

State of Louisiana's U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Virtual Information Session - Two

March 31, 2021

Q&A

- **Q1: Can landlords apply directly or are renters also required to submit an application? Meaning, would a landlord's application be processed without the renter's application (e.g., in the case of an uncooperative renter).**

An application may be initiated by either a renter or a landlord, but information and supporting documentation will be collected from both parties before payment is made. Because both renters and landlords are critical to filing a single application under this program, both parties are strongly encouraged to participate to ensure that payments for past-due rent are disbursed in a timely manner.

Cooperation from the renter is critical to the successful processing of a complete application. More importantly, the rental assistance application requires a current executed rental agreement (or other applicable documentation proving rental obligation) that identifies the unit where the applicant currently resides and establishes the rental payment amount.

- **Q2: If a renter makes a false claim in regard to being unable to pay rent due to COVID-19, what responsibility does the landlord bear in that claim?**

Eligible renters must meet the following criteria under the state-administered emergency rental assistance program:

- Renter resides in a rental unit within a parish covered by the program
- At least one individual in the household qualified for unemployment benefits or experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs or experienced other financial hardship due directly or indirectly to COVID-19
- Renter has received a past due rent notice, past due utility notice or an eviction notice or is experiencing housing instability
- Household income does not exceed 80% of area median income limit (AMI) for the parish, as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

During the application process, the applicant must complete a series of questions in the Certifications and Acknowledgements section that serves as a form of attestation that the applicant has completed the application with accurate information to the best of his or her knowledge. Per program guidance, both renter and landlord applicants should be aware that their filing of an application is a legally binding

document. Applicants may be subject to civil and criminal penalties if they knowingly provide false or misleading information related to this application and that any attempt to defraud the State of Louisiana or misuse these funds will fully result in prosecution of the law.

- **Q3: After the renter applies and receives a confirmation number, do they send in their documents?**

As part of the application process, the applicant is required to upload several required documents to prove financial hardship, housing instability or risk of homelessness, validate income and taxpayer identification, lease obligation and authority to rent. Submitting this documentation or other alternatives, as necessary, is critical to ensuring the program can disburse rent payments in a timely manner. You may refer to the Applicant Journey file available under *Resources* page of the LAStateRent.com program site for a general overview of the application process.

- **Q4: I applied for rental assistance the day the program launched and have not heard anything from the program. I have renters who are several months behind on rent, as well as behind on utility payments. When will I hear from the program? How long does it normally take to hear from the program?**

The state-administered program prioritizes the primary goal of serving the maximum number of households as quickly as possible while prioritizing those in greatest need. After the system identifies a submitted application as being 100% completed, the applicant will be assigned a case manager and the system will electronically notify the applicant as the application advances through the review process. Applicants are advised to call the contact center at 877.459.6555 for real-time status updates of an application.

The sooner that renter applicants and their associated landlords can provide the required documentation during the filing of their applications, the more expeditiously those applications can be reviewed for payment processing. An application can be reviewed within 14 days when the online applicant portal system indicates that both the landlord and the renter have completed their applications to the 100%-mark and provided all the required documentation. While program case managers aim to address those applications comprehensively and expeditiously as they come into the online applicant portal system, some applications may face special challenges impacting the pace at which they are processed.

Utility assistance will not be offered by the state-administered program initially. However, this may be revalued based on program subscription rates and available funding.

- **Q5: What if I am paying a mortgage? Can I still apply for this program?**

Per the current guidance from the U.S. Treasury, funding from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program cannot be utilized to pay mortgages. The program can cover past-due rent dating back to as early as April 1, 2020 and forward rent paid in increments of up to three months.

- **Q6: What if renters are unwilling to provide required information or join? What can a landlord do?**

An application may be initiated by either a renter or a landlord, but information and supporting documentation will be collected from both parties before payment is made. Because both renters and landlords are critical to filing a single application under this program, both parties are strongly encouraged to participate to ensure that payments for past-due rent are disbursed in a timely manner.

