



LEHIGH COUNTY

Public Information Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Financial Assistance Available For Renters Hurt Financially By COVID-19

Max assistance is \$750/month for 6 months; deadline to apply is Sept. 30

Lehigh County, PA-Renters who were financially impacted by the economic slowdown related to the coronavirus pandemic can now get CARES financial assistance to help with the payment of past-due rent. Applications and helpful information are available from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency's website at <https://www.phfa.org/pacares/rent.aspx>.] PHFA is coordinating the program statewide and the three agencies listed below are processing applications for residents in Lehigh County.

The Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, passed in March, provided \$3.9 billion for Pennsylvania and is intended to help people hurt economically during the pandemic. In late May, the General Assembly directed \$175 million of these CARES dollars to PHFA to provide assistance for struggling renters and homeowners. PHFA is working with organizations in all 67 counties, which are processing renters' applications and distributing the assistance locally. The state funding provided for rent assistance is at least \$150 million; \$25 million was set aside for mortgage assistance.

Details about Renters' Assistance

Renters who qualify the CARES Rent Relief Program may receive assistance equal to 100% of their monthly rent up to \$750 a month for a maximum of six months of assistance for the time period between March 1 and December 31, 2020. Payments will be made to their landlord on their behalf. Renters or landlords can apply for rent relief for apartment tenants, but renters are responsible for submitting all the documents needed to ensure their eligibility.

The deadline to apply is September 30, although it is possible that deadline may be extended. Contact any of the below agencies for the most current information.

Who is Eligible?

For renters to be eligible for financial assistance under the CARES Rent Relief Program, they will need to document at least a 30% reduction in annual income since March 1 related to COVID-19, or they must have become unemployed after March 1. If unemployed, they must have filed for unemployment compensation with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Their household income

cannot exceed the Area Median Income for their county of residence, adjusted for the number of people in their home.

The application process requires the submission of three applications: one completed by the renter and two completed by the landlord. Supplemental documents are also required, like proof of income and proof of residence. All materials must be submitted together to one of three agencies:

- **Hispanic American Organization**
462 Walnut Street
Allentown, PA 18102
610-435-5334
- **Catholic Charities**
900 S. Woodard Street
Allentown, PA 18103
610-435-1541
- **Lehigh County Conference of Churches/Pathways**
457 W. Allen Street
Allentown, PA 18102
610-439-8653

Completed applications may also be hand delivered or mailed to:

- Lehigh County Department of Human Services
17 S. 7th Street
Allentown, PA 18101
(ATTN: RRP)

Helpful support, including an application checklist and a Q&A sheet, is available on PHFA's website at the web address noted above.

To learn more:

For more information, visit the Lehigh County website – www.lehighcounty.org.

Questions may also be directed to Lehigh County Information and Referral at 610-782-3200 weekdays from 8:30am – 4:30pm.

For more information, visit PHFA's website note above. Questions may be directed to PHFA's call center weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The toll-free number is 1-855-U-Are-Home (827-3466). Callers should listen for the prompt mentioning CARES assistance for renters and homeowners. Spanish-speaking operators are available.

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