



# Community Engagement Tool Kit

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[RentReliefRI One-pager](#)  
(English and Spanish)

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[Sample Social Media Posts](#)

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[RentReliefRI Speaking Points](#)

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[www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com)

 [Rent Relief RI](#)

**RentReliefRI Call Center**

*For tenants and landlords with questions about the program*

**1-855-608-8756** Hours of Operation: M-F: 8:30 am - 5:30pm; Saturday: 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

# The past year has been a challenging one for so many Rhode Islanders.

Every day we see first-hand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on renters and homeowners struggling to keep a roof over their head and keep their families safe.

Fortunately, there is good news for Rhode Island renters with the recent launch of a new statewide rental assistance program, RentReliefRI, which provides rent and utility assistance for eligible families negatively impacted by the unprecedented loss of jobs and income due to COVID-19.

The success of this new program relies on both renters and landlords knowing about the program and how they can apply. We hope that you will partner with us to ensure that renters in every community are fully aware of this important opportunity.

We have developed a RentReliefRI Toolkit, which we hope that you will use in communicating about the program and sharing with your networks. We've included everything from sample social media posts, talking points, a program one-pager, and information on where renters can go if needing application assistance.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that Rhode Island renters have the tools, resources and information they need to stay stably housed.

Sincerely,



**Carol Ventura**  
*Executive Director of RIHousing*



## Social Media Posts

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**Are you a renter or landlord experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic?** You may be eligible for rent and utility assistance through a new, statewide rental assistance program. RentReliefRI is now accepting applications for eligible Rhode Islanders. Learn more and apply at [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com).

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**Funds are now available to provide rental and utility assistance to help eligible RI renters maintain housing stability.** Applications are available on [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com)

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If you are a RI renter or landlord that is applying for assistance through **RentReliefRI** and has questions, representatives are available to assist at **1-855-608-8756**.

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**Behind on your rent or utility payments because of COVID-19?** Visit [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com) for information on a new, statewide rental and utility assistance program available for eligible households.

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RI renters have felt the brunt of job losses and financial hardship due to COVID-19. Fortunately, there's a new, **statewide rental and utility assistance program** to help. Up to 12 months of assistance is available for eligible households. Visit [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com) for details and how to apply.

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**RentReliefRI provides rental and utility assistance to help eligible renters maintain housing stability.**

Learn more: [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com).

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**A new, statewide rental assistance program is available for eligible RI renters.** Visit [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com) to learn more about program guidelines and what you need to know to apply.

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**RENTAL ASSISTANCE NOW AVAILABLE:** Visit [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com) to learn more.

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[DOWNLOAD SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES](#)

# Website/Newsletter Copy

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## **New statewide Rental Assistance Program: RentReliefRI**

I am pleased to share with you information on a new, statewide rental assistance program: RentReliefRI. Administered by RIHousing, the program provides rental and utility assistance to eligible Rhode Island households.

Renters who are struggling to pay their rent or utilities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic may qualify for up to 12 months of assistance. The program can pay for rent and utilities owed back to April 1, 2020 and can also cover up to three months of upcoming rent. Renters may apply for help with paying for utilities even if they do not need help paying for rent.

Applicants must meet certain income limits and eligibility requirements. For more information, visit [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com) and [download the one-pager here](#).

## **About RentReliefRI:**

RentReliefRI is being supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number ERA0013 awarded to the State of Rhode Island by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

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## **Messaging to Constituents:**

Rhode Island renters have felt the brunt of job losses and financial hardship due to COVID-19. Fortunately, there's a new, statewide rental and utility assistance program to help. RentReliefRI provides assistance to Rhode Island renters struggling to pay their rent or utilities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rhode Island renters having trouble covering rent and/or utility payments may qualify for up to 12 months of assistance.

Known as RentReliefRI, the program can pay for rent and utilities owed back to April 1, 2020 and can also cover up to three months of upcoming rent. Renters may apply for help with paying for utilities even if they do not need help paying for rent.

Applicants must meet certain income limits and eligibility requirements. Eligible households must be at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI), which translates into approximately \$69,200 annual income for a family of four in most parts of the State. Funds will be paid directly to landlords and utility service providers.

For more information, visit [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com) and [download the one-pager here](#).

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# Speaking Points

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## Program Overview

- \$200 million in rent relief funds from the federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program
  - New rental assistance program, RentReliefRI, helps eligible Rhode Island renters struggling to pay their rent or utilities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
    - Can be used to pay rent arrearages, forward facing rent, utility arrearages and certain other housing expenses
  - Launched March 31, 2021
  - Up to 12 months of assistance: can pay for rent and utilities owed back to April 1, 2020 and can also cover up to three months of upcoming rent.
  - Applicants must meet certain income limits and eligibility requirements.
  - Funds will be paid directly to landlords and utility service providers.
  - Funding is available until September 30, 2022
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## Importance of new federal rental assistance funds

- The COVID-19 crisis continues to impact Rhode Islanders across the state.
  - These new federal funds will help struggling renters remain in their homes while also helping to stabilize the market by helping landlords who have struggled to make their mortgage payments due to lack of rental payments from tenants.
  - RIHousing is working with organizations, elected officials and community leaders across the state to ensure Rhode Island renters and landlords are aware of the program.
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## Eligibility

Three eligibility criteria:

- [Income Limit](#)
  - COVID-19 Impact
  - Risk of housing instability or homelessness
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## Speaking Points *continued.*

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### Applicants must have:

- Qualified for unemployment benefits
  - OR
  - Have experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due, directly or indirectly, to COVID-19.
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### Available Assistance

Program may be used to pay:

- Rent arrears
  - Forward facing rent
  - Utility arrears
  - Utility costs include electricity, gas, water and sewer, trash removal, and energy costs, such as fuel oil
  - Applicants can receive up to 12 months of rent/utility assistance (15 months in exceptional cases)
  - Eligible households must be at or below [80% of AMI](#)
    - translates into roughly \$69,200 annual income for a family of four in most parts of the State
  - Renters may apply for help with paying for utilities even if they do not need help paying for rent.
  - No monthly cap on eligible rent relief.
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### How to Apply

Visit [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com)

- Renters and landlords can go online to review the eligibility criteria and view the documentation needed.
  - Applications are accepted via one, user-friendly portal
  - For those who need it, application assistance is available through a network of community partners across the state; the listing is available online at [www.RentReliefRI.com](http://www.RentReliefRI.com)
  - A call center is also available for tenants and landlords with questions about the program.
    - **RentReliefRI Call Center:** 1-855-608-8756
    - Hours of Operation: M-F: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.; Saturday: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
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*This must appear on all  
RentReliefRI outreach materials.*

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