

**McHenry County Emergency Utility
and Rental Assistance Program
(MC-EURAP)
www.McHenryRent.com**



Policies and Procedures



This project is being supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number CFDA 21.013 awarded to McHenry County by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Program Guidelines

Program Description

The McHenry County Utility and Rental Assistance Program (MC-EURAP) provides emergency rental and utility assistance to income-eligible individuals and families who the COVID-19 Pandemic has economically impacted. Eligible households may receive up to twelve months of past due rent from April 1, 2020 to present. For housing stability purposes applicants may be eligible for rental assistance going forward for a total of 18 months of assistance. Three months of payments going forward may be paid out on approval of initial application. Additional time may be eligible as determined by staff that extra months are needed to ensure housing stability and funds are available. In some cases, this will necessitate the need to obligate funds to ensure long-term stability. Past-due utility payments for energy and water bills are eligible for assistance if deemed necessary to stabilize the household. For energy assistance, applicants must first apply for LIHEAP assistance (if LIHEAP is available at the time of the application) before EURAP grant funds are used. Rental and utility payments will be made directly to a qualified landlord, property management agent, or utility company. Landlords may apply on behalf of eligible tenants, and tenants will be sent an invite to complete the tenant's application portion. The tenants must participate for the landlords to receive funding. If the landlord is refusing or unable to participate, the tenant is still eligible for benefits payable directly to the landlord.

The Pandemic has directly impacted low-income individuals and families' ability to find affordable rental housing in the County. The eviction moratorium and McHenry County's the low vacancy rate has created a need for temporary emergency shelter housing. The program may fund emergency hotel/motel stays for up to three months. Relocation costs consisting of the first and last month's rent and security deposit and fees are eligible costs, plus additional rental ongoing assistance as indicated above upon recertification. Ongoing rental payments will require re-certification by the tenants and will be prioritized for tenants at imminent risk of homelessness.

Recertification for prospective payments may be reauthorized through a "Continuing Assistance Attestation Form" signed by a participating household. This would be done to prevent barriers to client program entry and ongoing need for assistance, as indicated by the Treasury.

Purpose: Is to prevent evictions and homelessness locally.

Effective Date: March 20, 2020- September 30, 2024

Program Parameters:

- A. Rental and Utility Assistance for those in arrears or facing imminent default or propensity to become homeless, receiving unemployment, or affect directly or indirectly by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- B. Eligible residents may receive a provision of assistance, of up to 18 months, under this program, through the life of the program and as funds are available.

Rental payment in arrears must be prioritized, and future assistance will be awarded for up to three months at a time. Households may re-apply for additional help at the end of the three months if needed, and the overall time

limit for assistance is not exceeded. The Neighborly program will email out follow up reports once a quarter to clients when it's time to re-apply. Applicants will need to recertify for additional funding every three months, which may be authorized through the aforementioned "Continuing Assistance Attestation Form."

Additional documentation beyond the "Continuing Assistance Attestation Form" may be required for re-certification. In other cases, the level of assistance provided to a household will be "titrated downward" as the household income levels increase. An outreach worker system will be established to link clients to available resources such as job programs, entitlement benefits, and other forms of resource as they move away from the need for the program.

- C. Rental payments going forward cannot be processed until rent is brought current.
- D. Funding for this program is available to McHenry County residents whose housing stability has been directly affected by COVID.
- E. Ideally, a Landlord/Property Manager would be willing to participate, complete required documentation, and accept 3rd party payee from the McHenry County Housing Authority to ensure documentation of the need for assistance. Participation by the landlord and property manager is not a requirement, and the timeframe for a landlord or property manager to reply to the request will be the length of time required by Treasury guidelines at the time the application is made, which may change from time to time.
- F. Landlords may apply for assistance for qualified tenants. However, tenants will be required to complete the tenant portion of the application and provide the necessary documentation
- G. All assistance is provided as a third party payment on behalf of the resident and paid directly to the landlord or/utility service by the McHenry County Housing Authority on behalf of the resident.
- H. The Program is First Come/First Served of a completed application (including required documents). Applications will be rated based on the program's priority list (see below) Clients at or below 200% of the poverty limit (see chart below) will be referred to MCHA's CSBG for assistance if they require 6 months or less assistance.
- I. Intake Assessment prevents duplication of services and ensures that eligible McHenry County residents are receiving rental and utility assistance directly related to COVID-19.
- J. The McHenry County Community Development Department's approval is required before payment of funds to landlord and utility companies.
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- L. Applicants found ineligible for MC-EURAP will be referred to other programs and or provided a copy of MCHA's Resource directory
- M. Funding is available to assist applicants with security deposits and rental fees who are temporarily or permanently displaced due to the Pandemic.
- N. Costs for hotel or motel room occupied by an eligible household are eligible as "other expenses" related to incurred due, directly or indirectly, to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Funding is limited to three-month increments. Priority will be for households with Children, Elderly (65yrs), and households with persons with disabilities.
- O. Funding is available to assist applicants with moving costs. These costs must be applied for by a navigator or a Case manager.

