

Program Overview:

The COVID-19 Rental Assistance program provides one-time cash assistance to low-income households residing in Solano County who have lost their jobs or had their wages reduced due to COVID-19. The goal of this program is to help prevent the eviction of over 800 households due to COVID-19 while reducing the risk of families/individuals from becoming homeless. Further, this program will provide informational resources to applicants and landlords/property owners of services available. The program targets to:

- Provide rental assistance that is paid directly to the landlord, on behalf of eligible renter households.
- To support low-income communities in each city across Solano County.
- Support paying for unpaid rent (excluding late fees) as retroactive as from the month of March 2020.
- Educate Tenants and Landlords/Property Owners on the current Eviction Moratoriums and provide tools to help support an agreement to a repayment plan of any outstanding rent due to COVID-19.
- Provide other educational resources such as:
 - Employment opportunities
 - Public Health Guidelines & Resources
 - Food Bank/Food Pantry Resources as well as CalFresh

Program Qualification:

Applicants apply online, over the phone, or in person by completing an intake form. To qualify for the program, households must:

- a. Have a head of household over 18 years of age.
- b. Have been a Solano County resident as of January 1, 2020.
- c. Have an income at or below 100% Federal Poverty Guidelines (or 125% Federal Poverty Guidelines if receiving CalFRESH).
- d. Demonstrate financial hardship or loss of income due to COVID-19
 - Requires documentary evidence, including a letter from most recent employer, bank statements, and bills in arrears to show inability to pay basic needs.
 - Verification of Income will be required (i.e. pay stubs, EDD denial letter, etc.)

Program Process:

In order to apply, applicants will view a short video or read a flyer of the program prior to filling out an application. The video will be made available online and can be accessed through any computer, at Catholic Charities directly, or through community providers across the County that may be providing services to eligible households at their locations. The video and flyer will encompass the same information, informing the Applicant of next steps including what documents will be required to prove that a COVID-19 eligible need exists. Applicants will provide contact information, demographic information, how they heard about the program, and they will certify under penalty of perjury that the information provided is correct. The application will then be filled out, whether online or in person, and will be made available in English, Spanish, and Tagalog.

**Solano County – CARES Act Expenditure Plan
Rental Assistance Program Overview
October 27, 2020**

Attachment B

Applicants who qualify will be sorted using a priority/vulnerability assessment to determine the highest needs households. This process will utilize a rubric to understand who is most at risk financially. Eligible households will then be contacted in that order of eligibility to start collecting any necessary documents. Once all information is verified, the Landlord is asked to complete a “Landlord Verification Form” and IRS Form W-9 in order to receive the rent payment directly from Catholic Charities. Once all steps have been completed, the landlord would receive the rental payment between 5-10 business days.

Program Calendar:

- Program Set-up/Logistics: September 1 – 7, 2020
- Outreach & Training of Community Partners: September 7-18, 2020
- Applications would open September 21, 2020.
- General Application period would close October 12, 2020 at 5pm.
- All supporting documents would be due no later than October 23, 2020.
- Review Period & Payment Processing would end November 6, 2020
- Financial Review: November 6, 2020
- Tentative Round 2: *only if funding is available after October 30, 2020.*

Program Recommendation and Budget: \$4 million:

- **Direct Client Assistance:** The total assistance provided to a household/individual will depend on the monthly rent amount and the total months of assistance that is needed. Catholic Charities would implement with a cap of no more than \$4,000 of one-time assistance per household.
 - **\$3,340,000** for direct assistance
 - Maximum payout per household could be:
 - **\$4,000** which would serve no less than 835 households
- **Administrative and Operations Costs:**
 - **\$660,000** would cover monthly salary and benefits for 11 total personnel, stipends for 32 volunteers, program operations costs, and indirect costs.

Rental Assistance Program October 2020 Update :

The RAP program accepted applications from September 21, 2020 through October 12, 2020. During the 3-week application period, 1,222 households applied online, by phone and in-person.

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|---------------------------------|-------|
| a. Total applications received: | 1,222 |
| i. Total qualifying households: | 861 |
| ○ Benicia: | 29 |
| ○ Dixon: | 24 |
| ○ Fairfield: | 286 |
| ○ Rio Vista: | 4 |
| ○ Suisun City: | 61 |
| ○ Vacaville: | 97 |
| ○ Vallejo: | 360 |

- ii. Total households who did not qualify: *337
**The majority of applicants that did not qualify were due to income levels being above the eligibility criteria of 100% Federal Poverty Line. 20 applicants did not qualify due to residing outside of Solano County*

b. Rental Assistance for qualified applicants: \$3,073,771.28

Application Figures:

The community's response to the RAP far surpassed what Catholic Charities has seen during the COVID19 pandemic. For comparison, Catholic Charities implemented its first rental assistance program earlier in 2020 in response to the pandemic. During that program's 5-month period of April through August 2020, 431 applications were received in total, with an average of 21 applications per week. With the current RAP funded by CARES, Catholic Charities received an average of 407 applications per week during the 3 week application period.

Tenant and Landlord Outreach:

Catholic Charities attributes some of the large response to the RAP to an intensive focus on Landlord and Tenant outreach and engagement efforts in the weeks leading up to and throughout the application period. To reach as many Solano County residents as possible, Catholic Charities received tremendous support from City, County, School District, Non-Profit organizations and other Community-Based partners across all jurisdictions to ensure that each unique community received targeted Landlord and Tenant communication and education about the RAP:

- 10 separate virtual trainings were widely advertised and provided to community partners. 67 community partners signed up and attended the events, with representatives from all seven cities in attendance. Throughout the period that these events were held, over 700 individuals signed up to receive email updates for RAP.
- Program advertisements and Catholic Charities interviews were broadcasted across local radio stations to promote RAP. The radio stations included KUIC 95.3 as well as Radio Santisimo Sacramento 1240 AM & 106.5FM.
- Interviews were held with Catholic Charities' Executive Director on television with both Univision 14 and Univision 19.
- Local newspapers throughout the county advertised the program in both print and virtual formats.
- Social media ads, 3 live event formats, and video posts specifically intended to target Landlords, Tenants, and community providers reached over 28,000 viewers with 2,888 likes, comments, or shares across Social Media platforms.
- All of Solano County's School Districts received information regarding how to connect their students' families to the program, RAP eligibility requirements, and contact information for specific Catholic Charities staff that were dedicated to serving each City jurisdiction.

Common Ground Collaborative:

As a member of 'Common Ground,' Catholic Charities collaborated with Common Ground affiliated organizations, representatives, and volunteers during the RAP implementation. This collaborative assisted with identifying key community partners through their unique networks that would promote the program, ensuring connections with various pockets of communities across Solano County. The largest promotional event coordinated by Common Ground was through their organization of a Tenant Protections & Landlord Relief virtual event. During this event, Legal Services of Northern California presented a bilingual presentation about AB 3088, and Catholic Charities concluded the meeting with a presentation to demonstrate how to apply for RAP and eligibility requirements. The virtual event was attended by more than 45 individuals. The Facebook Video 'shares' of this event had over 750 views.