Montgomery County COVID Rent Relief Program Frequently Asked Questions

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is currently accepting applications for round 4 of the COVID Rent Relief Program (CRRP). Please find answers below to frequently asked questions. Additional information and the link to apply is available at www.mc311.com/rentrelief.

I am struggling to pay my rent. Is there assistance available?
If you are behind on your rent because of a COVID-related financial hardship, assistance may be available. Please complete the online application available HERE. If you are unable to complete the online application yourself or with assistance from an employee of the property/landlord, please call 311 (240-777-0311) to request assistance. A County employee or partner organization will call you back to help you complete the application.

How do I apply?
You can apply online directly from the COVID Rent Relief website at www.mc311.com/rentrelief. You will be asked to answer questions about COVID's impact on your household and some questions about your household members, income and rent. Please be prepared to upload supporting documents and have your landlord's information available. Please note you will need an email address to complete the application. If you don't have an email address, please consider setting one up or connecting with your property /landlord or anyone else who may be able to assist you.

I do not have access to the internet, nor am I able to receive help from my property/landlord to complete the application. How do I apply?
If you do not have internet access or need other accommodations to complete the application, you may call MC 311 (240-777-0311) to request that a County representative or partner call you to help you apply. MC311 will collect basic information from you, and then a program representative will get back to you to help you complete the application.

Is there a deadline to submit my application?
Yes, the program will only accept applications for 45 days once the portal opens. Please note that only applications from households earning 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) or less will be considered for funding. Applications from households earning more will not be considered. Additionally, funding is limited and we are not able to guarantee assistance for all applications.

Who is eligible for the COVID Rent Relief Round 4 Program?
Households must meet the following minimum eligibility requirements. Household members must:
- have experienced COVID-19-related financial hardship,
- have a household gross income from either your 2020 or 2021 tax return or the previous 30 days that is at or below 50% of AMI,
- have resided in Montgomery County since at least August 2021,
- have an obligation to pay rent, formally or informally, and
- be behind on their rental obligation by at least two months.

Is there a US citizenship requirement? Do you require a Social Security Number in the application?
No, evidence of legal status is not required. The funding for this program is part of the coronavirus stimulus bill passed by Congress. Because this is emergency assistance, documentation of household legal status is not required. Similarly, social security numbers are not required.

What do you mean by financial hardship?
Financial hardship caused or related to Covid-19 can take many forms. For example, you may have lost a job or had your hours cut. Or you may have needed to stop working in order to provide childcare, look after sick loved ones or spend time in the hospital yourself. There is room in the application to explain exactly how Covid-19 has impacted you and your household.

What is AMI and how do I know if my income is below 50% of AMI?
AMI is Area Median Income. It is a calculated by looking at the "middle" income of all households in the area. The table below lists the maximum annual or monthly gross income amounts.

Family Size	Max. Monthly Gross Household Income 50% AMI	Max. Yearly Gross Household Income 50% AMI
1	$4,154	$49,850
2	$4,746	$56,950
3	$5,338	$64,050
4	$5,929	$71,150
5	$6,404	$76,850
6	$6,879	$82,550
7	$7,354	$88,250
8	$7,829	$93,950

What income needs to be reported and what do I need to include to show this?
Applicants must submit an accurate count of every member of their household and the income generated by all members of the household 18 and older who are not full-time students.

Income should be reported/documented as either the household's gross income as it appears on your 2020 or 2021 tax return or gross (pre-tax or deductions) income from the previous 30 days. Income reported should include, but is not limited to: wages, social security, benefits or pensions, public assistance, unemployment, interest income and/or child support. Income reported from the previous 30 days can be documented using pay stubs, bank statements, letters from the employer or a self-attestation form.

What if I've had to move since August 2021 -- am I still eligible?
Yes, as long as you still have a rent responsibility and have been a resident in Montgomery County since August 2021 or earlier. Even if you moved within the County after that date, you are eligible to apply for assistance at your current Montgomery County address, as long as you have rent responsibility.

I have an agreement with a friend/family member to pay for some of the household expenses, but do not have my own lease. Am I still eligible for assistance?
As long as you have an obligation to pay rent you are eligible for assistance, even if you have an informal lease. Whomever you have agreed to pay rent to will certify in writing how much you are expected to pay monthly and how much you have paid/owe. However, we cannot help you pay rent if you are related to your landlord by birth or marriage and that person owns the home.

I receive assistance to pay my rent from a housing subsidy program (Housing Choice Voucher, Rental Assistance Program, etc.) -- am I still eligible to apply?
Yes. You are still eligible to apply, but assistance can only be provided on the portion of rent that is your responsibility. We strongly encourage you to notify your subsidy provider of your change in income to have your rent responsibility adjusted.

How much money am I able to get?
Based on available funds at the time of application review, households earning 30% of Area Median Income or less are eligible for funds up to their total rental debt and up to $2,000 to address utility debt for a total of 18 months, including any assistance from CRRP Round 3. Applications from households earning 31% - 50% of Area Median Income may receive the lesser of 1) a total of $12,000 total or 2) 18 months of assistance, including CRRP Round 3 assistance. The funds are specifically available for rent only and take into account any previous funds received through COVID Rent Relief or other local, state or federal funds for COVID-related rent support. Applications from households earning more than 50% of AMI will not be considered.

I received assistance in earlier rounds of CRRP, but I am still behind. Can I get more help?
Yes. Even if you have already received COVID Rent Relief Program funds in earlier rounds of the program, you are eligible to apply again for additional funds, up to the program limit. If you have already received funds for the current round (4), you may not reapply.

How will you process applications? Will it be first-come, first-served?
No, applications will not be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Instead, applications will be prioritized based on need. When selecting applications to review, the program will take into account any eviction court proceedings, household income and geographic location.

