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Updates to \$20 million rental assistance program

Renters impacted by COVID-19 may be eligible for rent payment assistance

SALT LAKE CITY (Aug. 5, 2020) — With the end of the federal \$600 weekly unemployment benefit, the Housing and Community Development Division of the Utah Department of Workforce Services has adjusted the eligibility requirements for the pandemic housing assistance program. Those who are receiving unemployment benefits may now be eligible to receive rental assistance. Previously, only renters who were not receiving unemployment benefits were eligible.

The program is targeted to help renters whose income has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and who have a household income at or below the area median income. The program can pay up to \$2,000 a month for rent and utilities.

“We continue to adjust the housing assistance program as the landscape of the pandemic changes,” said Jess Peterson, State Housing Programs Manager at the Housing and Community Development Division. “Our goal is to help people stay in their homes and maintain the stability of their families during these hard times.”

The Utah Legislature approved using federal CARES Act funds for the housing assistance program and directed the Utah Housing and Community Development Division to administer the program. Before that funding was available, the division also used other federal funding from HUD to provide pandemic rental assistance starting in May 2020.

Since launching in May, the program has assisted 285 Utah households to stay in their homes with a total of \$383,103 in rent and rent-related payments. The housing assistance program is being implemented throughout the state by local nonprofit agencies.

To learn more about eligibility and where to apply, renters should call 2-1-1 to find their local agency. Callers should be aware that there may be wait times, or that they may need to leave a voicemail message so that staff can call them back.

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