



WINNEBAGO COUNTY

— ILLINOIS —

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Winnebago County Tenants and Landlords Can Now Apply for Funding to Pay Past Due Rent

ROCKFORD – April 5, 2021 – Winnebago County residents can now apply for financial help in paying past due rent payments or utility bills because of hardships related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The money is available through a federally-funded \$8.3 million Emergency Rental Assistance Grant and is meant to provide housing stability for renters and landlords.

You can access the application online at <https://renthelp.wincoil.us>. Both tenants and landlords can apply and applications must be submitted online. The initial application period runs through April 15. A new application window is expected to open May 1. Those without access to a computer or smartphone can call 815.972.RENT for assistance.

Anyone renting housing in Winnebago County and making less than 80% of the median household income is eligible to apply for funding. For a family of four, the necessary household income level would be \$55,700 or less. For a one-person household, that income level would be \$39,000 or less. An income chart is available on the website link above.

Winnebago County renters can also apply for coverage to pay up to 12 months of past due utility bills including electric, gas, water, wastewater or sewer, trash removal and internet services.

Application requirements include having a household member qualify for unemployment or have experienced a loss in household income since April of 2020. Money received must be used to pay past due rent that accumulated on or after April 1, 2020, and landlords can apply on behalf of their tenants. Winnebago County will issue checks directly to the landlords.

At the conclusion of the initial application period on April 15, applications will be reviewed, funding distributed and if grant money remains, the County will open a second application period from May 1-15. All applicants will receive notification of whether or not their application was approved. Tenants are responsible for paying any amount of past due rent or future rent, in full, that is not covered by this grant program.

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((cont. Emergency Rental Assistance Application))

Eligible households may receive up to 12 months of assistance, plus an additional 3 months if it is determined the extra months are needed to ensure housing stability and funds are available. The County is partnering with the City of Rockford Human Services Department to implement the program.

“This grant provides much needed relief to both tenants and landlords,” said **Winnebago County Chairman Joe Chiarelli**. “Many County residents lost their jobs and perhaps have not been able to make their rent payments for the first time in their lives. This allows them to catch up, wipe the slate clean and move forward as our region recovers from COVID-19.”

Winnebago County Board Member Paul Arena supported the County’s application for the federal program and serves on the Illinois Rental Property Owners’ Association. “The pandemic has been hard on landlords who haven’t received thousands of dollars in rent payments but still have the cost of maintaining their properties, paying utilities and property taxes. Some landlords are \$30,000 behind in receiving rent. This grant is a win-win for both tenants and landlords.”

Chairman Chiarelli and Board Member Arena were joined by Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara and City of Rockford Human Services Executive Director Anquette Parham at a news conference today announcing the application details.

The U.S. Department of Treasury’s Emergency Rental Assistance program makes \$25 billion nationally available to assist households that are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local governments can use the funds to provide assistance to eligible households through existing or newly created rental assistance programs. Any local government with more than 200,000 people could apply for the federal grant.

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Winnebago County, Illinois:

Winnebago County is home to nearly 300,000 people who enjoy the region’s close-knit feel combined with big-city amenities and a low cost of living. The region provides an award-winning park system, state-of-the-art sports facilities, diverse national and local restaurants, craft breweries, festivals, live music, professional sports, museums, a symphony, theater and is just a short drive to Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago. Winnebago County’s high concentration of aerospace, manufacturing, and healthcare companies represent significant sectors of employment and prosperity for the region, which is serviced by one of the country’s largest cargo airports also providing international passenger travel.