



Subject: Arizona Rental Assistance Policy
Process Owner: Division of Community Assistance and Development
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Arizona Rental Assistance Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Arizona Rental Assistance (ARA, or the Program) alleviates housing instability for eligible low income seniors and families with children. The Program is administered by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Division of Community Assistance and Development (DCAD), and funded by discretionary, state-allocated Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) provided under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) and administered federally by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. SLFRF provides support to State, territorial, local, and Tribal governments in responding to the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19 and in their efforts to contain impacts on their communities, residents, and businesses.

DES accordingly designed and administers the Program per ARPA, SLFRF, and Treasury guidance to support the vulnerable impacted Arizona communities. DES utilizes a direct-service model for distribution of Program benefits. Community Navigators, which work through state-designated Community Action Agencies (CAA) and other community partners, perform outreach and assist Applicants in understanding the Program and completing applications. DES contracts with CAAs and community partners; receives and adjudicates applications; and disburses Program benefits. An applicant may apply online, using a paper application, or telephonically with the assistance of a Community Navigator or directly to DES. Arizona Rental Assistance (ARA) is not affiliated with the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

II. TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. POLICY STATEMENT.....	1
II. TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
III. APPLICABILITY.....	3
IV. AUTHORITY.....	3
V. DEFINITIONS.....	3
VI. STANDARDS.....	4
A. Eligibility for Rental Assistance.....	4
B. Program Benefits.....	7
C. Prudent Decision-Making Principles.....	7
D. Policy Administration.....	8
VII. Procedures.....	8
A. Application Submission.....	8
1. Submission Types.....	8
2. Documentation Requirements.....	10
a. Proof of increased housing insecurity or risk of eviction due to temporary financial crisis or instability;.....	10
b. Proof of income.....	10
c. Proof of Educational, Vocational, or Job Training Program (if applicable).....	12
d. Proof of current rent obligation.....	12
e. Proof of residence.....	13
f. Verification of Identity.....	14
i. Certification of Understanding.....	19
B. Application Processing.....	21
1. Adjudication Timelines.....	21
2. Community Navigators.....	21
3. Incomplete Applications.....	22
C. Authorization of Benefits.....	23
1. Benefit Amounts and Limits.....	23
2. Decision Notices.....	24
3. Payment Issuance.....	24
D. Grievances.....	26
E. Program Monitoring.....	26
F. Welfare Fraud Prevention and Penalty.....	27
G. Confidentiality.....	28
H. Records Retention.....	28
Appendix 1 - 80% of AMI by Household Size and County.....	29
Appendix 2 - Glossary of Program Forms, Information.....	30

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all DES Employees, including contractors who are involved with administration of the Program.

IV. AUTHORITY

[Pub. L. 117-2, Sec. 9901](#)

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, State and Local Recovery Funds

[31 Fed. Reg. 4338 \(January 27, 2022\)](#)

Department of the Treasury, Final Rule, Effective April 1, 2022, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

V. DEFINITIONS

Applicant: A person that requests Program benefits in accordance with this policy. A person must be 18 years or older to qualify as an Applicant.

Area Median Income (AMI): The midpoint of a region's income distribution.

Arizona Rental Assistance (ARA, or the Program): The DES Program, administered through the Division of Community Assistance and Development (DCAD), that provides housing stability services in the form of rental assistance to eligible Arizona households with children and/or seniors.

Employee: Any full-time or part-time worker, or temporary paid or unpaid worker, who is employed directly by DES.

Full-time Employment: Employment of at least 30 hours of service per week, or 130 hours of service per month.

Gross Income: The total Household Income for all Household members before taxes and other deductions.

Household: Any individual or group of individuals who are living together as one economic unit for whom a Residential Dwelling is customarily used and purchased in common, subject to a Housing Agreement. For purposes of this policy, at least one person in the Household shall be obligated by a Housing Agreement to pay rent. Temporary visitors or guests who do not maintain the dwelling as their primary residence are not considered household members.

Housing Agreement: A lease or other form of written rental agreement between a Tenant and a Landlord.

Income: Taxable Income as defined by the Internal Revenue Service. Income can be earned or unearned.

Landlord: A person who owns a residential unit or otherwise has lawful permission to collect rent on a residential unit. A person who is listed as a Tenant in the Housing Agreement cannot also be considered a Landlord. Any 'Landlord' sublessor must have legal authority to sublease the property and is subject to tax reporting requirements.

Qualifying Child: A child listed on the Program application who is under the age of 18, who resides in the Household and is in the care and physical custody of a parent or non-parent relative or Legal Permanent Guardian adult that also resides in the Household, thereby qualifying the Household for Program benefits.