Cooperation from an eligible renter is critical to the successful and expeditious processing of applications. More importantly, the rental assistance application requires a current executed rental agreement (or other applicable documentation proving rental obligation) that identifies the unit where the applicant currently resides and establishes the rental payment amount.

- **Q7: Once an application is approved, how long does it take for payment to be received? Does payment need to be made to avoid fees and eviction? Or are those fees waived while waiting for payment?**

Payments to the landlords may occur within approximately seven to ten calendar days following the final approval of the renter application. To ensure a timely disbursement of payment to the landlord, it is critical that the applicant upload a complete and signed [IRS Form W-9](#) along with providing any additional required information for payment. Disbursements are made either via check or ACH.

Confirmation of ACH account payment is performed after the application's final approval and prior to the initiation of payment transfer. The sooner a landlord responds to that request for payment information, the sooner the payment can be disbursed. All banking and payment information will be kept secure and will not be shared with any unauthorized parties.

Landlords participating in the state-administered program are required to commit to forgive late fees, penalties and interest and not charge for court costs. These fees are not covered in payments from the state-administered Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Additionally, landlords are required to commit to not evict a renter for the following: past due rent prior to April 2020 and at least (60) days after assistance ends unless eviction is for cause other than non-payment of rent. These are stipulations of the program that must be observed by eligible landlords.

- **Q8: Does the landlord have to have a W-9 to participate in the program? What if the landlord does not file taxes as a business and simply owns a property that is rented out to tenant(s)?**

Landlords participating in the application process must provide the following:

- Proof of authority to rent the property
- Proof of taxpayer identification, in the form of a signed [IRS Form W-9](#)
- Lease documentation

The [IRS Form W-9](#) form serves as a tool by which to confirm taxpayer identification for payment through the program. Additionally, the W-9 validates information that the landlord applicant enters in the *Business Details* section of the application. For questions or additional support in navigating the application, landlords may call the contact center at (877) 459-6555.

- ***Q9: How will we know when funding has run out, even for parishes that are administering their own programs?***

H.R. 133, the federal coronavirus relief package, allocated \$161 million to the State of Louisiana to provide emergency rental assistance for renter and landlord applicants across 57 parishes in the state. There is currently no deadline for application submissions to the state-administered program. However, applications will be accepted until all program funds are fully expended. Funds are limited and applicants are strongly encouraged to register via the program website to file their applications as soon as possible. Changes or updates on funding disbursements will be communicated publicly as that information becomes available.

Applicants in one of the other seven parishes, having elected to administer their own programs, are encouraged to contact their program-specific officials to obtain program funding updates.

- ***Q10: How long does it take for an application to be under review before a decision is made?***

The state-administered program prioritizes the critical need to serve the maximum number of households as quickly as possible while prioritizing those in greatest need. After the system identifies a submitted application as being 100% completed, the applicant will be assigned a case manager and the system will electronically notify the applicant as the application advances through the review process. Applicants may call the contact center at 877.459.6555 for real-time status updates of an application.

The sooner that renter applicants and their associated landlords can provide the required documentation during the filing of their applications, the more expeditiously those applications can be reviewed for payment processing. An application can be reviewed within 14 days when the online applicant portal system indicates that both the landlord and the renter have completed their applications to the 100%-completion mark and provided all the required documentation. While program case managers aim to address those applications comprehensively and expeditiously as they come into the online applicant portal system, some applications may face special challenges impacting the pace at which they are processed.

- ***Q11: Can you recoup money if a renter left owing you money?***

Per program policy guidance, a landlord would be unable to recoup past-due rent from a former tenant. The rental assistance application requires a current executed rental agreement or other applicable documentation proving rental obligation that identifies the unit where the applicant currently resides and establishes the rental payment amount.

