



Rental Assistance Program during COVID-19: 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 Community Service Centers (CSCs) listed on page 3. Please visit or call a CSC for additional information. Rental Assistance Program funds are available regardless of immigration status. The Rental Assistance Program is not a “public charge” benefit.

[Spanish: If you do not speak English, interpretation services via a dedicated language line are available at any of the of the six Community Service Centers (CSCs) listed on page 3. Please visit or call a CSC for additional information. Rental Assistance Program funds are available regardless of immigration status. The Rental Assistance Program is not a “public charge” benefit.]

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Getting Help with the Application

Can somebody help me complete this application?

If you need help completing or submitting the application, you can contact your nearest Community Service Center and/or apply in person, daily (Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

- **Englewood Community Service Center**
1140 West 79th Street, Chicago, IL 60620, 312-747-0200
- **Garfield Community Service Center**
10 South Kedzie Avenue, Chicago, IL 60612, 312-746-5400
- **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Center**
4314 South Cottage Grove, Chicago, IL 60653, 312-747-2300
- **North Area Community Service Center**
845 West Wilson Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640, 312-744-2580
- **South Chicago Community Service Center**
8650 South Commercial Avenue, Chicago, IL 60617, 312-747-0500
- **Trina Davila Community Service Center**
4312 West North Avenue, Chicago, IL 60639, 312-744-2014

If your application is chosen for review, a case manager will be assigned to your case. They will reach out to you to make sure that you have provided all the required documents. At that point, they can answer any questions or help you submit new documents to prove you are eligible.

I do not speak English. Can I get help in my language?

If you do not speak English, interpretation services are available at any of the of the Community Service Centers via a dedicated language line. Please visit or call one of the Community Service Centers listed above.

I am living with HIV; are there specific support resources for me?

If you are a person living with HIV, specific resources are available for you by calling the HIV Resource Coordination Hub at 1-844-HUB-4040.

RAP Overview

What type of help is available, and how much money can I receive?

RAP can help in different ways, depending on your situation. These ways are:

- Help to pay past-due rent
- Help to pay future rent
- Help to pay security deposits if you have experienced a fire, flood, foreclosure, domestic violence, or eviction

RAP can pay for up to 6 months of rent depending on your specific case. Your case manager will contact you if your application is chosen for review through the lottery. They can help explain how much you qualify for.

What are the steps of the RAP application process?

- **Step 1: Application.** Submit your application during an open period listed on the DFSS RAP website.
- **Step 2: Lottery.** After the application period closes, DFSS will use a lottery to choose applications to review.
- **Step 3: Finalize documents, including landlord documents, with support from a case manager.** If your application is chosen for review, a case manager will review your application and contact you to address any problems with your application or documents. Your case manager will also tell you which documents your landlord must sign to complete your application.
- **Step 4: Approval.** After finalizing your application, your case manager will determine whether or not you meet the requirements of the RAP program.
- **Step 5: Housing habitability inspection.** If your application is approved, you will need to participate in a habitability inspection conducted by an organization called All Chicago. This inspection is different from a Chicago Department of Buildings inspection and will not be shared with them. Due to COVID-19, inspections are currently being done using recorded videos or a video chat, not in person.
- **Step 6: Funding sent to landlord.** If the residence passes the habitability inspection, your landlord will receive a check for the approved funding amount.

Important: After you submit your application, check your e-mail and voicemail often, and answer calls from unknown (312) phone numbers. If your application is chosen for review, your case manager will call or e-mail to get in contact with you. If you do not respond to these efforts to contact you, your application may be denied.

Who counts as my family for the purposes of the RAP application?

Anyone who you live with should be included in your family for the purposes of the RAP application. In the application, please add information about each person who lives in your home on the “Family Member” page.

Eligibility

I need help to pay past due or future rent. Can RAP help me?

Yes. You are eligible for this help if you can document that:

- You are resident of the City of Chicago (regardless of immigration status)
- Your household’s annual income is below 50% of the Chicago annual median income at the time you apply. To find out if RAP can help based on your household income, answer the questions on the first page of the RAP application.
- Your household is at imminent risk of homelessness
- Your landlord agrees to complete RAP requirements, including a “habitability inspection.” This is not a Chicago Department of Buildings (DoB) inspection and results will not be shared with DoB.
- If you live in subsidized housing, you may only receive funding for past due rent. If you live in unsubsidized housing, you can receive funding for both past due and future rent, as well as additional funding such as security deposit (if you otherwise qualify).

