



## CAYUGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

May 3, 2021

#### **Emergency Rental Assistance for Cayuga County tenants and landlords coming soon**

New York lawmakers in a vote today extended the state's COVID-19 eviction moratorium through the end of August 2021. Tenants who can attest to financial hardship due to the pandemic are protected from evictions for another four months. This will give tenants and landlords impacted by COVID-19 time to apply for a new rental assistance program.

The federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) allows tenants and landlords to apply for rental and utilities arrears payments. New York State, through the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (NYS OTDA), is making \$2.4 billion available to help eligible households who are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the pandemic. Mobile home rent and utility payments are eligible for assistance.

#### **You qualify if**

- An individual in your household has qualified for unemployment benefits or experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant cost, or experienced other financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- An individual in your household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- Your household has a household income at or below 80% of the area median income. Maximal annual incomes for Cayuga County start at \$39,850 for a one-person household.

#### **If you qualify**

- Your landlord may receive rent arrears payments of up to 12 months and prospective rent payments of up to 3 months. Funds may be used to pay a former landlord.
- Your landlord or a public utility company may receive utility arrears payments of up to 12 months.
- You may be eligible for certain relocation or displacement expenses.

NYS OTDA is expected to open an online portal sometime later in May that enables tenants and landlords to apply for rental arrears payment assistance. If eligible, these payments will be made to participating landlords directly. Details on the process and required documentation are expected soon.

Funds for this program are limited and made available regionally. No specific amount has been allocated to Cayuga County. Once the application process opens up, funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until the regional allocation is exhausted. Cayuga County is launching an intensive outreach and marketing campaign over the next few weeks to alert tenants and landlords about this opportunity. The newly created resource page [www.cayugacounty.us/renthelp](http://www.cayugacounty.us/renthelp) will be updated when more details on the program become available.

The Department of Social services along with community agencies are preparing to assist clients with eligibility questions, securing documentation, and completing the online application. Landlords with qualifying tenants are encouraged to discuss this program with them and help them apply when the time comes.

“We want to make sure our tenants and landlords are informed and ready to apply when the state portal opens,” says **Ray Bizzari, Director of Community Services**, “In partnership with community agencies we’ll do everything we can to assist eligible households access the much-needed funds to pay local landlords.”

**In the meantime, renters and landlords can**

- Sign up on the county website to receive automatic [Alerts](#) about updates for this program. Scroll down to the Alert Center, select Coronavirus COVID-19 Updates, and select how you would like to receive the alert (text or email).
- Review [Frequently Asked Questions](#) from the U.S. Department of Treasury regarding eligibility and other requirements. When NY-specific guidance becomes available, it will be posted on the county website.
- Start compiling documentation, such as copies of your lease agreement, proof of income, and the rent and utilities you owe.

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