



Rental Assistance Program (RAP) Frequently Asked Questions

If you do not speak English, interpretation services via a dedicated language line are available at any of the of the six DFSS community service centers (CSC). Please visit or call a CSC for additional information.

Español: Si no habla inglés, servicios de interpretación está disponible en los seis centros de servicios comunitarios, visitar o llamar a cualquier centro para obtener información adicional.

1) I need help paying my rent. Am I eligible for this assistance?

- The DFSS rental assistance program is available to qualifying low-income Chicagoans for assistance with past due rent. Please visit our website or connect with one of our six Community Service Centers for more information and to confirm your eligibility:
https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/serv/svcs/how_to_find_rentalassistanceinchicago.html

2) What does my income need to be to qualify for assistance?

- The rental assistance program is available to City of Chicago residents who are at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI), as required by ERA2 funds through the U.S. Department of the Treasury. As ERA2 funds are exhausted, the program is available to City of Chicago residents who are at or below 30% Area Median Income (AMI), as required by ESG funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

3) May I apply for rental assistance for help paying my mortgage?

- No, this assistance is not available to help cover mortgage payments.

4) How much assistance can I receive from the Rental Assistance Program?

- Rental assistance is available for up to six (6) months of rent with no more than three (3) months in future rent, barring funding availability and need. This does not mean every applicant will receive six months of assistance. It may vary depending on need. Final determination is made based on your need and supporting documentation.
- The rent cannot exceed Rent Reasonableness and Fair Market Rent as defined by HUD.

5) May I still be eligible for rental assistance if I currently live in subsidized housing?

- Yes, but only rental arrears for the tenant's portion of the rental payment not already being covered by other public sources. Future rent payments are not eligible under ESG funding.

6) What documents will I need to provide with my application?

- You will need to provide proof of identify documentation, proof of income (for all 18+ adults in the household), your current lease (minimum of 6 months), 5-day notice of non-payment



from your landlord, proof of emergency that led to inability to pay rent. Additionally, your landlord/property manager will need to submit documentation. See question 9.

7) What documentation does my landlord need to provide?

- Landlords need to fill out the following forms and upload them to the application for you to be considered for rental assistance:
 - i) Property Owner/Manager Participation Agreement Form.
 - ii) Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification.
 - iii) Signed Property Owner Affidavit on property management company letterhead & attach a business card or signed proof of management company's agreement with property owner.
 - iv) Client Payment Agreement (only if you owe 6 months or more of rent).

8) I don't have a 5-day notice yet. Can I still apply?

- You may be eligible for rental assistance without a 5-day notice if one of these circumstances applies to you:
 - i) You have experienced a disaster such as a fire or flood.
 - ii) You moved because of financial reasons two or more times during the 90 days prior to applying.
 - iii) You are living in the home of another because of financial hardship.
 - iv) You are living in a hotel or motel, and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individual.
 - v) You are living in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or live in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.
 - vi) You are exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care such as a hospital, long-term care facility, or jail.
 - vii) You are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Please contact a DFSS Community Service Center for guidance and support.
- If one of the above circumstances applies to you, you will need to submit one of the following:
 - i) Documentation of displacement due to fire or flood.
 - ii) Documentation showing that you moved due to financial reasons two or more times during the 90 days prior to applying for assistance.
 - iii) Notarized letter from leaseholder documenting end date of housing (if residing with others or "doubled up").



- iv) Receipt for stay in a hotel or motel when the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals.
- v) Lease showing you are living in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or live in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.
- vi) Letter documenting recent discharge from hospital, institution system of care, or corrections.
- vii) Domestic violence certification. Please contact a DFSS Community Service Center for guidance and support.

9) What proof of identification documents may I submit?

- Each family member over 18 years of age needs to include a valid (current and not expired) Driver's License or State ID. If you do not have a valid Driver's License or State ID, you can submit one of the following:
 - i) Chicago CityKey ID.
 - ii) Military ID.
 - iii) Passport.
 - iv) Letter from a Domestic Violence Advocate that supports where you currently live (you cannot be living in a shelter, but if you are receiving help with housing this can qualify).
- Household members that are under the age of 18 will need a birth certificate or similar photo ID as listed above, if available.

10) What proof of income documentation may I submit?

- The income you declare in the application must be supported through documentation. Please attach any of the following documents that are applicable to your income:
 - i) Public Aid Income Letter with dollar amount (SNAP, TANF, etc.).
 - ii) Social Security Income/SSI/SSDI Income current award letter.
 - iii) Pension/Annuity Income.
 - iv) Paycheck stubs covering the past 30 days, or employer's letter on letterhead giving gross monthly income.
 - v) Unemployment benefit documents.
 - vi) Child support documents.
 - vii) VA Benefits.
 - viii) Other wages (self-employed or 1099 contractors).

11) Can I still apply if I don't have income?

- If you recently experienced a loss of income, you would need to submit that documentation.

12) Can I apply for support with a security deposit or application fees?

- Yes, in certain circumstances we can provide support for a security deposit, application fee, etc. These instances include:
 - i) Disaster (fire/flood).
 - ii) Moved because of financial reasons 2 or more times during the 90 days prior to applying.
 - iii) Are living in the home of another because of financial hardship.
 - iv) Have received eviction notice during 21 days after applying for assistance.
 - v) Living in a hotel or motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individual.
 - vi) Living in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than 2 persons.
 - vii) Exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care.
 - viii) Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking. Please contact a DFSS Community Service Center for guidance and support.

13) Are people living with HIV eligible for this program?

- Yes, if all other eligibility criteria are met. Additionally, if you are a person living with HIV, specific resources may be available for you by calling the HIV Resource Coordination Hub at 1-844-HUB-4040.

14) Who can I contact for help with filling out the application?

- If you need help with the online application, you can contact your nearest Community Service Center (CSC), Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm. For CSC locations, visit our website https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/serv/svcs/community_servicecenterlocations.html or give us a call at 312-743-0300.

15) What can I expect to occur after I submit my application?

- Applications are processed in the order in which they are received. When your application is next, a case manager from one of our Community Service Center's will be in touch with you.

16) How do I check the status of my application?

- Once you apply, you can check the status of your application by logging in and seeing 'Application Status' at the top of the page.

17) How long should I expect to wait after applying before I find out if I have been approved?

- The time between applying and approval depends on your situation and how quickly you and your landlord provide accurate documentation to support your application.

18) I was denied rental assistance. Is there anything I can do?



- If you are denied rental assistance but believe you are eligible, you may appeal your denial. You will receive a denial letter that outlines the appeals process. After you receive the denial letter, you have 5 days to appeal. Follow the instructions on your denial letter to appeal.
- You may also connect to 2-1-1 by dialing 211, texting your zip code to 898-211, or visiting www.211metrochicago.org online to connect with other available resources.

19) My income has changed since I first applied. How do I report this?

- If your income changes after you submit your application, you should update your application by logging in here: <https://chicago.cap-portal.com> and changing it on the 'Head of Family' or 'Family Member' tab depending on who experienced the change. You will then need to delete the old documentation and upload your new documentation on the 'Upload' tab. After doing this, please re-sign on the signature page and submit. This will not change your initial submission date but is required for our records.

20) I was notified that I am eligible for assistance, but now I'm being contacted to participate in a housing inspection. Why do I need a housing inspection?

- We perform housing inspections to ensure compliance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) standards for rental assistance. Your unit must pass an inspection for you to receive financial assistance. Housing inspections are completed by our partner agency All Chicago.

Please note: All requirements are subject to change and assistance is dependent on available funding. DFSS will revise this document and our website when changes occur. This document was last updated in February 2025.