I need help to pay a security deposit or application fee. Can RAP help me?

Yes. You may be eligible for this help if:

- You have experienced a disaster, such as a fire or flood

- You are experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or dating violence
- You have moved because of financial reasons more than once in the 90 days before applying
- You are living in someone else’s home because of financial hardship
- You receive an eviction notice during the 21 days after applying for help
- You are living in a hotel or motel that is not paid for by a nonprofit or government program
- You are living in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit with more than one other person
- You are leaving a publicly funded institution, such as a hospital, long-term care facility, or jail

I need help to pay my mortgage. Can RAP help me?

No. Rental assistance does not support people who need help to pay mortgages.

I do not have a social security number. Can RAP help me?

Yes. Immigration status does not affect eligibility for DFSS’s Rental Assistance Program so you can apply if you are not a U.S. citizen, if you are a Legal Permanent Resident and/or if you live in a mixed-status household. If any members of your household do not have a social security number, they will be asked to submit alternative documents for identification and sign and submit a statement that they do not have, do not know, or refuse to provide their social security number. This statement can be downloaded on the DFSS RAP website.

The application will also ask you to enter a social security number for yourself and each member of your household. If you or anyone in your household does not have a social security number, you may enter 000-00-0000 in these fields.

I do not have an eviction notice. Can RAP help me?

Yes. During COVID-19, you may apply for RAP even if you do not currently have an eviction notice.

I live in subsidized housing. Can RAP help me?

Yes, but RAP can only help with past-due rent. If you live in subsidized housing, RAP cannot help with future rent, security deposits, or application fees.

What does my income need to be in order to qualify for help?

During COVID-19, RAP can help households with income below 50% of the Chicago Area Median Income. To find out if you qualify, answer the questions on the triage page of the RAP application.

Documents Required

What documents will I need to provide in the application?

You will need to submit documents in the following categories for yourself and each member of your household:

- Housing emergency
- Income
- Identity
- Current housing

More information on each category can be found below

Housing emergency

In order to be eligible for help, you must document your housing emergency. For some applicants, this is threat of eviction, which can be documented with one of the following:

- Notarized 5-day eviction notice from property owner/manager
- Letter from landlord stating intention to renew lease for 6-12 months if they receive RAP funding

If you are not facing eviction, you need one of the following documents. Your case manager can help you get these documents if needed.

- Proof of loss of income
- Domestic Violence Affidavit form
- Letter documenting recent discharge from an institution, such as a hospital, long-term care facility, or jail
- Documentation of displacement due to fire or flood
- Notarized letter from lease-holder documenting end date of housing (if you are sub-leasing from the leased tenant)
- Receipt for stay in a hotel or motel when the cost is not paid for by a nonprofit or government program
- Lease showing you are living in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit with more than one other person
- Documentation showing that you moved because of financial reasons more than once in the 90 days before applying

Income

You must document all income listed in your application, for yourself and any household members over age 18. The following documents may be relevant:

- Paycheck stubs from the past 90 days
- Letter from employer listing gross monthly income (on employer's letterhead)
- Public Aid Income Letter with dollar amount (SNAP, TANF, etc.)
- Social Security Income/SSI/SSDI Income current award letter
- Unemployment benefit documentation
- Pension/Annuity Income documentation
- Child support documents
- Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits
- Other wages (self-employed or 1099 contractors)

If you do not have any of these documents, you may sign and submit a statement that you have no proof of income. You can download this statement on the DFSS RAP website.

If you have no income, you must sign and submit a statement saying that you have no income. You can download this statement on the DFSS RAP website.

Identity

You must submit proof of identity for yourself and each of your household members over 18. Acceptable forms of identification must be current (i.e. not expired) and include:

- Illinois State Driver's License or State ID
- Chicago CityKey card
- Military ID
- Passport
- *If you are undocumented:* Temporary Visitor Driver's License (TVDLA) or Matricula

If you or any of your household members do not have any of these, you may sign and submit a statement that you lack proof of identification. You can download this statement on the DFSS RAP website.