Priority List for Any Assistance:

- a. Facing eviction due to being behind in rental payments, or having the propensity for an eviction case to be

filed;

- b. Being at or below 30% of the Area Median Income would be the highest priority;
- c. Being in an area in which at least 44.61% of the population have a household income of 80% or less of Area Median Income (this measure is included to prevent slums and blight);
- d. Households with at least one dependent or in which a resident is age 62 or better (this measure prevents more vulnerable populations from being compromised through an eviction or homelessness);
- e. Having a demonstrated rental burden of more than 30%, and especially those higher than 50% or more, prior to the Pandemic (this measure prevents difficult-to-rehouse households from becoming homeless, as they would likely not qualify for new housing due to the rent levels in the County);
- f. Being significantly behind in rent (defined as six or more months behind) in rent at the time of application for assistance.
- g. Households with Children temporarily living in Hotel/Motels

Applicant Eligibility: To be eligible for MC-EURAP, an applicant must provide:

- A. Proof of residency (id, utility bill matching lease address)
- B. Loss of income/housing stability must be directly related to COVID-19 (i.e., verifiable proof of loss of income effective 3/13/2020, forward) Applicant may self-certify.
- C. Income Qualify PY2021 AMI 80% - subject to annual changes (see chart below)
- D. Not currently receiving emergency housing assistance.
Any individual, family, household, business, or other entity that receives a duplicative benefit, must repay the County.
- E. Applicants from housing programs in which tax credit and investments from the HOME Investment Partnerships Program are eligible to apply. Qualified Section 8 and Public Housing applicants may receive funding for the "tenants" portion of the rent payment.
- F. Resident must offer verification of past due rent amount or may be current on their rent but provided they are at risk of imminent default, as determined by financial review.
- G. Must have an existing lease, or certify residency through presentation of a utility bill. Every effort should be made to have a lease enforced for rental assistance going forward in consideration of payments.

Eligible Expenses: Rent (including arrears) and past due utility assistance not included in rent. Emergency hotel/motel shelter stays, first month's rent, fees and security deposit for applicants who are currently homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

This program is made available to McHenry County Residents who fall under Income Limit Guidelines below Program Year 2021 Income Guidelines									
Program Year 2021 Income Limit Area	Program Year 2020 Income Limit Category	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
	Extremely Low-Income Limits (30%)	\$19,600	\$22,400	\$25,200	\$27,950	\$31,040	\$35,580	\$40,120	\$44,660
	200 % Poverty CSBG/LIHEAPn income Limits (30 days)	\$25,764	\$34,836	\$43,920	\$53,004	\$62,076	\$71,160	\$80,244	\$89,316
	Very Low-Income Limits (50%)	\$32,650	\$37,300	\$41,950	\$46,600	\$50,350	\$54,100	\$57,800	\$61,550
	Low-Income Limits (80%)	\$52,200	\$59,650	\$67,100	\$74,550	\$80,550	\$86,500	\$92,450	\$98,450

Process:

DISTINCT INTERNAL ROLES REQUIRED TO COMPLETE PROCESS:

