

United Lift 2021 Rental Assistance Program

FAQ FOR RENTERS SEEKING RENTAL SUPPORT

Application Process

1. COMPLETE AN APPLICATION

Visit www.UnitedLift.org to complete an application form and upload your eligibility documentation online. You will be asked to choose your community/city from a dropdown menu, which will redirect you to the appropriate form.

2. SUBMIT ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION

Applicants must submit all required eligibility documentation. The online application will prompt applicants to upload their eligibility documentation directly into the application form. An application is not complete, and will not be reviewed, until all eligibility documentation is provided. Staff may require additional documentation upon review and verification of eligibility. *For a list of required and acceptable documents, see page 3 of the FAQ.*

3. COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR LANDLORD (Recommended)

Funding is contingent on cooperation from your landlord. As part of the application process, your landlord must agree to participating in the program and verify your tenancy, your monthly rent price, and information regarding your past due rental balance (if any). If possible, please give your landlord or property management company notice in order to expedite application processing.

An FAQ for landlords can be found on www.UnitedLift.org. Payments will be made directly to your landlord who must also complete and submit a W-9 form for payment.

4. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

An application will only be reviewed once all eligibility documentation is submitted by the applicant.

If you are a resident in east Riverside County including all Coachella Valley cities, unincorporated communities, Calimesa, Banning, Beaumont, and Blythe, the Lift To Rise team will review your application. If you are a resident in west Riverside County, including the Hemet-San Jacinto region, northwest county region (Riverside, Moreno Valley, Perris, Eastvale, Norco, Corona), and southwest county region (Menifee, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta, Temecula, & Wildomar), Inland SoCal United Way will review your application.

In either case, you can check the status of your application at www.unitedlift.org under the "Check My Application Status" function.

5. PAYMENT

Once your completed application has been approved and a W-9 has been submitted by your landlord, a payment will be processed to your landlord/property management company. Both you and your landlord will receive a confirmation of payment.



Inland SoCal United Way

LIFT TO RISE



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the United Lift Rental Assistance Program?

The United Lift Rental Assistance Program is a coordinated effort between Riverside County, Inland SoCal United Way and Lift To Rise to keep Riverside County families and residents financially impacted by COVID-19 housed by providing direct rental and utility assistance.

The United Lift Rental Assistance Program uses federal funding from different sources to provide assistance to Riverside County renter households. Each source of funding carries its own set of eligibility guidelines defined by federal legislation and regulations.

Between June 2020 and December 2020, United Lift assisted over 6,000 households, disbursing over \$22 million in federal funding allocated by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. After depleting its allocation of CARES funding in December 2020, United Lift switched to disbursing a \$9 million allocation of federal funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which will continue through March 2021.

United Lift will re-launch in March 2021, and will shift its funding source again to disburse upwards of \$57 million in United States Treasury funds authorized by the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act coronavirus stimulus bill signed into law in December 2020.

How long will this program last?

The program will continue until funds are depleted, or until December 31, 2021, whichever happens first.

When will the application be available?

The application portal will be live starting March 8, 2021, and applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

How do I receive rental assistance?

To be considered for rental assistance, you must complete an application. An application **is not complete, and will not be reviewed, until all eligibility documentation is provided.**

Where can I apply and complete an application?

Interested residents can visit www.UnitedLift.org to apply.

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Who is eligible to receive rental assistance?

Federal guidelines require that households must meet **ALL** of the following eligibility criteria in order to be eligible for assistance:

- Renter household - rental assistance is reserved for renter households; homeowners or mortgage-paying households are not eligible for assistance. A lease agreement or other acceptable document proving renter status is required. County guidelines also require that households applying for assistance live within the County of Riverside.
- COVID-19 related financial impact - rental assistance is reserved for households who cannot pay for rent and/or utilities because they have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Documentation of COVID-19 related financial impact is required.
- Earning at or below 80% of area median income (AMI) - rental assistance is reserved for households that earned at or below 80% of AMI in 2020. Priority will be given to households earning at or below 50% of AMI in 2020. To see if your household's income-level is at or below 80% AMI, use the table below. Proof of ALL sources of income from ALL members of your household for 2020 is required.

What does it mean to earn at or below 80% of area median income?

Area median income (AMI) is mid-point of what households earn in a given region – half of households earn above the area median income and half of households earn below the area median income. Each year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines and calculates different levels of AMI for geographic areas across the country by household size. Families that earn at or below 80% of AMI are eligible for rental assistance (assuming they meet the other eligibility criteria).

