

News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Somerset County Launches \$650,000 Rental Relief Fund to Combat COVID Related Homelessness

Allocated Funding from CARES Act Will Assist Families Who Lost Income to COVID-19, Prevent Homelessness, and Maintain a Stable Rental Market

Somerville, NJ – Somerset County is using federal CARES Act funding to establish the Emergency Rental Relief Program (ERRP) to help households that lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic make monthly rent payments. The majority of the ERRP will be paid directly to landlords, with additional funding used to help families navigate the process and provide representation to residents currently in Landlord/Tenant court.

“Somerset County is committed to working with renters and landlords to prevent homelessness and maintain a stable rental market during the economic crisis caused by COVID-19,” said Freeholder Director Shanel Robinson. “The Emergency Rental Relief Program, in conjunction with other state and federal efforts, will help keep families in their homes as we reach the hottest month of the year and reduce the vacancies and expense of finding new tenants for landlords.”

Only tenants who can demonstrate their rent was up to date for March 2020, prior to the COVID-19 disruptions to our economy, should apply. Successful applicants are eligible for the lesser of three months’ rent or \$3,000 to be used to offset owed rent and will be paid directly to landlords through a partnership with Somerset County Social Services.

The program is funded by a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation of \$646,398 from the March 2020 Federal CARES Act for the majority of Somerset County, with separate CDBG funding allocated to Franklin Township. As a result, Franklin Township residents are not eligible for ERRP assistance.

In order to be eligible, an applicant must:

- Be a resident of any Somerset County municipality (except Franklin Township) and have a current lease or rent agreement.
- Have a household income that is less than the following income limits, based on household size including children:

1 Person - \$66,900	2 People - \$76,500
3 People - \$86,100	4 People - \$95,600
5 People - \$103,200	6 People - \$110,900

- Be able to demonstrate that rent payments were current as of March 2020.
- Provide documentation of COVID-related loss of income after March 9, 2020. Examples include:
 - Layoff or reduced work hours;
 - Unpaid leave to take care of children due to school and daycare closure;
 - Self-quarantine for 14 days resulting in a loss of income;
 - Other consequence of the virus that led to a reduction of income.

In order to receive assistance, eligible residents must complete an application and submit the required documentation. For your convenience, there are 3 different ways to apply.

- Complete and submit the application and required documentation online at <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/CDBG-CVERR>.
- Print an application from the above link and submit printed copy via email to commdevel@co.somerset.nj.us;
- Request and submit a paper copy by calling or emailing the Community Development Office at 908-541-5756 or commdevel@co.somerset.nj.us respectively.

To learn more about Somerset County's Community Development Office, please visit <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/human-services/community-development>.

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