

RC ERAP System for Prioritization of Rental Assistance

The Rockingham County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (“RC ERAP”) places an emphasis on providing assistance to those tenants with the greatest need. Per U.S. Treasury requirements, prioritization of assistance must be given to households with incomes less than 50% of the Area Median income (“AMI”) and/or have one or more members that have been unemployed 90 days or more prior to the application date.

Rockingham County purchased a tenant listing that specifically targeted renters whose household income was less than 50% of the Area Median Income and sent each of them a postcard that provided a brief description of the RC ERAP, and how they could start the application process.

The County also enlisted the services of Unqork in setting up its ERAP system, which would automatically calculate what percentage AMI category did an applicant fall into. Specific questions regarding unemployment are part of the RC ERAP online application process, including one that inquires if the tenant applicant has been unemployed for 90 days or more prior to applying for assistance.

The County conducted a brief training about its ERAP system with welfare office partners from all 37 of its municipalities (36 towns, 1 city), and provided information about the RC ERAP. Since these individuals’ clientele for other aid programs would most likely fall under the 50% AMI threshold, the goal was that this outreach to welfare partners would result in the welfare officers either assisting tenants directly with applications in the RC ERAP system or referring them directly to County personnel for help in applying for assistance from the RC ERAP.

The County has been doing outreach to local housing authorities, property management companies and apartment complexes to spread word about the RC ERAP. When compiling the weekly listing of completed applications for assistance, priority is given to households with incomes less than 50% of the Area Median income (“AMI”) and/or have one or more members that have been unemployed 90 days or more prior to the application date. Personnel running the RC ERAP onsite make sure that assistance is processed for these individuals as timely as possible, with assistance payments issued weekly. Follow-up communications via email and/or phone call are done with applicants in this category, to inform them of the possibilities of continued assistance under the RC ERAP.