

MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY
Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program

Program Guide Updates
March 9, 20201

Action and Page	Changes (in red)
Add – Page 4	<p><u>Program Overview:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rental arrears owed to the household’s current landlord • current costs and arrearages for utilities and home energy costs at the household’s current unit
Add – Page 5	<p><u>2020 Annual Income Option:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of signed or E-filed 2020 IRS Form 1040
Add – Page 6	<p><u>Documentation of Income:</u> A written attestation is sufficient if the tenant has no income.</p>
Add – Page 6	<p><u>Current Monthly Income Option:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A HUD-50059 Owner’s Certification of Compliance with HUD’s Tenant Eligibility and Rent Procedures or a MaineHousing Tenant Income Certification or Recertification with an effective date within 12 months of the date of application can be used for income verification to document that a tenant is at or below 80% AMI if the certification shows the tenant’s income is 80% AMI or less.
Add – Page 6	<p><u>Current Monthly Income Option:</u> Households using the Current Monthly Income Option are required to submit new income documentation for additional assistance unless the monthly income determination was based on a HUD-50059 Owner’s Certification of Compliance with HUD’s Tenant Eligibility and Rent Procedures or a MaineHousing Tenant Income Certification or Recertification with an effective date within 12 months of the subsequent request.</p>
Add – Page 6	<p><u>Categorical Eligibility:</u> Examples of determination letters include, but are not limited to TANF, SNAP, WIC, Head Start, HEAP, and HUD-50058 Family Report.</p>
Add – Page 9	<p><u>Rental Assistance and Documentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of months of assistance for rental arrears is equal to the rental arrears divided by the monthly rent. • Assistance must be provided to eliminate an eligible households’ rental arrears owed to the current landlord..... • If a household that received rental assistance for rental home moves, the household may receive assistance for subsequent months in the new apartment, but may not receive more than 15 months’ rent and may not receive rent twice for the same month. • The Program does not pay for parking or storage fees.
Add – Page 10	<p><u>Rental Assistance Documentation:</u> The Landlord Application & Attestation plus either proof of the landlord’s ownership (such as a tax bill or deed) or proof of a landlord agent has agency (such as a management agreement) is sufficient to prove occupancy and rental amount.</p>

Delete – Page 10	<p><u>Rental Assistance Documentation:</u> Paragraph 2 starting with “Proof of residency.....”</p>
Add – Page 10	<p><u>Rental Assistance Documentation:</u> A utility bill in the name of a household member to prove residency is sufficient along with bank statements, check stubs or other reasonable documentation used to verify rental amount.</p>
Add – Page 10	<p><u>Rental Assistance Documentation:</u> If multiple roommates live in the same household, but only one roommate needs assistance, that roommate can apply for their portion. The applicant does not need to include their roommates' income on the application. If eligible, the portion of the rent will be prorated and paid directly to the landlord. If the applicant has been paying rent directly to landlord, landlord attestation is sufficient. If the applicant has been paying rent to a roommate, documentation of payment history is required.</p> <p>Leasing arrangements with family members are eligible only if the tenant address is different from the landlord address. Preexisting written lease and evidence of a history of consistent rent payments is required.</p> <p>A lease establishing a rental relationship is required for any rent to own situations.</p> <p>Those living with related parties and paying rent informally are not eligible. Definition of related parties: the spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, including steps, and in-laws; and any person cohabitating with an applicant, as well as any immediate family member related by blood, marriage, or adoption, including cousins, aunts, and uncles.</p> <p>Rent charged to a credit card or borrowed can show financial hardship and housing instability but is not eligible as arrears or as other expenses related to housing due to COVID-19.</p>
Change – Page 10	<p><u>Documentation of Occupancy and Rental Amounts:</u> A utility bill, water/sewer bill, cell phone bill, credit card statement, insurance policy, W-2 form, tax return, tax bill, or driver’s license in the name of a household member can be used to prove residency.</p>
Change – Page 10	<p><u>Documentation of Occupancy and Rental Amounts:</u> Leasing arrangements with family members are eligible only if the tenant address is different from the landlord address. Preexisting written lease or evidence of a history of consistent rent payments is required.</p>
Add – Page 11	<p style="text-align: center;">Documentation Requirements for <u>Proof of Occupancy and Rental Amount</u></p> <p>These options are listed in order of preference to document occupancy and rental amount</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Current signed lease or rental agreement 2 Landlord application + either proof of ownership (tax bill or deed) or landlord agency (management agreement) 3 Utility bill in HH members name + either bank statement or check stubs showing rental payments 4 Tenant application + documentation of Housing Stability efforts (rent will be limited to Fair Market) <p style="text-align: right;">Options when Landlord is not participating ↓</p>