Qualifying Senior: An adult listed on the Program application who is 60 years of age or older and resides in the Household, thereby qualifying the Household for Program benefits.

Related Adult: The adult listed on the Program application who is age 18 or older, resides in the Household, and has physical custody or guardianship of a Qualifying Child.

Residential Dwelling: The property that is lawfully rented by the Tenant subject to a Housing Agreement. This property could be a house, unit within an apartment building, unit within a duplex, hotel/motel room, or other residential space.

Sublessee: The individual to whom a property is legally subleased.

Sublessor: The individual with legal written authority to sublease a property. A sublessor is considered a landlord for purposes of this Program policy, and is subject to the Program's tax reporting requirements.

Tenant: The person or persons listed as a leaseholder in a Housing Agreement at the time of application for the Program.

VI. STANDARDS

A. Eligibility for Rental Assistance

1. The Applicant's Household must be experiencing housing insecurity or risk of eviction due to temporary financial instability or crisis.
 - a. Eligible households that have been served an eviction notice may be given priority application processing.

2. The Household income must be at or below 80 percent of the current Fiscal Year (FY) Area Median Income (AMI).
 3. One or more Qualifying Children or Qualifying Seniors must reside in the Household's Residential Dwelling:
 - a. A Qualifying Child is any child:
 - i. Who has not yet turned 18 years of age;
 - ii. Who resides at, and is present within, the Residential Dwelling; and
 - iii. Is in the care and physical custody of a parent, non-parent relative or Legal Permanent Guardian who maintains the Residential Dwelling as their primary residence and actually resides at, and is present within, the residential dwelling.
 - b. A Qualifying Senior is any adult:
 - i. 60 years of age or older; and
 - ii. Who maintains the Residential Dwelling as their primary residence, and actually resides at, and is present within, the Residential Dwelling.
 - c. **Except when all members of the Household are at least 60 years old**, the Applicant, or an adult member of the Household must:
 - i. Have current Full-time Employment; or
 - ii. Currently be the qualifying recipient of one of the following benefits:
 - A) Unemployment;
 - B) Workers compensation; or
 - C) Disability.
- Note: An Applicant with a pending application for unemployment, workers compensation, or disability benefits, which is not reasonably expected to be processed by the responsible agency within 30 days of the application date, may qualify as a 'recipient' upon (1) the request of the Applicant and (2) providing proof of pending benefits application; or

- iii. Immediately be available for Full-time Employment, **and** any one of the following:
 - A) Have a history of Full-time Employment in the last 4 months prior to the application month and reasonably anticipate being gainfully employed;
 - B) Have successfully completed an educational, vocational, or job training program in the last 6 months prior to the application month; or
 - C) Have a job offer for Full-time Employment that begins within 3 months of the application approval date.
 - iv. Exception: If all adults in the Household are 60 years of age or older, the requirement of this section (3)(c) is waived.
4. The Applicant must be:
- a. A Tenant;
 - i. A Sublessee who resides in a specific property for which the the Sublessee has a written sublet agreement may be eligible for Program assistance provided:
 - A) The Sublessee provides both a valid sublet agreement or Housing Agreement, and a Housing Agreement between the sublessor and the Landlord. The Housing Agreement between the sublessor and Landlord must specifically permit subletting.
 - B) The Program benefit amount shall not exceed the rental amount listed in the Housing Agreement between the Sublessor and the Landlord.
 - b. Obligated by a Housing Agreement to pay rent on their Residential Dwelling; and
 - c. Residing in Arizona within the boundaries or zip codes of an eligible jurisdiction, including:
 - i. Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, Yavapai, and Yuma Counties;

- ii. The Cities of Mesa and Phoenix (according to assigned United States postal zip codes);
 - A) In Maricopa County, only Mesa and Phoenix residences are served by DES for rental assistance.
 - B) All other zip codes within Maricopa County are ineligible for ARA.
 - iii. Members residing on Indian Lands of Federally Recognized Tribes; and
 - iv. Any other jurisdictions that may later be designated.
5. An Applicant is not eligible for Program benefits:
- a. If the Applicant or Household previously received rental assistance from ERAP in any jurisdiction; or
 - i. This restriction does not apply to Applicants who previously received *only* ERAP Utility-Only Assistance.
 - b. For any portion of rent which is paid or otherwise covered by another rent, housing, or other public assistance program.
6. DES funding for the Program must be available for the Applicant to be eligible to receive a benefit.

B. Program Benefits

- 1. An eligible Household approved for Program assistance may receive a benefit equal to three (3) times the Household's monthly rent obligation, not to exceed a total benefit of \$10,500.
- 2. Program benefits may be used to cover the following for the Housing Agreement and Residential Address approved in the application, but are not calculated in the award total for rent obligation:
 - a. Rental Arrears;
 - b. Future rent; and
 - c. Rent late fees and penalties.

