

# Frequently Asked Questions

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**Q: What is King County's Eviction Prevention Rental Assistance Program?**

A: King County's Eviction Prevention and Rent Assistance Program is one of the ways the county is helping residents behind in rent and utility payments due to COVID-19 hardships. The program provides payments for back rent and even future rent obligations. Households throughout King County who have fallen behind in rent due to unemployment, lost wages and health crises as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic can now apply for assistance.

**Q: How does it work? How can someone sign-up?**

In the first phase of the program this year, we signed up Landlords and property owners with more than 5 units behind in rent. The beauty of signing up landlords first is that they helped with the application process on behalf of the tenants, and it makes it possible to enroll thousands who need help.

**Q: How do individual tenants get help?**

On May 17, we opened the Tenant Portal to allow individuals an opportunity to apply. The first step is to sign-up on the Tenant Portal: <https://rent-help.kingcounty.gov>. King County will randomly select tenants from the pool weekly to work with agencies to review their eligibility for rental assistance. If someone is selected through this process and meets the eligibility criteria, they will receive the rent assistance they need for 2021.

**Q: How do I know if my landlord already signed me up?**

A: If someone applies on the Tenant Portal and their landlord is in the program already, the tenant will be notified. Landlords will also be notifying tenants directly.

**Q: What are the advantages to landlords to participate?**

A: The landlord can receive 100% of back rent owed plus three months advance rent, for a total of up to 12 months of assistance – for EVERY TENANT who is eligible. This will make most landlords “whole” for the year, rather than opting for eviction procedures that can take months to complete and will bring no money in the door.

**Q: How does someone know if they or a family member qualifies for the program?**

A: Households throughout King County whose income is at or below 50% of the area median, and have fallen behind in rent due to unemployment, lost wages and health crises due to the COVID-19 pandemic are encouraged to apply. Eligible households that include an individual who has been unemployed for the 90 days prior to application for assistance and households with income at or below 50% of the area median are being prioritized for assistance.

**Q: How are you helping households that don't speak English?**

A: The Tenant Portal is available in English and Spanish and help in additional languages is also available by calling: 206-477-1331. The EPRAP home page and the tenant enrollment page note the availability of help in multiple languages – that sentence is translated into 28 languages. Community-based organizations are available to provide spoken translations, technology access and application assistance, including in-person or guiding tenants through the portal. Fact sheets are available explaining the tenant program, translated into 28 languages.

**Q: Can I sign up more than once? If I still haven't found a job can I sign up again for assistance later in the year?**

A: Based on funding, the opportunity to re-apply may be available. Additional support will be subject to available funds.

**Q: What if my landlord says no?**

A: The landlord must sign an agreement to participate in the program. If the landlord is not willing to participate, the tenant cannot be helped through the rent assistance program.

**Q: If I meet the eligibility criteria and apply to the Tenant Pool, what are my chances of getting selected to receive funding?**

A: The program will help as many people as possible and we will spend all the funds allocated but it is unlikely the program will be able to help everyone who is behind in their rent.

**Q: How soon will the money be paid to my landlord?**

A: Payments to landlords begin in mid-July, continuing through the life of the program.

**Q: What if my landlord isn't paid before the Governor lifts the eviction moratorium? I owe a lot of back rent!**

A: We are offering landlords the potential of 100 percent of back rent and up to three months rent in advance. A total of 12 months rent is possible under EPRAP 2.0 for ALL eligible tenants in their buildings. We are making payments directly to the landlords. Our payment schedule begins releasing payments in mid-July. We are partnering with landlords to help them recoup their losses over the long months of the pandemic, and helping to keep our community stable. No one benefits from thousands of people becoming homeless when our region is already struggling with a homelessness crisis.

**Q: What is the Hub & Spoke model?**

A: This model will allow some community members to sign-up directly through the community organizations they're already connected to. If you are receiving services for yourself or your family by a community-based organization, ask if they are participating in the EPRAP program as a "Hub or Spoke" agency. If they are and you get signed-up directly through a community organization that is serving as a "Hub or Spoke" you will get the rent assistance you need without signing-up through the Tenant Portal. We anticipate contracting with at least 9-12 "Hub" agencies and will be notifying the agencies they've been selected in June. The agencies will be conducting outreach to their community members about EPRAP. <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/COVID/eviction-prevention-rent-assistance/nonprofits.aspx>

**Q. How did you select the Hub agencies? What communities do they serve?**

A. The application process for CBOs to apply to participate in the Hub & Spoke model opened in April and closed in June: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/COVID/eviction-prevention-rent-assistance/nonprofits.aspx>

King County prioritized agencies serving a diverse population of historically underserved and hard-to-reach communities. The agencies have agreed to conduct outreach to their communities and sign-up those members who are eligible.

**Q: How many community-based agencies are participating in the program?**

A: In addition to the Hub agencies, EPRAP 2.0 is contracting with 14 agencies to engage with landlords and renters and expedite the application process to get payments made to landlords.

**Q: How is this year's program different than last year?**

A: This year we have almost \$150 million in federal funding compared to an initial investment of \$45 million last year, so we will be able to help many more community members. The ability for landlords and community-based organizations to sign up their tenants and community members directly is new this year and has helped ease and streamline the process.

**Q: Why is it taking so long to get the money out the door?**

A: The improvements we are making are streamlining both the application process and the processing of payments. The final phase of development, testing and implementation of our brand new, web-based data and processing system is near completion. The County Council approved the EPRAP funding on May 25, but we have been working since the Executive transmitted the expenditure plan in late March to prepare the new data system, prepare Request for Proposal processes to recruit and contract with community-based agencies, conduct the landlord enrollment process, and open the tenant enrollment process. This is a considerable amount of planning and work, culminating in payments going out the door in mid-July!

**Q: Have you been able to help anyone this year who needed rent assistance?**

A: Yes! We had about \$16 million available and have been able to assist and pay back rent for about 1,600 people in the community through our EPRAP 2020 procedures, even as we have been working to prepare to launch a program three times bigger than the 2020 program.

**Q: How many people did you help last year?**

A: Last year we were able to help more than 9,000 residents and this year we have three times the funding to help many more people stay in their homes through the crisis.