- **Q12: When do we start the application for rental assistance?**

The state-administered program launched on March 5, 2021. There is currently no deadline for application submissions to the state-administered program. Applications will be accepted until all program funds are fully expended. Funds are limited and applicants are strongly encouraged to register via the program website to file their applications as soon as possible.

- **Q13: Can I see an exact list of what landlords are agreeing to in order to accept these types of payments?**

Landlords participating in the application process must provide the following:

- Proof of authority to rent the property
- Proof of taxpayer identification, in the form of a signed W-9
- Lease documentation

Landlords participating in the state-administered program are required to commit to forgive late fees, penalties and interest and not charge for court costs. These fees are not covered in payments from the state-administered Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Additionally, landlords are required to commit to not evict a renter for the following: past due rent prior to April 2020 and at least (60) days after assistance ends unless eviction is for cause other than non-payment of rent.

Refer to the useful guides under the *Resources* page for a listing of the requirements that landlords must meet to receive funding through the program. A program guide that details the policy guidance, including certifications and authorizations that must be met upon submission of a completed application is also available for review at LAStateRent.com.

- **Q14: Does it help with a mortgage?**

Per the current guidance from the U.S. Treasury, funding from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program cannot be used to pay mortgages. The program can cover past-due rent dating back to as early as April 1, 2020 and forward rent paid in increments of up to three months.

- **Q15: After approval, what is the time frame to receive the funds?**

Payments to the landlords may occur within approximately seven to ten calendar days following the final approval of the renter application. To ensure a timely disbursement of payment to the landlord, it is critical to already have uploaded a complete and signed IRS Form W-9 along with providing any additional required information for payment. Disbursements are made either via check or ACH.

Confirmation of ACH account payment is performed after the application's final approval and prior to the initiation of payment transfer. The faster a landlord responds to that request for payment information, the quicker the actual payment can be disbursed. All banking and payment information will be kept secure and will not be shared with any unauthorized parties.

- ***Q16: When should landlords start to receive payments for residents who have been approved for assistance?***

The state-administered program prioritizes the primary goal of serving the maximum number of households as quickly as possible while prioritizing those in greatest need. After the system identifies a submitted application as being 100% completed, the applicant will be assigned a case manager and the system will electronically notify the applicant as the application advances through the review process. Applicants may call the contact center at 877.459.6555 for real-time status updates of an application.

The sooner that renter applicants and their associated landlords can provide the required documentation during the filing of their applications, the more expeditiously those applications can be reviewed for payment processing. Applications are processed as they enter the system. For landlords with multiple renters, applications may enter the review queues at different times depending upon when the application is initiated and completed. Application approvals and related payment times will vary accordingly.

An application can be reviewed within 14 days when the online applicant portal system indicates that both the landlord and the renter have submitted their applications to the 100%-completion mark and provided all the required documentation. While program case managers aim to address those applications comprehensively and expeditiously as they come into the online applicant portal system, some applications may face special challenges impacting the pace at which they are processed.

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Confirmation of ACH account payment is performed after the application's final approval and prior to the initiation of payment transfer. The faster a landlord responds to that request for payment information, the quicker the actual payment can be disbursed. All banking and payment information will be kept secure and will not be shared with any unauthorized parties.

- ***Q17: Am I eligible as a landlord if my renter has not been paying rent?***

The state-administered Emergency Rental Assistance program is designed to provide emergency rental assistance to Louisiana residents who are at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both landlords and renters may apply to obtain assistance for past-due and forward rent payments. If you meet the eligibility requirements detailed on the *How to Apply* page of

LAStateRent.com, you are encouraged to apply for the program. Call our contact center at 877.459.6555 should you need additional support in filing your application.

- ***Q18: What happens when you are not sure whether your landlord's email is correct? Are landlords contacted in some way by the program?***

Renters and landlords must submit correct phone and email contact information in the online application portal to ensure timely payment of past-due rent. As part of the application, renters and landlords will need to invite the other party via email to participate in the application process and correct contact information will enable the system to connect the applications.