C. Prudent Decision-Making Principles

- 1. The policies and procedures included in this Policy compile and prescribe guidance for determining eligibility, delivering benefits, and administering the Program. Employees and Community Navigators will use reason and apply good judgment in making decisions when addressing specific needs

or scenarios of an Applicant or Household not specifically addressed by this Policy or referenced Authority. Decision-making by Employees based on the best information available, program knowledge, experience and expertise is referred to as the Prudent Decision-Making Principle. Prudence may also include seeking DCAD or DES guidance on specific Program or policy interpretation. Employees should document their rationale used to make decisions not contemplated by this Policy or Authority, and cite any applicable references.

D. Policy Administration

1. Updates and/or amendments to this Policy will be issued as complete numbered revisions, superseding this Policy, in conjunction with any relevant Policy Memorandum summarizing changes.
2. Minor clarification to this Policy may be issued in the form of Policy Memoranda, providing interim guidance between revisions.
3. Questions or requests for clarification regarding this policy should be submitted via email to:

erapquestions@azdes.gov, and
dcadpolicy@azdes.gov

Subject: ARA Policy Questions & Clarifications

Please include your name, a contact phone number, and details regarding your inquiry.

VII. Procedures

A. Application Submission

1. Submission Types
 - a. An Applicant must submit a Program application online. Applicants who are unable to submit an application and require an accommodation may complete an application by telephone, mail/fax, or by visiting a DES Navigator. Submissions by mail/fax may result in increased processing times.
 - i. Online Applications. An Applicant may complete an application online at the Rental and Utility Assistance Portal <https://era.azdes.gov/>.
 - ii. DES Navigator Application Assistance. An Applicant may provide a paper application to, or complete an online portal

application with the assistance of a DES Community Navigator;

- A) Community Navigator assistance may be received by visiting the nearest [Community Action Agency](#). Applicants are encouraged to call ahead for current information on hours, specific program assistance, and appointment scheduling/availability.
 - B) Documentation Requirements will need to be met to complete an application, and required documents should be brought to this appointment.
- iii. Telephone Applications. Call 1-(833)-912-0878 to apply via telephone. For a telephone application, oral acknowledgment of the application will be deemed a signature; or
- iv. Mail/Fax Applications. Print or obtain a copy of an application from the Program webpage or local CAA.
- A) An Applicant shall complete all required portions of the printed application and attach copies of appropriate documents; and
 - B) Return the completed application to DES by:
 - 1) Faxing the application to (602) 612-8282;
 - 2) Submitting the application through their local community action agency; or
 - 3) Mailing the application to:
Department of Economic Security
Arizona Rental Assistance
PO Box 19130
Phoenix, AZ 85009-9998
 - 4) Mail applications are considered received on the date postmarked. Faxed applications are considered received on the date received (as annotated on the fax cover letter).

2. Documentation Requirements

- a. Proof of increased housing insecurity or risk of eviction due to temporary financial crisis or instability;
 - i. The Applicant must demonstrate that one or more members of their Household are experiencing increased housing insecurity or a risk of eviction due to financial instability. This may be demonstrated through either of the following:
 - A) An eviction notice (for failure to pay rent obligations only), current within 15 days:
 - 1) Eligible households that have been served an eviction notice may be given priority application processing;
 - B) Past due rent notice, current within 30 days, or
 - C) Other valid evidence of temporary inability to support household rental obligation(s).
- b. Proof of income
 - i. Must be provided for all Household members ages 18 and older, and 16-17 years of age if not a full-time high school student or equivalent.
 - ii. Income for the Household is defined as Gross Income, including self-employment, earned, and unearned income, before taxes and deductions, for each individual as outlined in this policy.
 - iii. Documentation of earned income may include any of the following, which may also satisfy verification of employment:
 - A) Paystub current within the last 60 days
 - B) Employment verification or signed/dated letter from employer including:
 - 1) Name, address, phone number of employer;
 - 2) Frequency of pay periods;

- 3) Gross pay amount (hourly, salary, etc.) and number of hours worked; and
- 4) Day of week, or other cadence, when employee receives payroll disbursement.

Note: An employment verification letter should not be used when it may jeopardize the employment of the applicant.

