have the resources and support they need to stay in their homes as we recover from this pandemic, and I am working hard in Springfield to ensure this aid is available to those most in need," **said Assistant Majority Leader Delia Ramirez (D-Chicago).** "I encourage those who have experienced financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 to speak with their landlord and apply today."

"We salute the Governor and the General Assembly on this much needed legislation for Emergency Rental Assistance. After such a challenging year when many tenants were unable to pay rent, this program will help to stabilize neighborhood housing, and stem the mounting disinvestment in many neighborhoods," **said Michael Glasser, President of the Neighborhood Building Owners Alliance.**

HB 2877 is effective immediately.

Illinois Rental Payment Program

The Illinois Rental Payment Program (ILRPP) will provide direct funding to support Illinois tenants unable to pay their rent due to a COVID-19-related loss of income. Approved applicants will receive one-time grants of up to \$25,000 paid directly to their landlords to cover missed rent payments as far back as June 2020 and prepay payments through August 2021, or until the \$25,000 is exhausted, whichever comes first. Applications for ILRPP will be accepted Monday, May 17 through Monday, June 7. Interested residents can apply online at: ILRPP.IHDA.org.

"The Illinois Housing Development Authority has a proven track record of helping keep families safe and sheltered as COVID-19 continues to impact our state. In 2020, IHDA

assisted over 56,000 families to ensure that they had the resources and support they needed to stay in their homes," said **IHDA Executive Director Kristin Faust**. "I thank Governor Pritzker for entrusting IHDA with this additional funding, and I encourage those who have seen their income decline as a result of COVID-19 to visit our application portal and apply to the Illinois Rental Payment Program today."

Tenant eligibility requirements:

- Household must have experienced a financial hardship directly or indirectly due to the pandemic.
- 2020 household income was below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), adjusted for household size.
- The household lives in Illinois and rents their home as their primary residence.
- Household must have an unpaid rent balance.
- Priority will be given to households earning less than 50% of AMI and to households with one or more members that have been unemployed for at least 90 days.

ILRPP is funded through an appropriation in the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (P.L. 116-260), which passed in December 2020. This legislation included \$900 billion in stimulus relief for the COVID-19 pandemic, with \$25 billion allocated for state and local government rental assistance programs. The Illinois General Assembly provided additional guidance for how this funding can best reach those most in need and increased protections for those facing eviction through the passage of House Bill 2877, the COVID-19 Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program Act.

ILRPP leverages and weaves together multiple funding streams to support this effort, including federal stimulus dollars, Illinois General Revenue funding and federal Community Development Block Grant support. It also builds upon existing infrastructure and the strength of local trusted providers, like Housing Counseling Agencies, Homeless Continuum of Care networks, Community Action Agencies, Welcoming Centers and faith and community-based organizations that are already serving families adversely impacted by COVID-19.

"People whose lives have been overturned by the COVID-19 pandemic should not have to endure the additional trauma of housing insecurity and homelessness," said **State Rep. Lindsey LaPointe (D-Chicago)**. "This program will bring much-needed relief to renters and property owners alike, and it will speed our communities' recovery as we move forward."

"No family in Illinois should have to worry about losing their home, especially while in the middle of a pandemic," said **State Senator Robert Peters (D-Chicago)**. "I'm proud

of the steps elected officials in Washington and Springfield are taking to help ensure individuals, working families and small landlords receive fair and equitable access to rental assistance to keep our most vulnerable families safe and housed.”

In addition to ILRPP, as an extension and expansion of its current efforts, IDHS is assisting with the deployment of housing, utilities, and legal assistance. The department also offers other types of support for those who are at risk of homelessness, providing direct legal representation and mediation, court-based rental assistance support and intensive case management interventions to address other barriers to housing stability that people may face. The available support services are designed with equitable policies and practices that focus on those most impacted by COVID-19 and those communities most vulnerable to experiencing homelessness.

“We have been and continue to be committed to responding to the basic needs of Illinois residents,” **said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou.** “Economic hardship like loss of employment or even a reduction in hours has deep impacts and can lead to housing insecurity at a time when families need it most.”

Utilities Assistance and Shutoff Avoidance Programs

To assist low-income families impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, last year Governor Pritzker announced the Help Illinois Families program, aimed at providing emergency relief on household costs through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) programs. To date, more than 260,000 households have received \$280 million in benefits through the CSBG and LIHEAP programs, which includes the Utility Disconnection Avoidance Program (UDAP) funds directly credited to customer accounts in threat of imminent disconnection. There is \$30 million in LIHEAP funding still available for new clients through the end of the current program year which ends May 31, 2021. A new program year will begin September 1, 2021, and residents qualifying for LIHEAP will have access to additional funds provided to the state through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

“Under Governor Pritzker’s leadership, Illinois has prioritized a swift economic response for those most in need, with programs like Help Illinois Families and the Utilities Disconnection Avoidance Program not only helping offset the costs of energy and household bills but providing assistance to hundreds of thousands of low-income families across the state to help avoid economic crisis,” **said DCEO Acting Director Sylvia Garcia.** “While Illinois continues to make strong progress in our recovery, safety

net programs like these will remain essential as we continue to reopen businesses, bring back jobs and get more of our residents back into the economy.”

Additionally, the Governor and DCEO created the UDAP to provide direct aid to households facing shutoffs due to inability to pay. UDAP identified customers previously enrolled in LIHEAP who were on their utility company’s disconnect list. Just weeks into the program, the State has exceeded its goal of serving 80,000 customers, and has prevented shutoffs for 115,000 customers, with over \$115 million credited to customer accounts to date.

Residents who do not qualify for UDAP can still enroll in LIHEAP benefits through the ongoing Help Illinois Families program. More information on how to apply for Help Illinois Families can be found on [HelpIllinoisFamilies.com](https://www.helpillinoisfamilies.com).

These housing relief programs are part of Governor Pritzker’s comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which spans economic relief measures taken for residents, businesses and to ensure a swift and precise health response to protect residents in the face of this unprecedented pandemic.

For more information and updates on the program, go to illinoishousinghelp.org.