If you face challenges in filing your application online, including situations where a renter or landlord does not have an email address, you can call the contact center at 877.459.6555 for options and additional support.

- ***Q19: Can the landlord apply for rental assistance?***

The state-administered Emergency Rental Assistance program is designed to provide emergency rental assistance to Louisiana residents who are at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both landlords and renters may apply to obtain assistance for past-due and forward rent payments.

Because both renters and landlords are critical to filing a single application under this program, both parties are strongly encouraged to participate to ensure that payments for past-due rent are disbursed in a timely manner. If a landlord cannot apply, a renter may still be eligible if all other documentation can be submitted. Additional program requirements are in place to address situations involving a non-responsive or uncooperative landlord.

If you meet the eligibility requirements detailed on the *How to Apply* page of LAStateRent.com, you are encouraged to apply for the program. Call our contact center at 877.459.6555 should you need additional support in filing your application.

- ***Q20: My landlord does not have an email address, and I am strongly concerned this will delay my application approval. What can I do to avoid my application being delayed due to this missing information?***

Renters and landlords must submit correct phone and email contact information in the online application portal to ensure timely payment of past-due rent. As part of the application, renters and landlords will need to invite the other party via email to participate in the application process and correct contact information will enable the system to connect the applications.

The sooner that renter applicants and their associated landlords can provide the required documentation during the filing of their applications, the more expeditiously those applications can be reviewed for payment processing.

If you face challenges in filing your application online, including situations where a renter or landlord does not have an email address, you can call the contact center at 877.459.6555 for options and additional support.

- ***Q21: I am a public housing authority. Am I able to receive funds to help my renters or would this be considered duplication of benefits since we are federally funded?***

The state-administered Emergency Rental Assistance program and payments cannot be duplicated by any other federally funded rental assistance provided to an eligible household. Examples of this restriction are listed below.

An eligible household that occupies a federally subsidized residential or mixed-use property may receive Emergency Rental Assistance Program assistance, if those funds are not applied to costs that have been or will be reimbursed under any other assistance.

If an eligible household receives a monthly federal subsidy (e.g., a Housing Choice Voucher, public housing or project-based rental assistance) and the tenant rent is adjusted according to changes in income, the renter household may not receive Emergency Rental Assistance Program assistance.

If a household receives rental assistance other than the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, the assistance may only be used to pay for costs, such as the tenant-paid portion of rent and utility costs, that are not paid for by the other rental assistance. Pursuant to section 501(k)(3)(B) of Subdivision N of the Act and 2 CFR200.403, when providing Emergency Rental Assistance, the grantee must receive the household's income and sources of assistance to confirm that the Emergency Rental Assistance does not duplicate any other assistance, including federal, state and local assistance provided for the same costs.

- ***Q22: I rent from an individual, and there is no lease or paperwork. What other type of proof will work in this circumstance?***

An eligible renter can apply without a written lease. The renter applicant is required to provide documentation establishing an obligation of payment to the landlord. Documents proving the renter's obligation to pay rent can include a current lease or alternate documentation, including canceled rental checks, money orders, etc.

Visit the [LASStateRent.com](https://www.LASStateRent.com) site and refer to the *How to Apply* page, user guides under the Resources page and instructions posted in the *Apply Now* link on the page for the options to provide required documentation.

- **Q23: Are individuals residing in the local public housing authority eligible for this program?**

Emergency Rental Assistance Program and payments cannot be duplicated by any other federally funded rental assistance provided to an eligible household. Examples of this restriction are listed below.

An eligible household that occupies a federally subsidized residential or mixed-use property may receive Emergency Rental Assistance Program assistance, if those funds are not applied to costs that have been or will be reimbursed under any other assistance.

If an eligible household receives a monthly federal subsidy (e.g., a Housing Choice Voucher, public housing or project-based rental assistance) and the tenant rent is adjusted according to changes in income, the renter household may not receive Emergency Rental Assistance Program assistance.