- C) A letter from an agency providing government-sponsored training;
 - D) An offer letter from current employer when employee has not yet received first wage payment;
 - E) Self-employment accounting records;
 - F) Bank statements or records; or
 - G) A client's statement, when all other proofs are unavailable and all attempts have been made to secure verification, with an explanation why the proofs are unavailable.
- iv. Documentation of unearned income may include:
- A) Assistance payment records
 - B) Social Security Administration (SSA) award letters or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) records;
 - C) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) award letters or disability benefit records;
 - D) Other benefit agency or payer records or award letters;
 - E) Bank records;
 - F) Court records or court orders (e.g., child support or alimony);
 - 1) If there is no other source of verification of child support or alimony payments, request a statement from the absent parent.
 - G) Arizona State benefit award letters, receipts, or other documentation;

- H) Federal government award letters, receipts, or other documentation;
 - I) Tribal government documentation;
 - J) Federal or state tax forms;
 - K) Insurance policies;
 - L) Sales contracts; or
 - M) Unemployment insurance records.
- c. Proof of Educational, Vocational, or Job Training Program (if applicable)
- i. The Applicant must provide a copy of certificate or other official verification of completion of the educational, vocational, or job training program, containing:
 - A) The Applicant or subject Household member's full name;
 - B) The awarding institution;
 - C) The program, certification, degree, or other program completed;
 - D) Date of completion; and
 - E) Signature or seal of awarding institution or representative.
- d. Proof of current rent obligation
- i. The Applicant must demonstrate a current Housing Agreement exists, and obligation to pay rental arrears and/or future rent by providing:
 - A) A Housing Agreement that matches the Applicant's name and current rental address; and
 - B) A Landlord's Ledger, or equivalent document subject to Program verification, indicating the Household's arrears balance, if applicable.

- ii. If a Household is the recipient of any other rental, housing, or other public benefit which pays or otherwise subsidizes any portion of the Household's rent obligation, the Household must provide documentation of the assistance.
 - A) A household may only receive Program assistance for the portion of rent for which the Household is responsible for paying, and which is not otherwise paid or covered by any other public assistance program.

- e. Proof of residence
 - i. To prevent fraud and validate Household residents that will receive Program benefits, an Applicant must:
 - A) Verify the Applicant's residence;
 - B) Verify the residence of any Qualifying Senior; and
 - C) For Qualifying Child(ren), verify the residence of the Related Adult (if different from Applicant).

 - ii. Proof of residence may include any of the following with the subject Household member's name and current Residential Dwelling address:
 - A) Utility bill or utility company records, current within the last 60 days;
 - B) Driver's license or other official Arizona Department of Transportation, Motor Vehicle Division documents;
 - C) State issued identification;
 - D) Tribal government-issued documentation;
 - E) Tax office records;
 - F) School records;
 - G) Rent receipt;
 - H) City Directory;
 - I) Church records;
 - J) Housing Agreement; or

K) Statement from any of the following, including a signature and phone number:

- 1) Non-relative employer;
- 2) Non-relative landlord; or
- 3) Other non-relative.

f. Verification of Identity

i. To prevent fraud and ensure that qualifying households experiencing housing instability or risk of eviction (for failure to pay rent obligations) receive eligible Program benefits, an Applicant must:

- A) Verify the Applicant's identity;
- B) Verify the identity of one or more Qualifying Children, or one or more Qualifying Seniors (if Applicant is not 60 years of age or older); and
- C) For Qualifying Child(ren), verify the identity of the Related Adult (if different from Applicant).

ii. Identity/Age verification documents include any of the following containing the subject Household member's full name and date of birth:

- A) Adoption records*
- B) Birth certificate*
- C) Hospital or public records of birth*
- D) Citizenship and immigration documents
- E) Custody agreement*
- F) Court records*
- G) Driver's license
- H) Census records* / family census card*

- I) ID card or records from health benefits or another assistance or social service program*
- J) Military records*
- K) School records* / identification
- L) Tribal government records* / identification
- M) Wage stubs
- N) Work ID
- O) Voter registration card
- P) Social Security Card

*Denotes records which also satisfy Relationship Verification requirements. Provided document must contain the full name of the Qualifying Child and Related Adult household member. See *Relationship Verification Documents* below for additional document options.

iii. To qualify a household for potential benefits, a Qualifying Child must reside with a Related Adult in the Household, who is either:

- A) A natural or adoptive parent,
- B) A non-parent relative; or
 - 1) May include the following:
 - i) stepmother or stepfather;
 - ii) grandparent(s);
 - iii) blood or adoptive: brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece; and

- iv) preceding generation persons with prefixes: grand or great or any multiple of these prefixes;
- v) first cousins once-removed; or
- vi) a spouse of any individual named above, even if death or divorce has terminated the marriage.

C) A Legal Permanent Guardian (LPG).