Will I receive the money directly?
In most cases, the grant goes directly to the property owner/landlord as a credit against your rent bill. If we are unable to coordinate with your landlord, the payment may be issued to you directly.

What documents do I need?
You will need the following documents to complete your application:

- **Photo Identification:** Copy of a Driver's License, passport or other official photo ID for each adult member.

- **Verification of Residency/Address:** You will be required to provide documentation that you live at the address for which you are applying for assistance. You may do this with a bank statement, official piece of mail, utility bill or other documentation that confirms your address.

- **Income Verification:** You will be required to provide documentation and/or self-certification that you have a gross household income that does not exceed the program limits based on household size. This can be your 2020 or 2021 tax return, pay stubs, letter from employer, unemployment letter or self-attestation/certification. A template/form for self-certification is available on the program website. You will also be asked to provide the most recent bank statements for any accounts held by household members.

- **Rent Confirmation.** You will need to provide documentation to show your rent responsibility, payment history and amount owed. This can be done using a rent ledger, lease, or other documentation that separately or combined provides the required information.

- **Landlord Documentation:** Your landlord is requested to register with the County's vendor registration system and provide documentation that confirms tenancy and rent information, including the amount of monthly rent, and how much is owed.

- **Tenant Income and Eligibility Certification (available on the website and in the application)**

I do not have a letter from an employer, or I am self-employed, or I do not have regular work hours. What do I do to verify my income?
You will be able to upload a self-certification statement in the application portal. This should include your employment/income information before COVID and your current employment/income information. Please see our self- certification form/template for guidance.

Will I have to report this money on my taxes?
No, in most cases the grant goes directly to the property owner as a credit against your rent bill. Landlords do need to report rental income as a rental payment.

How will I know if I receive funds?
A case worker will contact you by phone, email and/or letter when that person begins reviewing your application. If your case is approved for funds, the case worker will change the status of your case, which you can see when you log in to your application account. Most of the time the money is sent directly to the landlord. A final award letter detailing the amount provided will also be mailed to you and your landlord.

Will I have to pay this money back?
No, this is not a loan. You will not have to pay the County back.

My landlord says I need to leave immediately if I cannot pay everything in full. Where am I supposed to go?

Only a sheriff with a court order can evict you. Please reach out to Montgomery County Landlord and Tenant Affairs at 240-777-0311 and the Police Department non-emergency line at 301-279-8000 if you believe your landlord is trying to evict you illegally. Additional information is available on the [Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) COVID-19 website.](#)

I have a Court summons for an eviction hearing, what should I do?

Please attend your hearing in person and be sure to tell the judge that you have applied for Covid Rent Relief. You can also review the information available on the [Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) COVID-19 website.](#)

What should I write in my Covid impact statement?

This must be a clear statement about how your household experienced a financial hardship related to COVID-19. Please outline your household's loss of income if you incurred significant costs or another financial hardship during the pandemic. Be sure to include your pre-pandemic income and current income if you are unable to provide income documentation.

I forgot to attach documents to my application before I submitted it. Can I make updates?

No, after you submit your application, you cannot make any changes to it. Unless your eviction status has changed or you need to update your contact information, it is best to wait until a case worker contacts you. If your status has changed or you need to update your contact information, please email hss@montgomerycountymd.gov with the updated info.

Can I add additional months that I owe rent for after I submit my application?

No, you cannot change your application after it is submitted; however, when your case worker reviews your application, you may provide updated information.

I have moved since I submitted my application. Am I still eligible?

So long as you lived in Montgomery County since at least August 2021, you satisfy the local residency requirement. However, we can only pay for rental debt at your current address. If you have moved since you submitted your application, we cannot pay any rental debt from the old address. Additionally, you will only be eligible if you owe at least $1,000 to the landlord at your current address.

I need assistance paying for my utilities. Can you help?

Yes, if you are eligible for the covid rent relief program, you may receive up to $2,000 in assistance for utility debts. However, the total you may be awarded is dependent on your gross household income, utility bill balance and number of months of assistance for which you are eligible. We also encourage you to apply for utility assistance through our [Office of Home Energy Programs](#) if you meet their eligibility criteria.

I need to move but cannot afford to do so. Can you help?

CRRP funds can be used to help pay your security deposit and up to three months of rent, assuming you meet program eligibility requirements. If you have already applied for CRRP funds, please coordinate your move with your case worker.

If you are not eligible for CRRP funds, we may be able to provide financial assistance for moving and storage costs, security deposit and first months' rent. If this is a non-COVID-related need to move or a time-sensitive need, call 311 and ask for security deposit/moving assistance.

My case worker contacted me. Do I need to respond?
Yes, please respond to your case worker as soon as you can. If you do not respond, you may risk having your application denied. Case workers want to process applications as quickly as possible, so communicating with them helps to reach a decision on your application sooner. If your case is with a case worker, look for communication by email or by phone, depending on what contact information you supplied.

My landlord wants to help me apply. What can they do?
Your landlord can help you with collecting your documents, scanning them, and completing the application. Your landlord can also submit their own application in support of your case. They are always welcome to apply using our website (mc311.com/rentrelief).

Is a landlord able to get rent relief funds for tenant who refuses to complete the tenant portion of the application or has already moved out?
No, unfortunately. While we can process applications even if a landlord does not participate, we must receive supporting documentation from a tenant in order to provide assistance. Additionally, the tenant must still be residing in the unit at the time of assistance.

How do I log into my application?
Access your application from our home page at www.mc311.com/rentrelief

The website is not loading, what do I do?
Make sure you are using Google Chrome and not Internet Explorer. You may also use Firefox or Microsoft Edge.

*This information was last updated on April 28, 2022