



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - HOPE PROGRAM LANDLORD

The NC Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program is an initiative serving 88 counties that provides rent and utility assistance to eligible low-income renters experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19. The program works to prevent evictions and utility disconnections in order to promote housing stability during the ongoing pandemic. The NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency, a division of the Department of Public Safety, administers the HOPE Program.

Which counties and populations are served by the HOPE Program? Who serves the counties and populations that the HOPE Program does not serve?

The HOPE Program serves low-income renters in [88 North Carolina counties](#). The 12 counties listed below received direct federal funding for rent and utility assistance programs. If an applicant lives in one of these counties, they should apply to their local rent and utility assistance program instead of the HOPE Program. Those counties are: Buncombe, Cabarrus, Cumberland, Durham, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Johnston, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Orange, Union, and Wake.

Additionally, five Native American tribes received a direct allocation of federal emergency rental assistance funds, so recognized members of those tribes will be served by their tribal program. Those tribes are: Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Coharie Tribe, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe.

Can landlords apply to the HOPE Program?

Landlords cannot apply for the HOPE Program, but they can refer distressed tenants to the program for eligibility screening and referral. Renters can apply online at www.hope.nc.gov or by calling **(888) 9ASK-HOPE** or **(888) 927-5467**. If the tenant qualifies for rent assistance, their landlord will be contacted by the HOPE Program to complete the Landlord and Tenant Agreement and W-9 tax form.

What can I do to help make sure that my tenant gets assistance?

Renters need to provide their landlord's e-mail address, so make sure that they have that information. Once a rent award is made, you will have 21 days to complete the agreement electronically, so it is important to respond to HOPE Program e-mails promptly.

Applicants will need to provide evidence of a lease agreement to apply for assistance. Landlords are encouraged to provide applicants up-to-date lease agreements or other proof of a lease, such as a proof of payment of rent. A [Lease Summary form](#) signed by the landlord may be used if there is not a current written lease or written statement that includes the tenant name(s), the rent address, the amount owed per month, how many months late the tenant is, and when the lease ends is also acceptable.

How much in rent assistance can I expect for my tenants that qualify for the HOPE Program?

The new phase of the HOPE Program will pay the applicant's monthly rent owed, up to the county fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment. You can find the county fair market rent limits using the [2021 HUD Fair Market Rent Documentation System](#). Eligible applicants can receive up to 12 months of rent assistance, which includes up to nine months of past due rent. Rent assistance provided during the first phase of the HOPE Program counts towards the 12 months of total rent assistance that an applicant may receive.

The program also pays three months of future rent at a time, with a maximum of 12 months assistance the program can provide in total. If the applicant has not exhausted 12 months of rent assistance, and funds are available, then an applicant may apply for additional rounds of three months of rent assistance. Federal grant guidance requires that applicants re-apply and re-qualify every three months to ensure that the applicant continues to qualify for assistance.

My tenant owes more per month than the cap that the HOPE Program pays. Do I have to forgive that amount or does my tenant still owe the difference the program doesn't pay?

A tenant will still owe the difference in monthly rent that the HOPE Program doesn't pay. A tenant also owes any arrears not covered by the program. However, a landlord that accepts rent assistance from the HOPE Program agrees to not evict the tenant for non-payment of rent during the period of assistance and for at least 60 days after that period ends.

Are there differences between this new phase of the HOPE Program and the previous one? Why are there differences?

There have been adjustments made to the HOPE Program because this phase of the HOPE Program is being funded after the U.S. Treasury issued updated guidance on how to use rent assistance funds. Therefore, these funds have different requirements. Other adjustments have been made to streamline the program in order to serve those in need more quickly. Changes in the program are listed below:

- Rent awards are calculated by using the actual monthly amount that a renter owes up to a cap of the county fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment (previously calculated using the county median rent as the standard amount for rent awards).
- Tenants do not have to be behind on their rent when they apply in order to qualify for rent assistance. However, they must have been behind on rent or utilities at some point since April 1, 2020, or otherwise at risk of eviction or homelessness.

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