- 1) May be unrelated by blood or marriage with legal custody awarded by a Court of competent jurisdiction.

iv. Relationship Verification Documents

A) A parent, non-parent relative or legal permanent guardian may certify and attest to the relationship to the Qualifying Child in the Household. Additional documentation may be required to verify relationship and prevent fraud if:

- 1) Identity Verification Documents of the Qualifying Child and Related Adult are provided that do not also provide Relationship Verification; and
- 2) The provided Identity Verification Documents does not reasonably establish a parental, custodial, non-parent or legal permanent guardian relationship between the child and Related Adult.

B) Relationship verification documents, in addition to *Identity Verification Documents above, can include any of the following containing the full name of the Qualifying Child and Related Adult:

- 1) Artificial insemination records;

- 2) Baptismal records;
- 3) Bio data sheets provided by refugees;
- 4) Bureau of Vital Statistics records;
- 5) Tribal government records;
- 6) Correspondence (letters, email, etc.) from a person to the child, or to others about the child, referring to the child as the person's own;
- 7) Church records, including a statement from a member of the clergy;
- 8) Genetic testing results;
- 9) Insurance policies;
- 10) Marriage licenses and certificates;
- 11) Outpatient care records maintained by a hospital, clinic, or doctor;
- 12) Paternity records.;
- 13) When any other documented verification cannot be obtained, the following may be used to verify relationship:
 - i) Collateral contact verification. The name and contract phone number of a collateral contact who may be contacted to verify the relationship must be provided.

v. Duplication of Eligibility Prohibited

- A) An Applicant or Household may only qualify for a single benefit for the lifetime of this Program, and may not qualify for multiple benefits based upon different Qualifying Children or Qualifying Seniors.

- B) Qualification is based upon:
- 1) Where the Qualifying Child's parent, custodian, or legal permanent guardian actually resides and maintains primary residence; or
 - i) A Qualifying Child may provide eligibility for no more than two (2) households.
 - 2) Where the Qualifying Senior actually resides and maintains primary residence.
 - i) A Qualifying Senior may provide eligibility for no more than one (1) household.

g. Minor Parents

- i. In Households where minor parents seek benefits on behalf of them and their children, special processing considerations apply:
- A) When a minor parent lives in a Household with an adult parent, non-parent relative or Legal Permanent Guardian:
 - 1) The minor parent is considered a child for the purposes of the application; and
 - 2) An adult Household member must complete the Program application on behalf of the Household.
 - B) When a minor parent does not live in a Household with an adult parent, non-parent relative or Legal Permanent Guardian, the minor parent may apply for benefits as an exception to the 18 years of age Applicant requirement, providing that the minor parent is emancipated, as demonstrated by:
 - 1) Court order;
 - 2) Arizona Drivers License marked "emancipated minor"; or

3) Marriage certificate (See A.R.S. 25-503(Q)(1), “For the purposes of this chapter [Family Support Duties], a child is emancipated: 1) On the date of the Child’s marriage”):

- i) This provision applies to those who are married, widowed, divorced, or separated; and
- ii) To be eligible based upon marriage certificate, an adult spouse must otherwise be unable or unavailable to apply on behalf of the Household.

h. Direct Deposit Payment Information

i. Applicant will provide as part of a complete application:

- A) Applicant’s bank account and routing number; and
- B) Landlord’s current contact information, if not included on Housing Agreement.

ii. To be eligible for payment:

- A) The Applicant must be an account holder, authorized user, or equivalent named on the direct deposit account;
 - 1) An Applicant is liable for use of funds due to failure to provide an account to which they have lawful authority and access, or providing an account to which a third party has access.
- B) The Account must be a checking or savings account (or equivalent), that is eligible to receive direct, electronic deposit (ACH deposit).
 - 1) Prepaid accounts are not eligible for direct deposit.

i. Certification of Understanding

i. Applicants will certify and attest:

- A) Understanding that Program benefits may only be used for the authorized purpose(s) for which the benefits

were applied and approved, and as provided by this Policy.

- B) Understanding that they have reviewed their application information, and that all information provided in the application is true, accurate, and complete.
 - C) Understanding that misuse of Program funds, or intentionally misrepresenting or providing false information is a violation of Program rules; violations of these, or other program rules may subject Applicants to denial of benefits, disqualification from the Program (12 months for first violation, 24 months for second violation, permanently for third violation), recoupment of benefits, and/or criminal prosecution.
- j. Applicant Survey
- i. Applicants may complete a voluntary survey in conjunction with their Program application to assess any Household needs in service areas offered beyond rental assistance.
 - ii. This survey is used by the Department to:
 - A) Collect data on the needs of Households for improvement of program services;
 - B) Refer Applicants to services for which they may have needs or qualify;
 - C) Increase awareness of services offered by the Department and other service agencies.
 - iii. Survey participation is optional, and any information submitted by Applicants is voluntary.
 - iv. Applicants may be referred to programs or services which offer assistance in areas of need. Referral to any program or service is not an eligibility determination nor any guarantee of approval.
 - v. Applicant participation in any survey, or answers provided as part of any survey, shall have no effect on the Program application or Applicant's eligibility.

