

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | July 27, 2021

North Dakota renters can get help applying for rent assistance and other help

BISMARCK, N.D. – Housing instability is an issue that affects both rural and urban areas of North Dakota. Low- and moderate-income renters in North Dakota who are struggling to pay rent can now get help applying for the ND Rent Help program, which offers up to 12 months of help with past due, current and future rent to prevent evictions and promote stable housing, and which can also connect renters to other helpful resources.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services has trained and is now working with a network of 46 contracted application counselors across the state. The counselors will do local outreach, raising awareness about the ND Rent Help program and helping connect low- and moderate-income renters more quickly to rent assistance and other financial help.

“We recognize that not all renters have the ability to apply online themselves. Others need help submitting required documentation such as a lease agreement, income information, unemployment verification and other information. Others simply have questions,” said department Executive Policy Director Jessica Thomasson.

“Application counselors are now available statewide to help renters through the application process and to refer them to other services that can meet their needs. We expect this extra, in-community support will help people move from initial application to approval more quickly,” she said.

According to Thomasson, the ND Rent Help program has already aided 1,684 qualifying renters from 38 of North Dakota’s 53 counties between Jan. 1 and July 19, 2021, providing \$4.4 million in payments to participating housing providers.

The program can help more renters, and there is a need, she said. Renters whose households lost employment income since the beginning of the pandemic were twice as likely as other renters to report not being caught up on rent payments.¹

Connecting to ND Rent Help

Renters can begin the application process online at <https://portalapps.nd.gov/dhsps/emergency-rent> or can apply with the help of an approved application counselor. Contact information for approved application counselors is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/rent-help.html.

ND Rent Help rent assistance program can assist households with incomes up to 80% of area median income (AMI), which equals an annual income of up to \$80,000 for a family of four depending on the county in which they live. To participate, at least one member of the household must have qualified for unemployment or have experienced a reduction in income during the pandemic and be behind in rent or at risk of homelessness or housing instability.

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Households with incomes below 50% of AMI and other households with qualifying incomes that include a member who is currently unemployed and has been unemployed for 90 days or longer will receive priority.

The ND Rent Help program follows U.S. Treasury Department guidelines. A companion program to help qualifying North Dakota homeowners with housing-related costs is expected to be available this fall.

To learn more about ND Rent Help, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/rent-help.html.

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Data Source

¹ U.S. Census Bureau's [Household Pulse Survey](https://www.census.gov/hhes/housing/rent/household-pulse-survey/). Surveys were conducted weekly during the following periods: Phase 1 (April 23 – July 21, 2020), Phase 2 (August 19 – October 26, 2020), and Phase 3 (October 28, 2020 – March 29, 2021). See *Housing Insecurity* data visualization on <http://www.ndcompass.org>.

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