



# HOUSING PROVIDER AND UTILITY PROVIDER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

## OVERVIEW

The STAY DC (Stronger Together Assisting You) program is designed to provide financial assistance to households within the District that are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

## ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY

Under this program, eligible households can receive financial assistance to cover housing-related costs incurred after April 1, 2020.

	ELIGIBLE Expenses	INELIGIBLE Expenses NOT Covered
<b>RENT</b>	Monthly rental payments (future and past due rent) from an eligible rental household Limited Equity Cooperatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Full rental arrears beginning April 1st, 2020</li><li>○ Future rental costs up to 3 months</li></ul> <b>Note:</b> Utilities included as part of the rental payments to a Housing Provider is considered as rent for the purpose of this program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Mortgage payments</li><li>○ Maintenance costs</li><li>○ Home security</li><li>○ Landscaping and lawn care</li><li>○ Homeowners association fees</li><li>○ Security deposits</li></ul>
<b>UTILITIES</b>	Eligible utility costs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Electricity</li><li>○ Gas</li><li>○ Water and sewer</li></ul>	Ineligible utility costs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Cable</li><li>○ Internet access</li></ul>

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Housing Providers and utility providers play a critical role by helping connect renters and customers in need with the assistance available through the STAY DC Program.

If you have a renter or customer who needs assistance with past due rent or utility payments, you can:

- Share information about the program and the application process with them;
- Encourage them to complete the eligibility precheck and collect required documents;
- Work with tenants to exchange current email addresses, providing tenants with your correct Housing Provider email address to use in the application process;
- Remind tenants and customers that if they are unable to complete the online application, they can have a family member, friend, or a designated Community Based Organization (CBO) assist them in completing the application (all required documentation must be submitted with application); and
- If you have on site computers, create opportunities for tenants to use them for applying.

## HOUSING PROVIDER APPLICATION PROCESS

Housing Providers can initiate an application on the online portal at [stay.dc.gov](https://stay.dc.gov) and provide a valid email address for your tenant so that an automated notification can be sent to them to separately provide household information in the tenant portal.

NOTE: You can begin the application independently from your tenant. If your application is completed before the tenant, the tenant will be provided with a unique application code with which to begin their applicant and link their information to yours.

Conversely, if your tenant begins the application before you, a system-generated email will provide you with a unique 7-digit code with which you can use to begin the Housing Provider application and also link both applications.

After a tenant completes an online application you will be notified of the application via email and will be directed to login to the application portal to:

- VERIFY TENANT INFORMATION
- AGREE TO THE TERMS OF THE CERTIFICATION NOT TO EVICT FOR ANY ARREARS OR NONPAYMENT DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

If you are unable to complete the online application, you can have a family member, friend, or a designated Community Based Organization (CBO) assist you in completing the application (all required documentation must be submitted with application). See the list below for the CBO closest to you. For immediate question about this application you can contact our **Customer Care Center at 833-4-STAYDC (833-478-2932)** from **7am to 7pm ET, Monday through Friday**.

Beginning in May 2021, the following community-based organizations (CBO) can assist you in filling out an application:

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Phone number</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Ward</b>
<b>Catholic Charities</b>	202-338-3100	2812 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, WDC 20020	<b>7</b>
<b>GW Urban League</b>	202-265-8200	2901 14th Street, NW, WDC 20009	<b>1</b>
<b>Salvation Army (SE)</b>	202-678-9771	2300 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE, WDC 20032	<b>8</b>
<b>Salvation Army (NW)</b>	202-332-5000	1434 Harvard Street, NW, Suite B, WDC, 20009	<b>1</b>
<b>Housing Counseling</b>	202-667-7339	2410 17th Street, NW, Suite 100, WDC 20009	<b>1</b>
<b>UPO</b>	202-231-7910	2907 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE WDD, 20032	<b>8</b>

## **USE OF FUNDS**

Housing Providers and utility providers must apply all payments received to satisfy each individual tenant's rental obligation and customer's utility obligation

Note: Tenants must meet all program eligibility requirements to be eligible for the program.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. I have a tenant that owes back rent but for unknown reasons is not willing to cooperate to apply for assistance through the program. Can I apply directly as their Housing Provider?**

**No.** Housing Providers can initiate an application or validate information provided by their tenant. Each tenant household will be required to complete the application process and provides all documentation required for the application. A Housing Provider cannot be paid unless a tenant household application has been approved based on eligibility requirements.

- 2. As a Housing Provider, how will I know if my tenant has applied and what do I need to do?**

If your tenant submits an application, you will receive a system generated email with a unique 7-digit code and a link for you to apply on the Housing Provider portal. Please retain this code as you will be required to enter this 7-digit code at the start of your application to link your responses to the application initiated by your Housing Provider.