B. Application Processing

1. Adjudication Timelines

a. Standard Applications

- i. Will be processed by DES within 30 business days, from the date an application is received online, by mail, or by phone by DES until a decision is issued. Applications are processed in the order received.

b. Priority Applications

- i. Applicants that have received an eviction notice may receive expedited processing to ensure prompt adjudication and disbursement of benefits, and mitigate the risk of eviction.
- ii. DES will attempt to process priority applications within 5 business days from the date a completed application is received online, by mail, or by phone by DES until a decision is issued. Applications are processed in the order received.

Note: Application processing time does not include any days during which an incomplete application was in 'needs information status' (see (VII)(B)(3) Incomplete Applications below).

2. Community Navigators

- a. Provide integral support to the Program to ensure applicants have an option for local, in-person Program resources. Further, Community Navigators enhance the availability of the Program, and improve the quality of applications to streamline DES adjudication.
- b. Work through state-designated Community Action Agencies (CAA) or other community partners to perform outreach in accordance with contractual agreements.
- c. Perform appointments with Applicants for services as soon as practicable and in accordance with contractual requirements. Navigators must screen for crisis and/or priority circumstances, and priority will be given to these Applicants when practicable.
- d. Receive applications and requests for application services from Applicants. Specifically, Community Navigators:

- i. Ensure an application complies with the requirements of this Policy, including necessary documentation needed for DES to make an eligibility determination;
 - ii. Assist the Applicant in applying through the online portal, uploading documents, or in the case of a needed accommodation, locating and submitting an application and/or related application document(s); and
 - iii. Comply with all applicable Community Navigator and DES training, contractual agreements, law, and regulations in providing services.
 - e. Submit complete Program applications to DES within one (1) business day.
 - f. Conduct initial screening and reporting of potential Welfare Fraud.
 - i. For additional guidance on Welfare Fraud, please refer to Section VII(F) of this policy.
- 3. Incomplete Applications
 - a. When received or reviewed by a Community Navigator, the Community Navigator will make best attempts to resolve incomplete applications with the Applicant prior to submission of the application to DES and within prescribed timelines.
 - i. For example, the Community Navigator may request any missing information or assist the applicant in locating missing documentation.
 - b. When incomplete applications are received by DES, DCAD via online portal, phone, fax, or mail, and as a result an eligibility determination is unable to be made, the application will be placed in a 'needs information' status. An email notice will be sent to the Applicant explaining the information or documentation that is required to complete the application for an eligibility determination to be made. The Applicant may login to their portal application at any time to review messages and adjudication status.
 - i. Incomplete applications cannot be acted upon by DES until Applicants provide required information/documentation to complete their application.

- ii. After an application is placed in 'needs information' status and and Applicant is notified of missing information/ documentation, the Applicant will be provided 45 days to complete the application.
- iii. Applications that remain in a 'needs information' status for more than 45 days will be denied as incomplete and/or missing required documentation. The Applicant may reapply if otherwise eligible.

C. Authorization of Benefits

1. Benefit Amounts and Limits

- a. An eligible Household approved for Program assistance may receive a benefit not to exceed three (3) times the Household's monthly rent obligation:
 - i. The Household's monthly rent is the monthly cost of rent as provided by the Lease Agreement; and
 - A) Non-rent costs and expenses that are separately itemized and billed are not considered part of the monthly rent.
 - B) If any portion of the Household's monthly rent is paid or covered by any other rent, housing, or public assistance program, that portion will be subtracted from the Household's monthly rent, to determine the Household's month's rent obligation for the purposes of benefits calculation.
 - ii. The Household's monthly rent obligation is multiplied by three (3) to calculate the Household's total benefit amount.
 - iii. Formula: Benefit Amount = (Monthly Rent - Other Public Rent Benefits, If any) x 3
 - A) Example: A Household's rent is \$1,400 per month. The Household receives a \$300 Housing voucher. The Household's total monthly rent obligation is \$1,100, and multiplied by 3, the total benefit is \$3,300.
- b. Program benefits may be used to cover the following for the Residential Dwelling on the Housing Agreement:

- i. Rental arrears;
- ii. Future rent; and
- iii. Rent late fees and penalties.

Note: Benefits may not be transferred to a different address that was not approved by the Program.

