

## HELP WITH HOUSEHOLD BILLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: How do I know if I qualify for the special emergency rental assistance?**

A: TCAA has new special funding for renters living in low- and moderate-income households in Tempe and Fountain Hills. Eligibility conditions include, but are not limited to:

- At high risk of eviction, homelessness or utility disconnect due to overdue bills
- A member of the household qualifies for Unemployment Insurance
- Financial difficulty because of a COVID-hardship

Priority is given to low-income households and households with one or more members who are unemployed for 90 days or longer.

**Q. What are the income guidelines?**

A. To qualify, the household must be living at or below **80%** of the Area Median Income (AMI). Special consideration is given to households at **50%** of the Area Median Income. For example, 50% AMI for a family of three equates to \$35,050 or less.

50% Area Median Income		80% Area Median Income	
Household Size	Household Income	Household Size	Household Income
1	\$27,250	1	\$43,600
2	\$31,150	2	\$49,800
3	\$35,050	3	\$56,050
4	\$38,900	4	\$62,250
5	\$42,050	5	\$67,250
6	\$45,150	6	\$72,250
7	\$48,250	7	\$77,200
8	\$51,350	8	\$82,200

**Q. What does a COVID-19 hardship mean?**

A. This means your household can demonstrate a loss of income directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as:

- job loss, lay-off or furlough
- employer reduced work hours
- business closure
- reduced work hours due to need to care for child or disabled/vulnerable adult unable to care for themselves
- reduced work hours due to COVID-19 illness requiring self-quarantine
- loss of income due to a job offer that was made prior to the pandemic and then withdrawn due to the pandemic

It also includes increased household expenses due to COVID-19 such as unexpected increase in daycare, or medical expenses, or (if you are age 65 or older) increased basic living expenses.

**Q. How do I know if I am considered at high risk of homelessness or utility disconnect?**

A. Any ONE of the following applies:

- Notice of Past Due Rent
- Eviction Notice
- Eviction Judgement
- Writ of Restitution
- Past Due Utility Bill (Electric, Gas, or Water)
- Notice of Utility Shut-Off (Electric, Gas, or Water)
- Demonstrate less than 7 days of pre-paid electricity remaining on a pre-paid account (SRP Empower)

**Q. When are these funds available and for how long?**

A. New funding is available now through December 31, 2021.

**Q. What kind of bills can be paid?**

A. The special funds can be used for rent or utility assistance and can pay for:

- Past due rent
- Future rent (up to 3 months in the future not exceeding December 2021)
- Past due utilities
- Future utilities (up to 3 months in the future not exceeding December 2021)

*Note that a household may not receive more than 12 months of assistance.*

**Q. Can I apply for special funds to help with mortgage payments?**

A. No, the special rental assistance funds are only available to renters. You can apply for mortgage assistance through TCAA's regular Community Action Program process. See [www.tempeaction.org/helpwithbills](http://www.tempeaction.org/helpwithbills) for details.

**Q. Can TCAA help pay for late fees and other rent-related expenses?**

A. Yes, special funds are available for late fees, legal fees and court costs for past-due rent.

**Q. What type of utility bills can be covered?**

A. Eligible utilities include electricity, gas, propane, water, sewer, and trash. Payments are made directly to utility companies on behalf of the household.

**Q. Will I need to provide a copy of my lease agreement or other proof of rent?**

A. Yes, a copy of the lease agreement or a written statement signed by the landlord is required in order to be considered for rent relief.

**Q. How many months of assistance is available to each applicant?**

A. Depending on your situation, rent or utility payments can be made for future bills (no more than three months into the future) or for previously unpaid bills going back as far as April 2020. However, total payments may not exceed 12 months.

**Q. What if my situation continues after I receive help.... Can I reapply for assistance again?**

A. A household may reapply after 3 months for additional rent and/or utility assistance and must recertify household income at that time.

**Q. I'm a landlord. How can I help a tenant who is behind on rent payments?**

- A. Landlords for Tempe or Fountain Hills tenants who are behind on rent payments can:
- advise tenants that they can apply for assistance through TCAA
  - make computers and scanners available at the apartment so that tenants can apply
  - drop off completed applications along with all required attachments at TCAA for tenants who cannot submit them online
  - direct tenants to TCAA if they have questions regarding their eligibility for rent and utility assistance

**Q. What else do landlords need to know?**

A. If submitting on behalf of a tenant, Landlords must provide the Landlord Application on Tenant Behalf, which must be signed by the landlord and the tenant. (download at [www.tempeaction.org/helpwithbills](http://www.tempeaction.org/helpwithbills)).

Landlords must also provide a W-9 Form (download at [www.tempeaction.org/helpwithbills](http://www.tempeaction.org/helpwithbills)) OR register as a vendor with Maricopa County in lieu of submitting a W-9.

**Q. I received emergency rent or utility assistance from TCAA in the past 12 months. Am I eligible to apply for these special funds?**

A. Yes.

**Q. How are my rent and utility bills paid?**

A. Payments will be distributed by our partner Maricopa County after they have confirmed that you are eligible. Payments are made directly to landlords or property managers and to the utility companies – not to the tenant.

**Q. How do I apply?**

A. Begin by viewing a copy of the application (posted on our website at [www.tempeaction.org](http://www.tempeaction.org)) and collecting all required supporting documents. *TCAA will not be able to provide you with copies of supporting documents that you may have shared with us in the past.*

Applications and supporting documents must be entered on a website hosted by Maricopa County. You can access the website at <https://hsdclientportal.maricopa.gov/>

**Q. What if I have trouble with the online application or I don't have internet access?**

A. If you're unsure how to complete the application or you do not have internet access, TCAA can help. Contact us at 480-389-1375 during regular business hours. You may also download the application through our website, complete all required sections, attach supporting documents, and deliver your application in person at TCAA's Community Action Program.

**Q. How and when will I know if my application is approved for these special funds?**

A. If you qualify for the special funds enter your information into the Maricopa County portal (<https://hsdclientportal.maricopa.gov/>). You will receive a response by email with additional application instructions. If you do not qualify for the special funds, you will receive a letter in the mail addressed by Maricopa County.

**Q. What if I applied for the special funds but was denied?**

A. You may file to appeal the decision by submitting an appeal to TCAA, or you can apply for other Community Action Program services. For details go to [www.tempeaction.org/helpwithbills](http://www.tempeaction.org/helpwithbills).