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## Advisory #47

### Coming Soon: Montana Emergency Rental Assistance Program

The Montana Emergency Rental Assistance program will provide rent and utility assistance to Montanans who have been financially impacted, directly or indirectly, by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Renters will be able to apply directly for **rent and utility assistance**, and landlords will be able to apply on behalf of renters with the renter's co-signature and required documentation.

Renters will need to provide income documentation to verify program eligibility.

To streamline the application review process, **we recommend renters file their 2020 tax return now** and have that document available to submit when the program opens for applications.

The program is still being developed, but **interested applicants can begin preparing for their applications using the information below.**

#### **For Renters:**

1. Check **eligibility**. To be eligible for rental or utility assistance:
  - An applicant's household income cannot exceed 80 percent of the area median income. Area median income information can be found here: <https://housing.mt.gov/Portals/218/Shared/RentalHousing/docs/IncomeLimits.pdf>
  - The applicant or someone in their household must have experienced income loss, financial hardship, qualified for unemployment benefits, or incurred significant costs due directly or indirectly to COVID-19.
  - Applicants must be able to show that they are at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. For example, if they have received a past due rent notice or eviction notice or if they are experiencing unsafe or unhealthy living conditions.
2. Gather application **materials**, including:
  - Lease Agreement
  - Demonstration of need:
    - A late rent or eviction notice
    - Utility bill, late payment notice or shut off notice

- Income documentation:
  - 2020 IRS tax return

**OR**

- Documentation of all household member income sources for the most recent two months, which may include:
  - Paystubs for wages earned for the past two months
  - Most recent Social Security or pension award letter
  - TANF statement
  - Unemployment insurance benefit statement
  - Evidence of child support income for the past two months
  - Self-employment 2020- Schedule C or profit and loss statement
  - Documentation of other income for the past two months

***For Landlords:***

- Gather the W9 for the appropriate rental property where they have notified a renter of a late payment or sent an eviction notice
- Landlords will need their renter's signature on the application once they are ready to submit

*The program is not yet taking applications but applicants can begin getting their materials ready now.*  
**Watch for Montana Emergency Rental Assistance program updates at [HOUSING.MT.GOV](https://HOUSING.MT.GOV).**