2. Decision Notices

- a. DES will issue decision notices to Applicants via email through the Housing Stability and Utility Assistance Portal.
 - i. Approval Notices. Approval notices will be issued when the decision is made to grant benefits. An approval notice will include:
 - A) The application approval date;
 - B) The amount of the benefit;
 - C) The applicant's right to request reconsideration of the decision; and
 - D) The applicant's right to appeal.
 - ii. Denial Notices. Denial notices will be issued when the decision is made to deny benefits due to ineligibility, missing documentation, or another reason. A denial notice will include:
 - A) the date of the decision;
 - B) the basis for the denial;
 - C) the Applicant's right to request reconsideration of the decision; and
 - D) the Applicant's right to appeal.
 - iii. Updated Notices. If a subsequent DES decision is made affecting an Applicant's existing benefits eligibility or amount, an updated notice will be provided. Updated notices will include the same information as denial notices.

3. Payment Issuance

- a. The Department will:
 - i. Issue a Program payment to the Landlord on the Eligible Household's behalf electronically via Direct Deposit.

- A) Make 3 attempts to contact the Landlord within 5 calendar days after the Tenant application is approved if the Department receives a Tenant application without a corresponding Landlord application.
 - ii. Issue a Program payment for rental assistance to the Tenant if the following conditions are met:
 - A) The Tenant application has been approved without a corresponding Landlord application;
 - B) The Department has made 3 attempts to contact the Landlord within 5 calendar days of the Tenant's application approval; and
 - C) The Landlord is non-responsive or indicates that they do not wish to participate in the Program.
 - iii. Provide an Eligible Household with proof of payment, via the Client portal, disbursed to the Landlord or Tenant.
 - iv. Perform additional review of any payment data to be submitted to a bank account or mailed to an address outside the United States before processing the payment.
- b. When a Program payment is received by the Landlord under this section, the Landlord must use the payment to satisfy the Tenant's rent, rental arrears, and rent late fees and penalties to the Landlord.
 - i. Landlords must apply benefits payments to rent arrears and rent late fees and penalties prior to applying benefits to future rent.
- c. Any disputes arising out of the Landlord Release of Tenant Liability must be resolved in an Arizona court of competent jurisdiction according to Arizona law, and not as a small claims lawsuit without the Tenant's consent.
- d. When a Program payment is received by a Tenant, the Tenant may be required to provide documentation showing that the Program payment was used to pay rent when:
 - i. The payment was automatically paid to the Applicant as part of a Priority application; or
 - ii. The Department

- A) Has reason to believe that the Tenant has not used the payment for rent; or
 - B) Suspects fraud.
 - iii. The following documents could be used to demonstrate that a Tenant used a Program payment for rent:
 - A) Bank statements;
 - B) Canceled checks; or
 - C) Landlord Ledger.
- e. Exhaustion of Program funding
 - i. Arizona Rental Assistance benefits are subject to the availability of funding.
 - ii. Unobligated benefits funds, equal to or exceeding the Applicant's eligible benefit, must be available for the Applicant to be eligible to receive a benefit under the program.
 - iii. If unobligated funds are not available, the Applicant is not eligible.
 - A) The application will be denied as "Funding unavailable. Please monitor <https://des.az.gov/ERAP> for updates on if future funds become available and applications reopen."

D. Grievances

- 1. Applicant grievances will be processed in accordance with the DCAD Grievances Policy.

E. Program Monitoring

- 1. Program monitoring generally consists of evaluations of internal processes and procedures for compliance with all requirements of applicable law, Program contracts, and this Policy.
 - a. Community Action Agencies (CAA). CAAs will be monitored a minimum of once every three (3) years, focusing on program, fiscal, policy, general contract, and Navigator model compliance. Monitoring will be performed in accordance with Division monitoring protocols and this Policy.

- b. DES will complete internal case audits on a monthly basis to ensure accurate determinations are made.
 - i. Program adjudicators will complete initial monthly case audits.
 - ii. Second-level audits will also be completed to ensure quality and accuracy of the monthly audit process. Second-level audits will be completed on no less than a quarterly basis, by a Program employee with adjudicator supervisory authority.
- c. Arizona Auditor General's Office. Audits the Program in its audit of program expenditures in accordance with the Single Audit Act of 1984.

