

## **EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

### ***WHAT IS AN ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLD?***

An “eligible household” is defined as a renter household in which at least one or more individuals meets the following criteria:

- Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19;
- Demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability; and
- Has a household income at or below 80 percent of the area median.

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### ***HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE PROCESSED?***

Applications will be processed based on the priority groups established by the US Department of Treasury. Eligible households that include an individual who has been unemployed for the 90 days prior to application for assistance due to COVID-19 and households with income at or below 50 percent of the area median are to be prioritized for assistance.

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### ***WHEN WILL THE SEMINOLE COUNTY EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BEGIN?***

Seminole County will launch the application portal for Emergency Rental Assistance grants on March 2, 2021. Pre-registration will begin on February 22, 2021.

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### ***DO I HAVE TO PRE-REGISTER TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE?***

No, you do not need to pre-register to apply or receive assistance. Pre-registration is an option to help expedite your log-in process. Pre-registration allows you to create a profile with User Name and Password. The application will not be accessible during Pre-registration.

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### ***HOW CAN I RECEIVE UPDATES ABOUT THE SEMINOLE COUNTY EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?***

Information regarding the Emergency Rental Assistance application process will be on the Seminole County website and County social media platforms.

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### ***HOW MUCH CAN AN INDIVIDUAL RECEIVE IN GRANT FUNDS?***

Assistance can be provided for up to 12 months of past due unpaid rent and utilities depending on client’s specific situation (Rent and utilities due prior to April 2020 is not eligible for assistance).

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### **WHAT ARE ELIGIBLE EXPENSES FOR THIS GRANT?**

This assistance is only available to Seminole County residents who are **RENTING** a unit in Seminole County. This program is not open to homeowners or mortgage holders.

- Rent assistance
  - Utility Assistance (water, electric, gas for residence)
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### **CAN I APPLY FOR THE SEMINOLE CARES INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE GRANT IF I RECEIVED ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY RELATED TO COVID-19 SINCE MARCH 2020?**

Individuals who have received funds from Seminole County Community Services or through the online portal that were specific to a COVID-19 financial hardship (CARES or CRF Program) may apply for Emergency Rental Assistance funds however, they will be placed in the last priority group. If funds are still available after all other eligible applicants have been assisted, those individuals who already received funding will be evaluated for possible financial assistance.

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### **WHAT DOCUMENTS WILL BE NEEDED TO APPLY FOR EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE?**

- Valid Photo ID for adult in the household
  - Current Lease Agreement (all pages)
  - Utility Bill (if requesting utility assistance)
  - Documentation of financial hardship related to COVID-19 (job loss letter, proof of unemployment, reduced hours at work, furlough letter)
  - 2020 Tax Return 1040 Form for all adults in the household
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### **HOW DO I PROVE I LOST MY JOB OR HAD REDUCED HOURS?**

Applicants must submit one form of documentation showing a loss of income (*only one is required*), such as:

- Employer notice of reduced hours, furlough, or layoff
  - Unemployment letter showing award or other information related to COVID-19
  - Profit/Loss Statement for January 2020-June 2020 to document the loss of business income due to COVID-19
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### **HOW DO YOU PROVIDE PROOF OF REDUCTION IN HOURS IF YOU ARE SELF-EMPLOYED?**

Self-employed residents can provide 6 months of a profit/loss form to prove their reduced income. Additionally, residents can show their documentation for their award of unemployment.

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**IF APPROVED, HOW DO I RECEIVE THE FUNDS?**

Funds will be distributed directly to your landlord and utility company(ies).

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**IS THIS THE SAME PROGRAM AS THE SEMINOLE COUNTY'S RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?**

No. The Rental/Mortgage/Utility Assistance Program is funded through the County's general funds. The Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program is funded by the US Department of Treasury. If you have received assistance with rent/mortgage/utilities from Seminole County **NOT** related to COVID-19 within the last 2 years, you **CAN** apply for the ERA Program.

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**WHAT IF MY APPLICATION IS INCOMPLETE?**

Applications may be delayed or rejected if documents are missing, falsified or illegible.

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**DO I HAVE TO PAY THE MONEY BACK?**

No. Residents do not have to pay back the money.

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**IF MY APPLICATION IS APPROVED, WILL I GET A NOTIFICATION?**

Yes, you will receive an email with the status of your application.

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