

Housing and Other Basic Needs

Berlin Elementary Helping Hands

Helping Hands is committed to supporting the families and students of Berlin Elementary School. We support the BES Food Pantry, BES Holiday Bears, winter gear giveaway and recycling program. We are here to lend a helping hand to families in need. We also accept helping hands through donations of various items. For more information call Deanna Baker at BES or email her:

dhansen@berlincentral.org

Berlin Middle/High School Helping Hands

Helping hands can provide school supplies, winter coats and other winter clothing, and holiday gifts for families in need. Referrals come from students, parent/guardians, and staff.

mputtermanhoffmann@berlincentral.org

Commission on Economic Opportunity Weatherization Assistance Program Offers FREE insulation and weather-sealing services to eligible residents in Rensselaer County.

Keith Place, Weatherization Manager

(518) 272-6012 ext. 290

kplace@ceoempowers.org

<http://www.ceoempowers.org/services/healthy-homes/weatherization/>

CoNSERNS – U

Phone: (518) 463-8571

50 Herrick St., Rensselaer, NY 12144

Services include a food pantry, information and referral service, advocacy, clothing, back-to-school, emergency assistance (including utility assistance), and holiday gift and food distributions. Casework services are also provided to individuals and families throughout rural Rensselaer County.

<http://www.ccrda.org>

RCHR's Mini-Repair Program – Rensselaer County

The Mini-Repair program run by Rensselaer County Housing Resources (RCHR) provides FREE LABOR to eligible homeowners for minor repairs. The Homeowner is responsible for the cost of materials. Contact RCHR's Mini-Repair Coordinator Jay Coon at 272-8289 x 211 to request a repair.

<http://www.triponline.org/homeownership/homeowner-repair-assistance/>

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

The HEAP Program usually opens in November of each year and continues through the heating season.

(518) 266-7960

<http://www.rensco.com/departments/department-of-aging/home-energy-assistance-program-heap/>

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

Provides rental assistance and home ownership option to extremely low, very low and low income households; also provides assistance to senior citizens and disabled persons on fixed incomes, displaced families, and homeless individuals with disabilities.

<http://www.nyshcr.org/Programs/Section8HCV/>

Temporary Assistance

To find out if you are eligible to receive Temporary Assistance, including help with an emergency, you need to file an application with your county department of social services. You should identify any emergency needs you may have at this time. If you have an emergency, you will be interviewed and told in writing about the decision on your emergency the same day you apply.

Temporary Assistance Hotline at 1-800-342-3009

(518) 266-7800

<http://otda.ny.gov/programs/apply/#ta>

United Way 2-1-1

Offers information on: food, housing, childcare, employment, health care, senior care, substance abuse, mental health, financial problems, crisis counseling, legal issues, volunteer opportunities or other matters.

Dial 211

<http://www.unitedwaygcr.org/211>

Unity House Street Ministry

Unity House is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people living in poverty, adults with mental illness, victims of domestic violence, children with developmental delays and their families, people living with HIV/AIDS, and others whose needs can effectively be met by Unity House services and philosophy. Unity House provides direct service and works toward social justice. We help individuals identify their strengths and needs, draw upon their abilities, and access community resources. We educate, collaborate with others and advocate to influence public policy and to create awareness of the people we serve and the issues they face.

(518) 274-2607

2431 Sixth Avenue, Troy, New York 12180

www.unityhouseny.org

New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

The New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) will provide significant economic relief to help low and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing rental arrears, temporary rental assistance and utility arrears assistance.

Eligibility

New York residents are eligible for ERAP if they meet the following criteria:

- Household gross income is at or below [80 percent of the Area Median Income \(AMI\)](#). These income limits differ by county and household size. A household may qualify based on current income or calendar year 2020 income that is at or below 80 percent AMI.
- Household gross income between 80 and 120 percent AMI. These income limits differ by county and household size. A household may qualify based on current income or calendar year 2020 income that is at or below [120 percent AMI](#). Households with income between 80 and 120 percent AMI are eligible for a state-funded ERAP payment so long as funds remain available. All applications for households with income up to [120 percent AMI](#) will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- On or after March 13, 2020, a member of the household received unemployment benefits or experienced a reduction in income, incurred significant costs or experienced financial hardship, directly or indirectly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The applicant is obligated to pay rent at their primary residence and has rental arrears (rent overdue) at their current residence for rent owed on or after March 13, 2020.
- The household must be at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability, which can be demonstrated by having rental arrears owed on or after March 13, 2020.