Add – Page 11	<u>Arrears:</u> If arrears are owed for March 2020, payment must be prorated.
Add – Page 11	<u>Non-Duplicative Rental Assistance:</u> The Tenant Application & attestation requires the tenant to attest that if they had a change in income, they told the program administrator who changed their portion of the rent.
Change – Page 11	<u>Non-Duplicative Rental Assistance:</u> Applicants receiving monthly federal subsidies as described above must work with the subsidy administrator to adjust the tenant portion of their rent if there has been a change in the household income.
Add – Page 11	<u>Landlord Application and Requirements:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAA can help a landlord fill out an online Landlord Application & Attestation. However, the landlord must sign the Landlord Application & Attestation. The landlord may raise the rent in 2021 only if the increase is set forth in an existing signed lease. An eviction notice does not suffice as proof of ownership.
Add – Page 12	<u>Utility Assistance:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of months of utility arrears paid on behalf of a tenant is equal to the utility arrears paid on behalf of the tenant divided by the amount for the current month (or most recent month). If the utility bill may be in the name of a household member other than the primary applicant. If the utility bill is in the name of the landlord, the lease must reference that the tenant is responsible for making the utility payment.
Add – Page 13	<u>Other Housing Related Expenses Due to COVID-19:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households must meet other housing and income requirements described earlier in this program to qualify for other expenses.
Add – Page 13	<u>Other Housing Related Expenses Due to COVID-19:</u> Only households that receive rent or utility assistance are eligible for Internet expenses.
Change – Page 13	<u>Other Housing Related Expenses Due to COVID-19:</u> Flat fee from \$60 to \$50
Change – Page 13	<u>Other Housing Related Expenses Due to COVID-19:</u> The months of service will still be required to provide assistance. The Program can pay charges for a cell phone hotspot.
Delete – Page 14	<u>Tenant Application Processing:</u> Example: Roomer/borders situations with additional documentation; or
Add – Page 14	<u>Tenant Application Processing:</u> Example: Note: Applicants living in recovery houses, boarding houses, hotels, motels, or renting a room in the landlord’s home must provide a lease, rental ledger, ore payment history to prove residency for 60 days or more.
Add – Page 17	<u>Quality Assurance Activities and Monitoring:</u> <u>CAA Quality Assurance Monitoring</u> Monthly internal quality assurance reviews will be required of each CAA. The intent of the quality assurance review is to monitor the accuracy of application files throughout the

program year, and to ensure staff are correctly interpreting and applying program requirements and policies. Additionally, results should be used to identify areas that should be used for internal training purposes.

As part of the monthly reviews, CAAs will select a file sample, maintain a quality assurance log identifying the files and results, and upload results to MaineHousing for review.

1. **File Sample:** CAA will select a sample of no less than one percent (1%) or two (2) files, whichever is greater, of the total applications taken or processed by each intake worker and processor during the month. The sample selection shall include eligible and denied applications (if any).
2. **File Review:** A full review of the file and EmpowOR shall be performed to verify accuracy and completeness, and include an assessment of the following:
 - a. Case file notes and documentation – should tell the entire story of the household and should be clear to anyone reviewing the file.
 - b. Information is legible and logical.
 - c. Appropriate documents are completed, signed and dated.
 - d. Information is entered correctly in EmpowOR.
 - e. Household has been served according to the program guidelines.
3. **Quality Assurance Log:** The CAA shall maintain a quality assurance log identifying the files reviewed and include the household ID, intake worker’s name, certifier’s name, reviewer name, date reviewed, and results.
4. **Share Results and Log:** CAA management must upload a report to MaineHousing’s ShareFile, Misc. Documents Communications sub-folder on or no later than the twentieth of each month (or first working day following the twentieth day if the twentieth day falls on a weekend or a holiday). To obtain access to ShareFile, please complete and submit the MaineHousing User Authorization Form, which can be found at <http://www.mainehousing.org/partners/partner-type/community-agencies/HEAP> (select “Program Tools” tab).

MaineHousing Monitoring

In order to ensure program integrity and monitor CAA performance, MaineHousing will perform program and fiscal monitoring to satisfy all program oversight requirements. The objective of the monitoring process is to examine policies, processes, and standard operating procedures related to the delivery of services and compliance with program regulations. It is MaineHousing’s goal during monitoring to not only confirm consistent delivery of the program, but to also recognize best practices, improvement of the delivery of services and to acknowledge successful program compliance. These monitoring activities also identify areas that need improvement and specific activities which may require corrective action and a revision of operating procedures.

All documents and guidance referred to in this section and subsequent sections can be found at <https://www.mainehousing.org/partners/partner-type/community-agencies/emergency-rental-assistance-program> .

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Conflicts of Interest:
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As stated in the fully executed Subgrant Agreements between MaineHousing and the CAAs, the CAAs are expected to be attentive to and disclose potential conflicts of interest when employees, temporary staff, volunteers or contractors are beneficiaries of ERA. The aforementioned relationships are examples and do not represent an all-inclusive list of situations that could potentially be perceived as partiality, a perceived conflict of interest or an

actual conflict of interest. Monthly monitoring requirements are described in the Subgrant Agreement, and more detailed procedures are documented below:

1. Each month, CAA will submit a report notifying MaineHousing of the employees, including temporary staff and volunteers, of the CAA who are beneficiaries (or prospective beneficiaries) of the Program. The report shall be cumulative and inclusive of those who received services or benefits funded by ERA during the contract period. The report shall identify the following:
 - a. Person’s name;
 - b. Person’s job title or description of their affiliation with the CAA; and
 - c. ERA benefits applied for or received and for which month or time period
2. CAA management must upload a report to MaineHousing’s ShareFile, Conflict of Interest subfolder, on or no later than the twentieth of each month (or first working day following the twentieth day if the twentieth day falls on a weekend or a holiday). To obtain access to ShareFile, please complete and submit the MaineHousing User Authorization Form, which can be found at <http://www.mainehousing.org/partners/partner-type/community-agencies/HEAP> (select “Program Tools” tab).

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Appeals:
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3. Each month, CAA will submit a report notifying MaineHousing of the employees, including temporary staff and volunteers, of the CAA who are beneficiaries (or prospective beneficiaries) of the Program. The report shall be cumulative and inclusive of those who received services or benefits funded by ERA during the contract period. The report shall identify the following:
 - d. Person’s name;
 - e. Person’s job title or description of their affiliation with the CAA; and
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