If a household receives rental assistance other than from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, the ERA assistance may only be used to pay for costs, such as the tenant-paid portion of rent and utility costs, that are not paid for by the other rental assistance. Pursuant to section 501(k)(3)(B) of Subdivision N of the Act and 2 CFR200.403, when providing ERA assistance, the grantee must receive the household's income and sources of assistance to confirm that the ERA assistance does not duplicate any other assistance, including federal, state and local assistance provided for the same costs.

- **Q24: If my landlord is unable to file his application while I file my application, will this lag impact for opportunity to receive assistance?**

An application may be initiated by either a renter or a landlord, but information and supporting documentation will be collected from both parties before payment is made. Because both renters and landlords are critical to filing a single application under this program, both parties are strongly encouraged to participate to ensure that payments for past-due rent are disbursed in a timely manner. If a landlord cannot apply, a renter may still be eligible if all other documentation can be submitted. Additional program requirements are in place to address situations involving a non-responsive or uncooperative landlord.

- **Q25: How long is the application review period, and how will my application be impacted by the upcoming expiration of the eviction moratorium?**

The state-administered program prioritizes the primary goal of serving the maximum number of households as quickly as possible while prioritizing those in greatest need. After the system identifies a submitted application as being 100% completed, the applicant will be assigned a case manager and the system will electronically notify the applicant as the application advances through the review process. Applicants may call the contact center at 877.459.6555 for real-time status updates of an application.

The sooner that renter applicants and their associated landlords can provide the required documentation during the filing of their applications, the more expeditiously those applications can be reviewed for

payment processing. An application can be reviewed within 14 days when the online applicant portal system indicates that both the landlord and the renter have completed their applications to the 100%-completion mark and provided all the required documentation. While program case managers aim to address those applications comprehensively and expeditiously as they come into the online applicant portal system, some applications may face special challenges impacting the pace at which they are processed.

On March 29, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) extended the eviction moratorium through June of this year. The extended moratorium and its enforcement are critical to supporting Louisiana renters and landlords to maintain families housed during the pandemic. Additional information regarding the moratorium is available on [LStateRent.com](https://www.lastaterent.com) at the bottom half of the page.

- **Q26: A link to my parish on the [LStateRent.com](https://www.lastaterent.com) website does not work; what can I do?**

We apologize for any inconvenience and have addressed the matter. Refresh your browser and navigate back to the ribbon at the top of the landing page of [LStateRent.com](https://www.lastaterent.com) to access direct links to the programs being administered by Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans and St. Tammany.

- **Q27: Where on the site is the link for Lafayette residents?**

On the landing page of [LStateRent.com](https://www.lastaterent.com), you will see a ribbon at the top of your screen listing out the seven parishes administering their own emergency rental assistance programs: Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans and St. Tammany. Click the link there and you will be brought to a listing of those parishes located further down on the website landing page. By clicking on the name of your parish, you will be taken directly to those individual programs for guidance on applying for parish-specific assistance.

- **Q28: What parishes are not included in this program?**

The state-administered Emergency Rental Program covers 57 parishes, with the exception of Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans and St. Tammany. Those parishes received a direct allocation from the U.S. Treasury and elected to administer their own programs. Local programs may vary in terms of eligibility, prioritization, benefits and application process, and applicants are encouraged to reach out to those programs directly.

Renters and landlords in these seven parishes cannot apply to the state's program and are encouraged to contact their local representatives of their respective parish program. The state's website [LStateRent.com](https://www.lastaterent.com) contains direct links to the parish-specific programs.

- **Q29: Will a recording of this session be available for future viewing?**

Yes. We will post recordings of these sessions for on-demand viewing through our program website at [LStateRent.com](https://www.lastaterent.com).

- **Q30: Are there any Spanish speakers at the contact center?**

Yes. We have Spanish-speaking representatives at our contact center ready and able to assist you with addressing questions or issues related to the program. Call 877.459.6555 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.