There are no immigration status requirements to qualify for the program.

Households eligible for rental arrears may also be eligible for help paying utility arrears at the same rental unit.

Applications for all eligible households will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, as long as funds remain available.

Benefits

Households approved for ERAP may receive:

- Up to 12 months of rental arrears payments for rents accrued on or after March 13, 2020.
- Up to 3 months of additional rental assistance if the household is expected to spend 30 percent or more of their gross monthly income to pay for rent.
- Up to 12 months of electric or gas utility arrears payments for arrears that have accrued on or after March 13, 2020.

Payments will be made directly to the landlord/property owner and utility company on behalf of the tenant. Tenant applicants will be notified of the amounts paid on their behalf. If a landlord is difficult to locate or does not otherwise provide information needed to complete the application, funds will be held for up to 180 days to allow sufficient time to locate the landlord and collect required information as well as to provide tenant protections and maximize landlord participation.

For more information & to apply visit

<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/>

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Information for Renters – Document Checklist

The New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program assists eligible households behind on their rent that have experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19 and are at risk of homelessness or housing instability.

When applying, renters will need to provide:

- **Personal identification** for primary applicant (individual signing application). Acceptable forms of identification include items such as: A photo ID, driver license or non-driver government-issued ID, passport, EBT/Benefits Issuance Card, birth certificate or school registration.
- **Social Security number** of any household members who have been issued one. **Individuals do not need to have a lawful immigration status to qualify for the program.**
- **Proof of rental amount**, signed lease, even if expired. If no lease is available then proof can be shown through a rent receipt, canceled check or money order. If no documentation is available, landlord attestation will be accepted.
- **Proof of residency and occupancy** – Signed lease, rent receipt, utility bill, school records, bank statement, postal mail with name of applicant, insurance bill, or driver license. Proof should be current.
- **Proof of Income:**
 - **Documents demonstrating monthly income** for the prior month, such as pay stubs, bank account deposit verification, unemployment benefits letter, or other proof;

OR

 - **Documents demonstrating annual income for 2020**, such as a W-2 tax form from an employer, an annual statement of earnings, or a copy of a completed income tax return, such as a 1040, 1040EZ, 1099 tax form, or other evidence of 2020 annual income.
 - Self-attestation through a written and signed statement of income is permitted in certain circumstances where no documentation is available such as certain self-employment.
- **Copy of gas or electric utility bill**, if applying for help paying for utility arrears at the same rental unit.

Applicants will be asked to attest that on or after March 13, 2020, a member of the household received unemployment benefits **or** experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs or experienced other financial hardship, directly or indirectly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The applicant will need to sign the application form and associated certifications agreeing that the information provided in the application is accurate.

New York State

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

Do you need help paying for overdue water and wastewater bills?

The Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) can help.

LIHWAP is a drinking water and wastewater emergency assistance program funded through new federal resources. Benefits are based on the amount of unpaid water and wastewater bills owed by applicants. This assistance is targeted at low income households and income guidelines will mirror that of the Home Energy Assistance Program.

LIHWAP benefits are based on the actual amount of drinking water and/or wastewater arrears, up to a maximum of \$2,500 per drinking water or wastewater provider, or \$5,000 if drinking water and wastewater services are combined, per household. Benefits are paid directly to the household's drinking water and/or wastewater vendor(s).

Eligibility and benefits are based on:

- income,
- household size,
- household includes a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or qualified alien, and
- amount owed to drinking water and/or wastewater provider(s).

Primary applicants must provide:

- Proof of identity
- Proof of residence
- Documentation of earned and unearned income
- A drinking water, wastewater, or combined drinking water and wastewater bill listing their permanent and primary residence
- A valid Social Security Number (SSN)
 - SSNs of additional household members will be requested

For more information, visit <https://otda.ny.gov/LIHWAP>



NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

Overview

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) can help eligible New Yorkers heat and cool their homes.