F. Welfare Fraud Prevention and Penalty

- 1. Employees will take multiple steps to detect and prevent instances of Welfare Fraud. Specifically, Employees will review applications, identification documents, lease agreements, and other associated materials for signs of fraud.
- 2. Applicants are required to attest that the information they are providing is true and accurate, and may be required to certify certain eligibility information in the absence of other available documentation. Providing false statements may be punishable by law and/or result in denial or disqualification from Program benefits.
- 3. In cases where potential Welfare Fraud is detected, Employees will document the suspected nature of the fraud, any relevant information (e.g., known facts, statements, witnesses, or other knowledge possessed by the employee regarding the matter) and refer the matter to the Office of the Inspector General for investigation.
- 4. When Welfare Fraud is detected, external parties shall:
 - a. Call the DES Fraud Hotline at (800) 251-2436; or
 - b. Complete the online form at <https://fraudreferralexternal.azdes.gov/>.
- 5. If DES determines that an Applicant may have committed an intentional program violation or defrauded LIHEAP, the Applicant will be subject to denial of Program benefits, disqualification from the Program, and criminal prosecution.

- a. Applicants are subject to 12-month disqualification for a 1st violation, 24-month disqualification for a 2nd violation, and permanent disqualification for a 3rd violation.

G. Confidentiality

1. Information collected by the Program and during an appeal is confidential under [A.R.S. § 41-1959](#), unless such confidentiality is waived.
2. The U.S. Treasury Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the Arizona State Auditor General, or their authorized representatives, have the right of access to confidential records to conduct audits or investigations.

H. Records Retention

1. All records and financial documents, including those pertaining to eligibility determinations, shall be maintained by the Department.
2. DES shall maintain Program records for at least five years after all funds allocated to the State have been expended, according to *Records Management and Reports Policy* (DES 1-37-12) and associated procedures (DES 1-37-12-01).

Appendix 1 - 80% of AMI by Household Size and County

Rental Assistance Program - Maximum Household Income Allowed (80% AMI)* - FFY 23								
County	Household Size (Persons)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 or more
Apache	\$32,850	\$37,550	\$42,250	\$46,900	\$50,700	\$54,450	\$58,200	\$61,950
Cochise	\$38,300	\$43,750	\$49,200	\$54,650	\$59,050	\$63,400	\$67,800	\$72,150
Coconino	\$50,900	\$58,200	\$65,450	\$72,700	\$78,550	\$84,350	\$90,150	\$96,000
Gila	\$35,700	\$40,800	\$45,900	\$50,950	\$55,050	\$59,150	\$63,200	\$67,300
Graham	\$39,200	\$44,800	\$50,400	\$56,000	\$60,500	\$65,000	\$69,450	\$73,950
Greenlee	\$42,500	\$48,600	\$54,650	\$60,700	\$65,600	\$70,450	\$75,300	\$80,150
La Paz	\$34,800	\$39,800	\$44,750	\$49,700	\$53,700	\$57,700	\$61,650	\$65,650
Maricopa	\$52,400	\$59,850	\$67,350	\$74,800	\$80,800	\$86,800	\$92,800	\$98,750
Mohave	\$36,800	\$42,050	\$47,300	\$52,550	\$56,800	\$61,000	\$65,200	\$69,400
Navajo	\$32,850	\$37,550	\$42,250	\$46,900	\$50,700	\$54,450	\$58,200	\$61,950
Pima	\$45,500	\$52,000	\$58,500	\$64,950	\$70,150	\$75,350	\$80,550	\$85,750
Pinal	\$52,400	\$59,850	\$67,350	\$74,800	\$80,800	\$86,800	\$92,800	\$98,750
Santa Cruz	\$32,850	\$37,550	\$42,250	\$46,900	\$50,700	\$54,450	\$58,200	\$61,950
Yavapai	\$42,300	\$48,350	\$54,400	\$60,400	\$65,250	\$70,100	\$74,900	\$79,750
Yuma	\$33,900	\$38,750	\$43,600	\$48,400	\$52,300	\$56,150	\$60,050	\$63,900

*AMI determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in accordance with Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, section 501(k)(1). See [HUD User Office of Policy Development and Research Dataset, Income Limits](#)

Appendix 2 - Glossary of Program Forms, Information

- Arizona Rental Assistance Program Manual Application, English (ARA-1000A) - <https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/dl/ARA-1000A.pdf>
- Arizona Rental Assistance Program Manual Application, English Large Print (ARA-1000A-LP) - <https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/dl/ARA-1000A-LP.pdf>
- Arizona Rental Assistance Program Manual Application, Spanish (ARA-1000A-S) - <https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/dl/ARA-1000A-S.pdf>
- Arizona Rental Assistance Program Manual Application, Spanish Large Print (ARA-1000A-SLP) - <https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/dl/ARA-1000A-SLP.pdf>
- [Housing Stability and Utility Assistance Portal](#) - Online application portal for Arizona Rental Assistance (ARA) and Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- <https://des.az.gov/erap> - Arizona Rental Assistance by DES Webpage and FAQ's