1. **McHenry County CD Division- Application Review & Approval for Payment**
Bianca Gonzalez blgonzalez@mchenrycountyil.gov
Joseph Davis jadavis@mchenrycountyil.gov
Brandon Kyker BJKyker@mchenrycountyil.gov
2. **McHenry County Housing Authority-Intake Review & Payments to Landlord/Utility**
Intake Coordinators: Brooke Rosenquist BRosenquist@mchenrycountyhousing.org
Haley Herman HHerman@mchenrycountyhousing.org Kristen
Hanson KHanson@mchenrycountyhousing.org
3. **Home of the Sparrow: Navigator Assistance**
Navigators Elizabeth Heneks eheneks@hosparrow.org and Stephanie Sinnett ss@hosparrow.org
4. **Consumer Credit Counseling Services: Navigator Assistance**
Navigators Maureen Gates: mgates@illinoiscccs.org Erika Chavez: echavez@illinoiscccs.org
5. **Veterans Path to HOPE (formerly TLS)**
Navigators Kelly McDonald: kmcdonald@vphope.org

STEP 1: HOW TO APPLY

- The following criteria determine preliminary eligibility of resident:
 - Housing Instability due to COVID-19 (Beginning on or after 3/20/2020)
 - Resident to complete application via Neighborly Participant <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/ERAP-MCHENRYCOUNTYIL/Participant>
 - Landlords will automatically be invited to complete the landlord portion of the application
 - Landlord applying on behalf of a tenant will complete the Landlord section of the application at <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/ERAP-MCHENRYCOUNTYIL/Landlord>
 - The tenants will automatically be invited to apply and complete the tenant portion of the application
 - Paper applications may be printed and mailed to or deposited at MCHA's drop box located at 1108 N Seminary (Rt 47), Woodstock, IL 60047
 - Paper applications will be available at MCHA's Office, CCCS, County Planning and Development (Suite 208), and HOS offices for client to pick-up
 - Persons without a personal computer or needing reasonable accommodations will be referred to Home

of the Sparrow or Consumer Credit Counseling for navigation assistance

- Assistance available at HOS and CCCS for the use of a computer or to receive a paper application
- CCCS Navigators can assist clients who require a Spanish speaker
- HOS and CCCS Navigators can assist clients with gathering the needed documentation and outreach to landlords for required paperwork
- HOS and CCCS may add themselves as a participant to the application in order to assist clients and track the application progress
 - ✓ HOS and CCCS Navigators will provide an MCHA resource guide, or other resources for job search assistance, budgeting, other barriers or concerns as brought up in communication with the resident

STEP 2: APPLICATION/ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

- All applications to be submitted through the Neighborly online platform
 - If, for accessibility reasons, a hard copy is received via mail or email, **date stamp documents** for internal verification/documentation of First Come/First Serve
 - Start a new application and upload all hard copies to Neighborly (this will be completed the same as online application. Anyone entering in a paper application must note it in the application)
- Ensure application is complete - A complete application has **ALL** supporting documents required
 - **ALL** applications must include the following documentation uploaded to the appropriate Neighborly section or the "Required Documents" Page:
 - ✓ Copy of verification that current housing instability is directly related to COVID-19 (Unemployment award letter, a letter from employer on furlough, lay-off/loss of job, reduced hours).
 - ✓ Copy of Driver's License or State Issued I.D. card for each household member or the age of 18
 - ✓ Proof of family size – must include at least one of the following: (for under 18yrs.)
 - Copy of Birth Certificates for each household member
 - Copy of Social Security Card for each household member
 - Copy of 2020 or 2019 tax return with dependents listed
 - Copy of School ID
 - Baptismal Certificate
 - Lease agreement listing other and other tenants
 - SNAP letter
- For rental assistance, also include **ALL** of the following:
 - Copy of current Lease/Rental Agreement
 - Eviction Notice, if received, with the total amount due to bring rent or lease current*