Use the table below to see if your household's income is at or below the 80% AMI threshold. First, find the number of persons in your household in the top row, then compare your 2020 household income (before taxes) to the number listed. If you made **LESS** than that number, you are eligible; if you made **MORE** than that number, you are not eligible:

Persons in Family	Income Limits (\$)
1	>42,200
2	>48,200
3	>54,250
4	>60,250
5	>65,100
6	>69,900
7	>74,750
8	>79,550

Who is prioritized for assistance?

The federal guidelines attached to the 2021 funding for the United Lift program require that assistance be prioritized for:

- Households with incomes less than 50% of area median income
- Households with one or more adults that have not been employed during the 90 days prior to submitting their application

Additionally, United Lift is prioritizing applicants who have not previously received funding from the United Lift Program. Households who are eligible but are not in these prioritization categories are still encouraged to apply. However, their applications will not be reviewed until priority applications have been reviewed.

What eligibility documentation do I need to provide?

- A form of identification
- A copy of the lease agreement
- A documented COVID-19 related financial impact
- Proof of 2020 household income
- Utility bill(s) with past due amount(s), if applying for utilities assistance.

What is a lease agreement?

A formal written agreement between a landlord and tenant.

What form of identification is acceptable?

Any government issued identification, including a driver's license, passport, permanent resident card, etc.

What is a COVID-19 related financial impact?

If your household has experienced a loss or reduction in income or an increase in household expenses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, you may be able to demonstrate a COVID-19 financial related impact. This includes:

1. A loss or reduction in income
2. An inability to find employment during pandemic (unemployed before March 15)
3. Significant increase in childcare costs (and adult care) resulting from COVID-19
4. Significant medical costs resulting from COVID-19
5. COVID-19 self-quarantine costs (ex. hotel stays)

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How do I document a COVID-19 related financial impact?

Documentation **must** prove a COVID-19 related financial impact under the definition above. Documentation can include:

1. A letter from an employer or other source of income citing COVID-19 as a reason for reduced work hours, termination, or other substantial reduction in pay.
2. Employer payroll checks or payroll stubs showing a reduction in pay following the COVID-19 outbreak.
3. Bank statements showing a reduction of income following the COVID-19 outbreak.
4. Documentation showing payment of substantial out-of-pocket medical expenses caused by COVID-19.
5. Documentation showing the closure of a school or childcare facility where a child in the tenant's care would otherwise be present during the tenant's normally working hours which, as a result, has caused the tenant to work reduced hours.
You must still demonstrate the financial impact of a school closure and/or childcare facility closure. A generic letter from a school district is not sufficient.
6. Any other objectively verifiable documentation to demonstrate a substantial hardship or inability to make timely rent payments caused by COVID-19.

How do I submit all eligibility documentation?

Preferred Method

Please upload your documentation at the point of applying. The application form will guide you in uploading all required documents. An application is not complete, and will not be reviewed, until all eligibility documentation is provided. Staff may require additional documentation upon review and verification of eligibility.

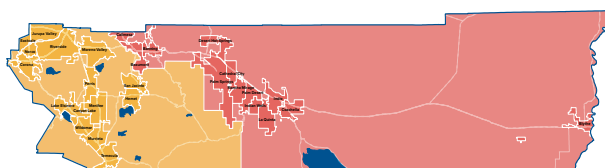
Alternative Methods

Once launched, in-person application events to supplement the online process and ensure widespread reach of the program will be scheduled for this spring and beyond.

If you are unable to complete an application online and require additional support, please contact Inland SoCal United Way (western Riverside County applications) or Lift To Rise (eastern Riverside County) for alternative options.

Inland SoCal United Way	Lift to Rise
951-328-8280	760-205-1035
countycares@uwiv.org	rentalsupport@lifttorise.org

[County of Riverside](#)



- Areas Covered by Lift to Rise
- Areas Covered by Inland SoCal United Way

How do I provide documentation of my 2020 household income?

Applicants should provide documentation that shows their household's adjusted gross income for 2020, if possible. If it is not possible to provide documentation of 2020 adjusted gross income, households can provide proof of monthly income for at least the two months prior to applying, which United Lift will use to produce an annualized estimate of the household's 2020 income.

The below table describes acceptable forms of income documentation based on the type of income:

Income Source	Acceptable forms of documentation (Monthly)	Acceptable forms of documentation (Annually)
Employment/ Wages	-60 consecutive days of the most recent pay stubs -If working multiple jobs the same applies as above for all jobs -3 months of the most recent bank statements if pay stubs are not available	-1040 Tax Returns -1099-NEC -1099-MISC -W-2 -1040 Schedule C (self-employed)
Unemployment	-Claims Summary or full payment history	-Form 1099G
Public Assistance	-The most recent award letter stating how often and how much you receive	
Social Security/ Pension	-The most recent award letter stating how often and how much you receive	-Form SSA-1099 -1042S Benefit Statement
Other	-Valid documentation showing how often and how much you receive from this source of income	-Valid documentation showing how often and how much you receive from this source of income

How do I check on the status of my application?

