

HOW TO GET HELP IF YOU'RE BEHIND ON RENT

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program is Available NOW!



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Me and other members of the Crown Heights Tenant Union fighting for affordable housing!



Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest

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We are Here to Assist You

My office is here to assist you. To seek additional help or a referral to an organization that can help you with your application, please reach out to ad57@nyassembly.gov, or call us and leave a message at 718-596-0100.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, many of us have lost our jobs and lost income. For working people across New York, the past year has been very difficult. 1.4 million households in the state are behind on the rent, with many more struggling month to month to keep a roof over their head. In the leadup to the annual State Budget, I fought to **raise taxes on the wealthy** and for a relief program robust enough to make sure no New Yorker is evicted because of a pandemic. The result was the Emergency Relief Assistance Program, which is available now.

What is ERAP?

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program is a program through the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Eligible renters can apply for up to 12 months of back rent dating back to March 13, 2020. If a household pays more than 30% of income in rent, ERAP also guarantees a further 3 months of future rent.

Landlords are required to accept the funds, which will be transferred to them directly by OTDA. Once you have received ERAP you are protected from rent increases and evictions due to lease expiration, even if the Landlord doesn't accept the funds.

Who Qualifies?

To be eligible, a tenant or household has to be at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)*, you have some risk of homelessness or housing liability, and one of the following:

- You were eligible for or collected unemployment during the period you fell behind
- You experienced a reduction in your household income
- You incurred significant COVID-related costs, including health and funeral costs

Empowering Tenants for Affordable Housing

In addition to providing you information about rent relief, I would like to share a bit about myself, and why my office has been working with constituents with housing needs to set up Tenant Associations.

I became active in the tenant movement out of necessity. In 2016, I helped my neighbors organize meetings when we were informed that our landlord was going to convert our rent-stabilized apartments to condos. We turned to the Crown Heights Tenant Union for support and guidance, and I realized that there were tenants all over my neighborhood who were fighting back against displacement through collective action. I became the president of my building's tenant association and participated in a mass civil disobedience in June 2019 as part of the Housing Justice for All campaign — which won some of the strongest tenant protections New York State has ever seen.

I believe in **tenant power**, and that's why we're working with more than a dozen buildings right now to set up tenant associations, because our community is stronger when we organize together.

If you are having issues with your apartment or building, and think others may be as well, **please contact my office**, we are here to help. Email us at ad57@nyassembly.gov or call us and leave a message at (718) 596-0100.

And if you are interested in volunteering with our office or joining an upcoming event, you can always sign up at bit.ly/pharaohoffice

How Can I Apply?

To apply, visit: otda.ny.gov/ERAP or call 844-NY1RENT (844-691-7368). You will need to provide Personal ID, SSN (if you have one), Proof of Residency and Rental Amount, Proof of Income (e.g., pay stub, tax form, or letter from employer), proof of financial hardship, and proof of rental arrears or court case if you have one. If seeking utility relief, a copy of gas or electric bill.

*In Brooklyn, 80% AMI for an individual is \$66,850, for a couple is \$76,400, and for a household of four is \$95,450.