- Current utility bill to confirm residency
- For utility assistance, required copies of the most recent bill (gas, electric, water)
- For past due amount in excess of \$750.00 Payment log from March 2020 to current bill will be needed (please see our tutorial on how to acquire these from the utility company at ****)
- *Verification of imminent default through financial review can be used in lieu of this documentation*
- Copy of Bank statements in their ENTIRETY, all pages, from **all accounts** for the **last sixty days** (from the date of applications for **each** household member over the age of 18) **OR** certification in Neighborly of "No Bank Account" on the Assets page
- Copy of **ALL GROSS INCOME** for the last 60 days (from the date of the application for **each** household member over the age of 18 years) including all forms of income and pay, the current year Social Security award letter(s) Retirement Benefits, Unemployment award letter(s), child support, etc.
 - Also acceptable is the certification of No Income (if applicable, for **each** household member over the age of 18) on the "Income" page in Neighborly
- If self-employed FEINTax ID#
- If newly employed at a reduced rate or less income, written verification of new employment, showing weekly hours, rate of pay 1st payday, start date, employer contact information
- Copy of Child Support orders for each child in household and Divorce Decree (if applicable, for **each** household member over the age of 18)
- Copy of benefit letter from S.S., SSI, DES, or TANF (if applicable, for **each** household member over the age of 18)
- Certified Government Benefit Form in Neighborly for applicant and household, with requested back up for **each** household member over the age of 18 uploaded to the "Required Documents" Page. *Driver's License or State Issued ID fulfills this requirement*
 - One form to be completed and signed in Neighborly by the applicant for themselves and all other household members over the age of 18
- 2020 Tax returns. 2019 returns will be accepted
 - Or Resident can certify non-filing on the Income Tax Certification page in Neighborly, if applicable
 - Resident to complete 3rd Party Authorization, granting permission for MCHA to contact Landlord/Utility Company/ other MCHA program to share and receive required information regarding account status
- MCHA Intake Coordinator to review supporting documents
 - ✓ Reviewer will "link" the tenant application and the landlord application or portion (if/when available)
 - ✓ Pull a property profile to verify the owner of record at <https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-iz/treasurer> Take a Print/screenshot displaying property owner information and upload to the "Documents" page in Neighborly
- If the application is *incomplete*, create the email for missing documents via Neighborly task
 - ✓ Reopen any areas of the application where adjustments or additions are required
 - ✓ Remind Resident to upload to the appropriate area in the

application and use Messages function associated with task, if needed

- ✓ Assign due date of one week
 - ✓ If a hard copy was submitted, highlight missing documents on the Notification of Documents required form and send it to the resident, notify resident application will not be processed until all documents are received.
- When all required file documents are accounted for, complete income verification forms, using the following and save each to case file in Neighborly:
 - ✓ CPD Income Calculator <https://www.hudexchange.info/incomecalculator/>
 - ✓ MC-EURAP income calculation spreadsheet, found in MC-EURAP file on the shared drive
 - ✓ Must have calculator tape attached to income calc sheet
 - For rental assistance, if income eligibility is determined and if not already submitted, add a Neighborly task for the resident to send Landlord packet to Landlord/Property Manager for completion
 - ✓ Forms provided by the resident to Landlord in Landlord Packet
 - ✓ Rent ledger or letter with past due amount
 - ✓ W-9 with valid EIN to be submitted by Landlord/Property Manager with a completed packet
 - ✓ Lease or documentation for lease extension
 - ✓ For Motel/Hotel Letter and bill confirming date approved stay upon payment
 - Upon receipt, review the Landlord packet for accuracy and completion of the required information
 - Reviewer will "link" landlord and tenant together
 - Download and print a full copy of application and document for MCHA's paper file. ?
 - If ineligible, MCHA Intake Coordinator will change the case status to Denied/Ineligible under "Status."
 - ✓ MCHA Intake Coordinator to prepare Denial Letter (Neighborly Task) with a clear explanation of determination and obtain the signature of the MCHA Senior Staff via DocuSign or in-person
 - ✓ Email Denial Determination letter to the resident
 - Provide MCHA's Resource Guide and, if appropriate, referral to other resources or programs
 - Residents needing longer-term assistance or housing instability unrelated to COVID-19 may be referred to TBRA or other housing resources

