

# Governor's Office for Emergency Relief & Recovery

## NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSING RELIEF PROGRAM

### Program Overview



The Governor has authorized the allocation and expenditure of \$35 million from the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (“flex funds”) to support families or individuals in need of housing assistance as a result of COVID-19. Of the allocated \$35 million, \$20 million will be initially expended, with \$15 million being held in reserve, for rent stabilization and housing support.

According to New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority estimates, renters are twice as likely as homeowners to have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This would result in many of the approximately 152,000 renter households in New Hampshire lacking the ability to pay some or all of their rent. These Granite Staters could face possible eviction after the expiration of the emergency order prohibiting evictions for non-payment of rent.

The impact of significant numbers of households unable to pay rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic goes beyond the risk to their housing security. Small landlords and other property owners that are unable to collect rent are also disadvantaged and may be unable to meet their obligations to lenders and to their communities. Almost 90% of all rental units in New Hampshire are owned by small landlords, meaning those who own 10 or fewer apartments.

The Governor's Office of Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) will provide the funds to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) which will then make an initial disbursement of funds to New Hampshire's five Community Action Program (CAP) agencies, with additional funding provided based on use and need. The CAP agencies have experience administering other emergency housing funds, and their experience working with renters and property owners throughout the communities they serve will allow the Housing Relief Program funds to quickly reach people who are struggling to pay their rent. They are also well-positioned to connect renters with other resources and services they may need.

The New Hampshire Housing Relief Program is designed to keep people from losing their housing and to secure or maintain permanent housing. The program has two components: one-time assistance grants; and a short-term rental assistance program.

The one-time assistance grants can be used to assist households with:

- Past-due rent from April 2020 forward for households that fell behind on rent due to either increased household expenses or lost household revenue as a result to COVID-19;
- Past-due housing/household related expenses that may impact an individual's/families' ability to remain housed; and/or

- Other housing related one-time expenses that if not paid impact the ability to maintain housing.

The grant is not to exceed \$2,500, and is conditioned on COVID-19 related loss of household income or increased household expenses. This grant program is targeted to those households who will be able to maintain their housing without assistance after the one-time assistance payment.

The New Hampshire Housing Relief Program will provide short-term rental assistance to maintain or secure permanent housing. This includes assistance for:

- Past-due rent that was not paid due to a COVID-19 related inability to pay and ongoing rental assistance on a short term basis using progressive engagement. The rental assistance will decrease over time as households regain stability; or
- First month's rent and ongoing short-term rental assistance to assist with initial costs to facilitate the transition of working households from shelters into permanent housing.

Both the one-time grants and the short-term rental assistance will be coupled with regional case management services to help connect households to appropriate services as defined by the household and the agency. Program payments will be made directly to the landlord or provider, and this program will end by December 30, 2020.