



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

Division of Community Assistance and Development

Policy & Procedures



Subject: Emergency Rental Assistance Program Utility-Only Assistance
Process Owner: Division of Community Assistance and Development
Effective Date: 7/1/2022
Revision Number: 7

Emergency Rental Assistance Program Utility-Only Assistance Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program Utility Only (ERAP-Utility Only) within the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES or Department) was established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provides guidance to Employees on the treatment of cases and communication among all parties. This policy pertains specifically to utility benefits and does not apply to rental assistance.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all DES Employees, including contractors who are involved with the ERAP. This policy also applies to applicants and recipients of ERAP assistance funds.

III. AUTHORITY

Emergency Rental Assistance

[American Rescue Plan Act, 2021](#)
[Pub. L. 117-2](#)
[Section 3201](#)

[Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#)
[Pub. L. 116-260, Division N,](#)
[Section 501](#)

National Declaration of Emergency

[Proclamation on Declaring a National
Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus
Disease \(COVID-19\) Outbreak \(March 13, 2020\)](#)

[Continuation of the National Emergency Concerning the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic \(February 26, 2021\)](#)

U.S. Dept. of the Treasury Guidance

[U.S. Department of the Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Frequently Asked Questions \(August 25, 2021\)](#)

Arizona Revised Statute

[A.R.S. § 41-1959 Confidential information: permissible disclosure, rules, violation; classification](#)

IV. DEFINITIONS

Applicant: A person or business entity that requests ERAP 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.

Client: A person or business entity that receives ERAP in accordance with this policy.

Eligible Household: A Household of one or more persons that:

- Has a Gross Income not exceeding 80 percent AMI;
- Is obligated to pay rent on a Residential Dwelling;
- Can self-certify that one or more persons within the Household has qualified for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits or has experienced a reduction in Household Income, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due, directly or indirectly, to COVID-19; and
- Can show a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability, which may include a past due utility or rent notice or eviction notice, unsafe or unhealthy living conditions (such as overcrowding), and/or any other evidence of such risk including self-certification, as determined by the Department.

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

ERAP (or Program): The DES Program, administered through the Division of Community Assistance and Development (DCAD) provides housing stability services in the form of utility assistance to eligible Arizonans in need.

Household: The person or persons occupying the residence at the time of application. For purposes of this policy, at least one person in the Household must be obligated to pay rent.

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

Income: Taxable Income as defined by the Internal Revenue Service.

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

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

Utility Company: A business or organization that provides water, sewer, trash, gas, or electricity services. For purposes of this Program, a Utility Company does not include telecommunications services such as telephone, cable, or internet.

V. STANDARDS

A. Eligibility for Utility-Only Assistance

1. The Applicant must be a Tenant and is obligated to pay rent on their Residential Dwelling.
2. The Tenant must only be seeking assistance with their utility payments. They may not be seeking rental assistance.
3. The Tenant or a member of the Tenant's Household must be at risk of housing instability or homelessness.
4. The Tenant or a member of the Tenant's Household must have been financially impacted by COVID-19. This hardship may be direct or indirect and may be reflected by receiving UI benefits, experiencing a reduction in Income, or experiencing a significant increase in expenses. Other financial hardships, as certified by the Tenant, are acceptable
5. The Tenant must reside in Arizona at the time of application.
6. The Tenant's Income must meet specific requirements:
 - a. Gross Income is at or below 80 percent of the AMI (refer to Appendix 1).
 - b. An Eligible Household with a Gross Income at or below 50 percent of the AMI, or one or more persons unemployed for at least 90 calendar days at the time of application, will be given priority for the ERAP.
 - c. Countable Income means Gross Income for all Household members age 18 years or older and includes:

- i. Employment payments as indicated on a W2, 1099, tax documents, or pay stubs;
 - ii. Unemployment Insurance benefits;
 - iii. Social Security benefits; and
 - iv. Other monies coming into the household.
7. DES will not request evidence of an Applicant's legal status or citizenship for ERAP eligibility.
8. The Tenant will not receive benefits under the ERAP for utility expenses already paid by any other assistance program.

B. Application Process - Utility-Only Assistance

1. Application Submission

An Applicant must complete an online ERAP application at <https://des.az.gov/ERAP>. If an Applicant does not have access to the internet or is otherwise unable to apply online, an Applicant may:

- a. Call 1 (833) 912-0878 to apply for ERAP via telephone. For a telephone application, oral acknowledgment of the application will be deemed a signature; or
- b. Print a copy or obtain a printed copy of the application form from a local DES office.¹
 - i. An Applicant must complete the printed application and attach appropriate documents; and
 - ii. Return the completed application to DES by
 - A. Faxing the application to (602) 612-8282;
 - B. Taking the application to a local DES office;² or
 - C. Mailing the application to:

Department of Economic Security
Emergency Rental Assistance
PO Box 19130
Phoenix, AZ 85009-9998

¹ Applications can only be obtained from local DES offices within Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Mohave, Navajo, Pinal, Santa Cruz, or Yavapai County.

² Applications can only be returned to local DES offices within Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Mohave, Navajo, Pinal, Santa Cruz, or Yavapai County.

2. Application Requirements

An Applicant must submit the following:

- a. Bill(s), invoice(s), or other evidence of the utility account;
- b. Total annual Income for the Household;
- c. Demographic information of the primary Applicant. This information is required to be collected per federal guidelines, including race, ethnicity, gender, and veteran status. There is a “choose not to answer” option for all demographic data collection elements.
- d. Self-Certification of the following:
 - i. Applicant is a Tenant and is obligated to pay rent on their Residential Dwelling;
 - ii. Existence of a financial hardship due to COVID-19;
 - iii. Household is at risk of homelessness or housing instability;
 - iv. Household did not receive any other utility assistance for the same utility cost; and
 - v. Correctness and completeness of the application signed by the Tenant.
- e. An Employee will refer to *Address Confidentiality Program Policy (DES 1-01-45)*, [DCAD Address Confidentiality Program Policy](#), and associated procedures ([DES 1-01-45-01](#)) if an Applicant states the Applicant is participating in the Address Confidentiality Program.