To minimize any processing issues, please work to provide your valid and correct email address to your tenant so that you can receive the notification email.

- 3. As a utility provider, how will I know if my customer has applied and what do I need to do?**

As with prior utility assistance programs, the District will work closely with utility providers to validate your listing of customers with outstanding balances. Through this direct effort, we will confirm which customers have applied and for which periods or amounts assistance is sought.

- 4. If the Housing Provider and tenant applications are approved, how will a Housing Provider get paid?**

The DC STAY program is designed to make payments directly to the Housing Providers. As part of the Housing Provider application process, you will be required to provide your remittance address which is the mailing location to which a check payment will be mailed. Please ensure that you provide a valid address to minimize potential delivery issues.

- 5. How will payments be made to utility providers?**

Once an eligible renter's utility assistance request or application is approved, a payment will be issued directly to the utility provider(s). The provider(s) will deposit those funds in the applicant's account as a credit applied towards the outstanding and current account balance.

- 6. My tenant receives a monthly federal subsidy (e.g. Housing Choice Voucher, Public Housing, Project-Based Section 8, USDA Rural Development), are they eligible to apply?**

**Yes.** Households that receive a monthly federal subsidy where their rent is adjusted according to changes in income, are eligible to apply for assistance through the program. However, assistance will only be provided for the amount not covered by other programs.

- 7. If tenants don't need help making utility payments, can they still apply for help with rent?**

**Yes.** Eligible tenants may apply for rent assistance only, utility assistance only or both rent and utility assistance.

- 8. I have received assistance from emergency rental assistance programs in the past, can I still receive assistance from this program?**

**Yes.** However, assistance will only be provided for the amount not covered by other programs and you will need to certify that you have not received and do not expect to receive assistance for the same rent due for that tenant from another source.

**9. I am not certain that my tenants can document that their immigration status, should I still encourage them to apply?**

**Yes.** This program does not require the applicant to document nationality or immigration status.

**10. I am owed rent for a tenant that is no longer in the apartment, can I apply for assistance with these rent payments?**

**No.** These funds are only available to support current tenants.

**11. Can renters receive utility assistance for future months?**

**Yes.** Based on an evaluation of need, prospective assistance may be provided for up to three months.

**12. Do renters have to have been impacted by COVID-19 to be eligible for this program?**

**Yes.** Renters must demonstrate negative economic or financial hardship due directly or indirectly to COVID-19

**13. If renters don't need help making rent payments, can they still apply for help with unpaid utility bills?**

**Yes.** Renters may still apply for utility assistance only.

**14. Can the relief be used to pay for expenses other than rent and utilities?**

**No.** Funds can only be used for rent and utility assistance.

**15. Can the relief be used to pay rent owed and/or unpaid utility bills?**

**Yes.** Funds will be used to first pay unpaid rent and utility bills. Funds cannot be applied to rent or utility costs that were incurred prior to April 1, 2020.

**16. Can renters receive utility assistance for future months?**

**Yes.** Based on an evaluation of need, prospective assistance may be provided for up to three months.

**17. I am a Housing Provider with multiple tenants. Do I need to complete separate applications for each?**

**Yes.** Because the eligibility requirements for the STAY DC program are primarily focused on the tenant household, applications need to be reviewed at the tenant level. As a result, you will need to complete individual applications for each of your tenant households that applies.

To ease the burden of data entry, do consider using the autofill feature on your web browser. Autofill remembers and fills in specific information and form fields as part of the web browser on your computer. In a perfect world, autofill should save time in a variety of situations, and in most cases, that's exactly how it works. To make sure your settings aren't causing you unnecessary trouble (e.g., saving sensitive information), please review the autofill settings and adjust as necessary.

**18. Will the payment amount(s) I receive be considered taxable income?**

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Emergency Rental Assistance is intended to help eligible households that require financial assistance to pay for rent, utilities, home energy expenses, and other related expenses, and the payments are excluded from income only for those households. Rental payments and/or utility payments you receive, whether from a customer or from a Distributing Entity on the customer's behalf, are includible in your gross income.. See <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/emergency-rental-assistance-frequently-asked-questions>

**19. What if I do if I don't want to participate in the STAY DC program?**

U.S. Treasury expects that in general, rental and utility assistance can be provided most effectively and efficiently when the Housing Provider or utility provider participates in the program. As required by the Act, the District will make reasonable efforts to obtain the cooperation of Housing Providers and utility providers to accept payments from the STAY DC program.

To be excluded from the program, a Housing Provider must confirm in writing that the Housing Provider does not wish to participate. Written notice can be emailed to [stay@dc.gov](mailto:stay@dc.gov)