You may check your application status via the Application Portal at www.unitedlift.org. Applicants will be able to access their application using the email address provided on their application.

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If I meet all the eligibility requirements does this guarantee that I will receive rental assistance?

No. If you meet all the general eligibility requirements, this guarantees that your application will be considered for funding. However, funding is contingent on the availability of funds and cooperation from your landlord and/or property management company representative. In cases where an eligible applicant's landlord/property management company representative is non-responsive or chooses not to participate in the program, United Lift will refer the applicant to Riverside Legal Aid for further assistance.



How much am I eligible to receive?

This program provides one-time support in rental assistance in the amount of **up to 12 months of rent in arrears** (i.e. unpaid rent) during the period between March 13, 2020 until the time of application, **plus an additional 3 months worth of future rent**. This program also provides utility assistance in the amount of your past due balance(s) from March 13, 2020 until the time of application.

Does the landlord receive one payment or monthly payments?

The landlord will receive one payment credited to your account.

Can I apply more than once??

If you apply after March 8, 2021 and RECEIVE assistance, you cannot reapply.

If you applied at any time and did NOT RECEIVE assistance because you were ineligible, you can reapply ONLY if your circumstances have changed such that you are now eligible.

If you applied between June 2020 and Feb 2021 and RECEIVED rental assistance, you can reapply, but you will NOT receive assistance for the months of rent that were already covered by your previously received assistance, as per federal guidelines. Additionally, your application will be reviewed only AFTER the priority applications (as listed above) have been reviewed.

Can my landlord apply on my behalf?

Your landlord can initiate an application on your behalf using the Landlord Application Form in the Application Portal on www.unitedlift.org. If this happens, United Lift will reach out to you via phone and email with specific instructions on how to complete the tenant portion of the application. By following those instructions and completing the tenant portion of the application, you consent to participating in the program.

You are not obligated to participate in the program if your landlord initiates an application on your behalf. However, if you are behind on your rent due to COVID-19, you are encouraged to participate.

How long does this process take after submitting my application?

Applications will be processed on a rolling basis. If all documents are submitted and your landlord has cooperated, we expect processing to take no more than 3 weeks.

Application Submitted	Application Review	Payment Processing	Payment Delivered
	7-12 days	2-3 days	Dependent on payment method. If mailed, please allow up to 10 days for the check to be delivered.

Note: United Lift may initiate a waitlist in one of two circumstances a)the program experiences a high volume of applications and b)guidelines around priority groups (as described above). If your application is placed on a waitlist you will be notified as soon as your application moves to the "Review" stage.

Though we hold ourselves to this strict processing timeline, there may be other factors that contribute to extended processing timelines.

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MORE INFORMATION

FAIR MARKET RENT POLICY

Funding under the Riverside County Rental Relief program cannot be used to pay rent that exceeds 200% of the local FMR without prior written County authorization.

However, please note that the Treasury Department Guidelines do limit the payment of rent to 100% of the FMR in certain situations.

If an applicant is able to provide satisfactory evidence of residence but is unable to present adequate documentation of the amount of the rental obligation, grantees may accept a written attestation from the applicant to support the payment of assistance up to a monthly maximum of 100% of the greater of the Fair Market Rent or the Small Area Fair Market Rent for the area in which the applicant resides, as most recently determined by HUD and made available at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>.

NON-RELATED PARTIES POLICY

Funding under the Riverside County Rental Relief program cannot be used to pay rent on behalf of a tenant to a member of the tenant's immediate family including: spouse, parents, grandparents, children (adopted, half and step children), grandchildren, siblings, and in-laws (mother, father, brother, sister, daughter and son).

IMMIGRATION RELATED QUESTIONS

Can I receive assistance if there is an undocumented member in my household? Can I receive assistance if I am undocumented?

Assistance is being given without regard to immigration status.

Will receiving housing assistance from Lift to Rise affect me if I am applying for a green card (lawful permanent residence)? I heard there is a "public charge" rule, which makes it harder to get a green card if you use certain benefits.

No. *Housing assistance from Lift to Rise is not considered in a public charge test.*

Does public charge apply to everyone?

No. The public charge ground of inadmissibility does not apply to many people, including those applying for Temporary Protected Status, asylum, refugee status, U visas or T visas, Special Immigrant Juvenile status or other "humanitarian" immigrants. Public charge does not apply when LPRs are seeking to become citizens. People who already have their green cards (LPR status) are not subject to a public charge inadmissibility test unless they leave the country for more than 180 days and seek to reenter. If you have questions about your own situation, you may consult an immigration attorney. [This link](#) has a directory of nonprofit immigration legal providers.