

Chesterfield Emergency Rent & Utility Assistance (CERA) Program

The Chesterfield Emergency Rent & Utility Assistance (CERA) Program is funded through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The Coronavirus Relief Bill passed by Congress in December 2020 provided \$10 million to help Chesterfield County renters economically harmed by Covid-19 meet up to 15 months of past or future rent and utility obligations.

CERA Program funds are only available for renters and can be used for the following:

- Rent;
- Rental arrears;
- Utilities and home energy costs;
- Internet service deemed vital;
- Utilities and home energy costs arrears
- Other housing expenses resulting from the pandemic

[Area Congregations Together in Service \(ACTS\)](#) administers the program for Chesterfield County.¹ CERA assistance can pay for up to 12 months of future or owed rent, plus an additional three months if necessary, to ensure housing stability; all forward payments are made on a three month basis. Rental arrears payments cannot be used for rent accrued prior to April 1, 2020.

Chesterfield residents have two entry points for the CERA program:

Resident Initiated Applications

- Complete online application at: <http://actsrva.org/chesterfield-cera-application/> or
- Call ACTS at 804-644-2401. Press 2 and leave a message.
 - (Spanish speaking residents press 5).
 - All calls will be returned in the order in which they are received.

Chesterfield Landlords may apply on behalf of their tenants

- Landlords can find information with instructions at:
 - <http://actsrva.org/chesterfield-landlord-information>
- Landlords should send completed applications with required documentation attached to
 - chesterfieldlandlord@actsrva.org.

¹ The CERA program closely parallels the Chesterfield Emergency Rent and Mortgage Relief Program administered by ACTS in Q4 of 2020 and funded with \$550,000 of the County's Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act award.

Eligible and Priority Households

CERA funds may only benefit tenant households matching one of the three following criteria. The assistance must not be duplicative of any other federally funded benefit received by the household.

1. One or more individual in the household has:

- Qualified for unemployment benefits, or
- Experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due directly or indirectly to the pandemic

2. One or more individual in the household demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability, which may include:

- A past due utility or rent notice or eviction notice,
- Unsafe or unhealthy living conditions, or
- Any other evidence of such risk

3. The household income may not exceed 80% of the area median (AMI) based on either

- Total income for calendar year 2020, or
- Confirmation of monthly income at the time of application

Among eligible households, the U.S. Treasury Department priority is assigned to those with:

- Incomes less than 50% of AMI
- Households whereas of the date of the application a member has been unemployed for the preceding 90 days

Monthly income eligibility will need to be reverified for every three months of forward assistance.

This assistance does not count as income for purposes of determining eligibility under any federally funded program.

Expenditure of Funds and Payment Process

ACTS will make payments directly to landlords and/or utility providers on behalf of eligible households. If a landlord or utility provider is unwilling to participate, the agency may provide funding directly to eligible households for this purpose.

Landlords may either assist renters in applying for assistance or apply on behalf of renters. With the latter, the landlord must:

- Obtain the signature of the tenant (may be electronic)
- Provide documentation of the application to the tenant, and
- Use any payments received to satisfy the tenant's rental obligations.

For additional CERA Program questions contact:

Nicholas Feucht
Real Estate | Housing | Revitalization
[Chesterfield County Department of Community Enhancement](#)

9800 Government Center Parkway
Chesterfield, Virginia 23832
Phone: 804-318-8867
Email: FeuchtN@chesterfield.gov