STEP 3: PAYMENT INFORMATION AND DRAW REQUEST

- MCHA's Intake Coordinator will go to the Budget for applicant and select payments to be made for rent in arrears, rent, and or utilities by selecting "add budget item"
- Confirm the amount entered matches the amount of assistance approved
- Each completed application package will require 2 MCHA signatures for approval (Neighborly Task) prior to submitting for approval
- Once all the amounts are entered, the reviewer will select the 'draws folder' and click add a draw.
- The reviewer will submit the draw request to the County "the approver" the will see draw pending on their dash board

STEP 4: COUNTY APPROVING ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS

- **Approval Process:**

- Re: MC-EURAP Housing Stability Program Applicant Eligibility
- Proof of McHenry County Residency
- H.H. Size: #
- H.H. Income: \$
- Income Limit: 80%
- Determination: Eligible/Ineligible
- Requested assistance:
 - Rental: \$ for (months eligible) @ \$/month
 - Utilities: \$ for (months eligible) @ \$/month

- McHenry County CD Division to review draw request

- ✓ Payee Information:

- Primary Payee Name – Rent/Mortgage payee
- EIN – taxpayer I.D. number
- Payee mailing address
- Upload: W-9 if available; otherwise, EIN Sheet with appropriate EIN highlighted
- Score applicant with inclusion of Low-Mod Area Benefit, Rent Burden, and Priority Population

- ✓ Audit: HMIS Information

- Demographic information
- Project costs
- Household information
- Service Area

- ✓ McHenry County CD then marks the Neighborly task "Approved" and informs MCHA of the final "score" for the household.

- **STEP 5: PAYMENT INFORMATION AND DRAW REQUEST**

- MCHA's Intake Coordinator to complete award letter, including a breakdown of payments to be made, and
 - ✓ Email/mail a copy to resident/ Hotel/Motel and or landlord
 - ✓ Provide an MCHA resource guide, or other resources for job search assistance, other barriers or concerns as brought up in communication with the resident
- Upon McHenry County CD approval, MCHA's Fiscal Assistant will create an account(s) in MIP and client set-up or import data from the Custom Draw Report
- The Fiscal Officer will review and approve payments to landlords and utility companies prior to submitting ACH payment or physical check being printed.
- Once the payment has been processed the Intake Coordinator will complete award letter email, including a breakdown of payments to be made, and
 - ✓ Email/mail a copy to resident and or landlord
- Provide an MCHA resource guide, or other resources for job search assistance, other barriers or concerns as brought up in communication with the resident

- All completed client files will be stored in the Fiscal Assistant's office
- Also Included in the file is a hard copy of the backup documentation
 - ✓ W-9 or EIN Information
 - ✓ Award email
 - ✓ Payment information, including utility bills, coupons
 - ✓ Signed Supervisor approval
- MCHA Reimbursement Draws and fund replenishments will be completed by the Fiscal Officer with the assistance of the Fiscal Assistant and approved by the Executive Director /Deputy Director
 - ✓ Draws will include:
 - ✓ Letter requesting funds & required CD draw requisition form
 - ✓ Spreadsheet listing documents
 - ✓ All invoice documentation and proof of payment
 - ✓ For staff time- timesheets, copy of paystubs and benefit percentages
 - ✓ A copy of each draw will be stored in the Fiscal Officer's office
- MC-EURAP funds replenished by submitting an invoice and cover letter as well as a spreadsheet identifying how the EURAP funds. Funds will be transferred in \$500,000 increments.

STEP 6: FOLLOW-UP

- One week after the check(s) is issued, MCHA Fiscal Assistant to ensure all payments to Landlord/Lender and Utility Company(s) have been received
- If the resident has not utilized all available rental assistance
 - The MCHA Intake Coordinator will change the case status to "Open."

STEP 5: RE-CERTIFY- PROCESS (Applicants may re-apply for future assistance for if needed). Additional utility bill can be paid if they are late.

- MCHA intake worker or community outreach worker will follow-up with applicants who have not re-certified for additional assistance and change status to pending applicant information
- Applicant signs into Neighborly and completes addendum to their application and uploads the required updated documents. If applicant submitted 2020 tax returns no additional income documentation is required. If no changes to family income applicant can sign a "No Change" attestation. "Continuing Assistance Attestation Form"
- The procedures will move to STEP 2 in the process and follow the same steps
- MCHA Fiscal Assistant will take the lead for processing re-certifications