You must also prove Social Security Numbers (SSN) for you and each member of your household.

Acceptable documents include:

- Copy of Social Security card
- Printout from SSA website with full name and SSN shown
- Copy of 2019 tax returns with full name and SSN visible
- Payscale from the last 90 days with full name and SSN visible

If you or any members of your household do not have a Social Security Number, you may sign and submit a statement saying that you do not know, do not have, or refuse to share your social security card. You can download this statement on the DFSS RAP website.

Current housing

You will be asked to submit a copy of your current lease. Your lease must show that you can continue to live in your current home for at least 6 months.

If you do not have a current lease, you may submit a letter from your landlord stating intention to renew lease for 6-12 months if they receive RAP funding.

What documents does my landlord need to provide?

Your landlord does not need to provide anything when you submit your application. If your application is chosen for review through the lottery, they will need to provide:

- Property Owner/Manager Agreement Participation Agreement
- Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (IRS Form W-9)
- *If you are renting from a property manager rather than the owner:* Signed Property Owner Affidavit on property management company letterhead with attached business card OR Signed proof of management company's agreement with property owner
- *If you owe more than 6 months of rent:* Client Payment Agreement

Your case manager can help with this process if you are chosen for review. While not required, having your landlord submit these documents at the time you apply can speed up processing time later.

Moving Through the Rental Assistance Application Process

I submitted my RAP application. Now what?

After you submit your application, check your e-mail and voicemail often, and answer calls from unknown (312) phone numbers. If your application is chosen for review, your case manager will call or e-mail to get in contact with you.

If you do not respond to these efforts to contact you, your application may be denied.

You can check your application status by logging into the application website. Your 'Application Status' is at the top of the page.

[How long will I have to wait to find out if I will receive help?](#)

It may take a few weeks after the application period ends to find out whether your application has been chosen for review. Processing your application quickly then depends on you and your landlord providing accurate documentation.

[I was denied rental assistance. What can I 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 10 days to appeal. Follow the instructions on your denial letter to appeal.

[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?](#)

A "housing habitability" inspection ensures compliance with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's standards. Your unit must pass the inspection in order for you to receive assistance. This is not a Chicago Department of Buildings inspection and results will not be shared with them. The inspection will check that your home has things like: working electricity and water, working fire and carbon monoxide detectors, and appropriate entrances and exits to the unit.

DFSS's partner agency All Chicago will contact you to complete the inspection. Due to COVID-19, inspections are currently being done using recorded videos or a video chat, not in person.

[I am a landlord. What do I need to know?](#)

[What documentation do I need to provide?](#)

You need to fill out the following forms and upload them to the application for your tenant to be awarded rental assistance:

- Property Owner/Manager Agreement Participation Agreement
- Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (IRS Form W-9)
- *If you are a property manager rather than the owner:* Signed Property Owner Affidavit on property management company letterhead & attach a business card, or signed proof of management company's agreement with property owner
- *If tenant owes more than 6 months of rent:* Client Payment Agreement

[How long should we expect to wait after applying to find out if the award has been approved?](#)

It may take a few weeks after the application period ends to find out whether your tenant's application has been chosen for review. Processing the application quickly then depends on you and your tenant providing accurate documentation.

[My tenant was notified that they are eligible for assistance, but now they have been asked to participate in a housing inspection. What is this inspection, and why is it required?](#)

A “housing habitability” inspection ensures compliance with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s standards. Your unit must pass the inspection in order for you to receive assistance. This is not a Chicago Department of Buildings inspection and results will not be shared with them. The inspection will check that the unit has things like: working electricity and water, working fire and carbon monoxide detectors, and appropriate entrances and exits to the unit.

DFSS’s partner agency All Chicago will contact you to complete the inspection. Due to COVID-19, inspections are currently being done using recorded videos or a video chat, not in person.

How will I receive payment if I am awarded rental assistance?

After DFSS confirms that your tenant is eligible, you submit the required documents, and the unit passes a habitability inspection, DFSS or a partner agency will send a check directly to you (landlord or property manager) at the address you provide in your documents.