3. Verification of Identity

- a. To prevent fraud, an Applicant must verify their identity.
 - i. Generally, Applicants should verify their identity through ID.me at <https://www.id.me/>. Use of id.me will require a Social Security Number (SSN) or Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN).
 - A. An Applicant’s disclosure of their SSN or TIN is optional and is used only to verify the Applicant’s identity.
 - B. If an Applicant wishes not to disclose their SSN or is otherwise unable to verify through ID.me, they may

submit a paper or phone-based application and provide identity documents. This method may lengthen processing time.

4. Incomplete Application

If an application is incomplete, DES will request missing information from the Applicant.

5. An Employee may not process an application submitted by any person the Employee knows, including a friend, neighbor, or relative.

C. Authorization of Benefits

1. DES will only issue payments when DES has approved the initial ERAP application. DES will not make any payments for ERAP applications approved by another jurisdiction.

2. The Department will authorize 100% of an Eligible Household's utility assistance as stated on the DES ERAP application, up to a total of \$3,500 per month.

3. Payment Issuance

a. The Department will:

- i. Issue an ERAP payment to the Utility Company on the Eligible Household's behalf via an Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) or check.
- ii. Provide an Eligible Household with proof of payment made to the Utility Company via the Client portal.
- iii. Perform additional review of any payment submitted to a bank account or mailed to an address outside the United States before processing the payment.
- iv. Base prospective utility assistance amounts on the average utility cost for the prior three months billed, based on the Client's estimate of the utility costs.

3. Benefit Limits

a. An Eligible Household will not receive ERAP payments for more than 18 months and not more than \$63,000 in total combined rent and utility assistance. This calculation includes:

- i. All months the applicant was approved for either Utility-Only assistance or rental assistance.

- ii. All funds distributed for either Utility-Only assistance or rental assistance.
 - c. Future ERAP payments for an Eligible Household's utilities from the date of application are payable in three-month increments but will be transmitted on the first business day of each month.
 - d. A Tenant may reapply for ERAP benefits every 3 months with reduced documentation.
- 4. Arrears Debt
 - a. A Tenant may apply for a one-time, lump sum payment for utility arrears assistance from the date of application dating back to the March 13, 2020 National Declaration of Emergency.
 - b. An ERAP payment must be used to cover an Eligible Household's utility arrears debt prior to any future payment.
- 5. Other
 - a. An ERAP payment is not considered Income to the Tenant.
 - b. The Tenant's receipt of an ERAP payment will not adversely impact the Tenant's eligibility for other public assistance programs provided by the Department.

D. 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 and the U.S. Government Accountability Office, or authorized representatives of either, have the right of access to confidential records to conduct audits or investigations.

E. Records Retention

- 1. All records and financial documents, including those pertaining to eligibility determinations, will be maintained by the Department.
- 2. DES will maintain ERAP 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](#)).

F. Fraud Prevention

1. Employees must take multiple steps to detect and prevent instances of fraud (as addressed in Standard Work).
2. Tenants are required to attest they are not receiving benefits under the ERAP for utility expenses already paid by any other assistance program.

Rental Assistance Program - Maximum Household Income Allowed

County	Household Size (persons)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 or more
Apache	\$31,050	\$35,450	\$39,900	\$44,300	\$47,850	\$51,400	\$54,950	\$58,500
Cochise	\$36,150	\$41,300	\$46,450	\$51,600	\$55,750	\$59,900	\$64,000	\$68,150
Coconino	\$48,100	\$55,000	\$61,850	\$68,700	\$74,200	\$79,700	\$85,200	\$90,700
Gila	\$33,750	\$38,550	\$43,350	\$48,150	\$52,050	\$55,900	\$59,750	\$63,600
Graham	\$37,050	\$42,350	\$47,650	\$52,900	\$57,150	\$61,400	\$65,600	\$69,850
Greenlee	\$40,150	\$45,900	\$51,650	\$57,350	\$61,950	\$66,550	\$71,150	\$75,750
La Paz	\$32,900	\$37,600	\$42,300	\$46,950	\$50,750	\$54,500	\$58,250	\$62,000
Maricopa	\$49,500	\$56,550	\$63,600	\$70,650	\$76,350	\$82,000	\$87,650	\$93,300
Mohave	\$34,900	\$39,850	\$44,850	\$49,800	\$53,800	\$57,800	\$61,800	\$65,750
Navajo	\$31,050	\$35,450	\$39,900	\$44,300	\$47,850	\$51,400	\$54,950	\$58,500
Pima	\$42,950	\$49,100	\$55,250	\$61,350	\$66,300	\$71,200	\$76,100	\$81,000
Pinal	\$49,500	\$56,550	\$63,600	\$70,650	\$76,350	\$82,000	\$87,650	\$93,300
Santa Cruz	\$31,050	\$35,450	\$39,900	\$44,300	\$47,850	\$51,400	\$54,950	\$58,500
Yavapai	\$39,950	\$45,650	\$51,350	\$57,050	\$61,650	\$66,200	\$70,750	\$75,350
Yuma	\$32,050	\$36,600	\$41,200	\$45,750	\$49,450	\$53,100	\$56,750	\$60,400