If you are eligible, you may receive one regular HEAP benefit per program year and could also be eligible for emergency HEAP benefits if you are in danger of running out of fuel or having your utility service shut off.

Questions regarding the HEAP program should be directed to your [HEAP Local District Contact](#).

HEAP may be able to help you if you heat your home with:

- Electricity
- Natural Gas
- Oil
- Coal
- Propane
- Wood/Wood Pellets
- Kerosene
- Corn

How to Apply for HEAP

You can [apply for Home Energy Assistance Program](#) benefits online, in person, or in writing.

Types of Benefits: Regular Benefit, Regular Arrears Supplement Benefit, Emergency Benefit, Heating Equipment Repair or Replacement Benefit, Clean and Tune Benefit, Cooling Assistance

For more information visit: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/>

Legal Assistance

LawHelpNY

LawHelpNY is an online tool for helping low-income New Yorkers solve their legal problems. Our mission is to: "Provide and promote access to, high-quality online information about free legal services throughout New York, about legal rights in a broad range of substantive areas, about the court system, and about related advocacy, government and social service organizations. We are committed to providing information that is user-friendly, in English, Spanish, and other languages, in order to help low-income and other vulnerable New Yorkers achieve equal access to justice." LawHelpNY is the only comprehensive source of legal referral information in the state and includes:

- More than 600 free legal service projects & organizations with their contact & intake information.
- Over 4,000 Know Your Rights and self-help resources covering 16 areas of law.
- Extensive links to social service, advocacy and government organizations, information about the Court system.

<http://www.lawhelpny.org/>

Legal Aid Society North Eastern NY

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York provides free legal services to low-income upstate New Yorkers.

518-462-6765 or 1-800-462-2922

95 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12206

<http://www.lasny.org/contact/>

NYS Bar Association Referral Service

Lawyer referral and information service. The service does not list Pro Bono (free) attorneys. If you are referred to an attorney through the lawyer referral service the attorney will provide you with a half-hour consultation for \$35. (Free consultations are given for personal injury, social security, medical malpractice, veteran's and military law, unemployment or workers' compensation.) If the attorney agrees to represent you, the attorney will charge you at his or her regular rates.

1-800-342-3661

<http://www.nysba.org/lawyerreferral/>



295 Hamilton Street, Albany, NY 12210

<https://utalnbany.org>

(518) 436-8997

info@unitedtenantsalbany.org

Who We Are

United Tenants of Albany (UTA) is a community based nonprofit organization that works to improve housing conditions, both in terms of physical conditions and in terms of tenants' rights for security and equity. UTA responds to calls throughout the Capital District and concentrates its activities in low and moderate income neighborhoods in Albany.

Mission

The mission of UTA is to protect tenants' rights for safe, decent and affordable housing, with special emphases on those who have the greatest need or who experience the most severe problems and to promote the development and preservation of more affordable housing.

Background

Over the past 4 decades UTA has worked to improve code enforcement, campaign for rent regulations, advocating for responsible investment policies and support the development and preservation of affordable housing. We have linked up with public housing tenants, mobile home park tenants, concerned home owners and responsible landlords on issues of housing justice.

UTA carries on this tradition with a combination of direct services and community organization. The direct service activities range from crisis intervention to counseling and advocacy. The community organization work includes bringing small groups of people together and joint efforts with other organizations on broader housing issues.

United Tenants funding sources vary from year to year but generally include The NYS Homes and Community Renewal, the Albany County Department of Social Services, the Emergency Solutions Grant through the City of Albany, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Catholic Charities of the Albany Diocese, corporate donors, and numerous individual donors (many through the State Employee Federate Appeal and Community Works).

TenantHelp

About

The New York Covid-19 Tenant Help Project provides clear and easy guidance to tenants facing eviction as well as information on how to present defenses in court. This website will also provide resources to pro bono attorneys assisting tenants with their eviction cases.

This website is a collaboration of the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, Nassau Suffolk Law Services, Legal Aid of Western New York, Legal Aid Society of Mid New York, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Legal Services of Hudson Valley, and Pro Bono Net. Funding is provided by the New York Office of Attorney General.

<https://tenanthelpny.org/>