

## HOUSING AND UTILITIES As of May 5, 2020



### HOUSING

**Q. Can I be evicted during the public health emergency?**

**A.** Your landlord cannot evict you, charge you late fees, or increase your rent during the public health emergency. During the public health emergency and for 60 days thereafter, your landlord cannot file an eviction case against you in DC Superior Court.

**Q. I can't keep up with my rent. Is there a program that can help me?**

**Yes, there are 2 things that may help you:**

(1) **Rent Payment Plan.** During the public health emergency and for one-year thereafter ("covered period"), landlords with 5 or more residential units rented or available for rent must develop a rent-payment-plan program ("Program") for tenants who have notified the landlord that they cannot pay some or all of their rent due because of the public health emergency. Under the Program, a landlord must:

- Permit an eligible tenant to enter into a payment plan for rent that comes due during the covered time period ("payment plan");
- Waive fees or penalties arising out of the entering into a payment plan;
- Not report to a credit bureau as delinquent the rent that is subject to the payment plan or report the payment plan as negative information about the tenant;
- Notify all tenants of the availability, terms, and application process for the rent payment program; and
- Memorialize all payment plans in writing.

(2) **Rental Assistance Program.** On May 11, 2020, the Department of Housing and Community Development will start a rental assistance program for low-income DC residents to help pay April and May rent. The program will assist 400 households for between 6 months to 2 years based on financial need and available funds. Check back at [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).

**Q. I heard landlords can get mortgage deferrals. Will that help me?**

**A.** Your landlord must notify you within 5 days of receiving a mortgage deferral, and must give you rent relief that is proportional to the mortgage relief. Your landlord may require you to repay that amount.

**Q. What if I become homeless during the public health emergency?**

**A.** Families at risk of homelessness can call the Virginia Williams Resource Center at 202-526-0017 or their ERAP provider. Families seeking emergency shelter can call the DC Shelter Hotline at 202-399-7091 or 311.

### UTILITIES

**Q. I can't afford to pay my utility bills. Can utility companies disconnect my services during the public health emergency?**

**A.** Your utilities (electricity, gas, water, cable and phone) cannot be turned off during the public health emergency or for 15 days afterward. Your cable and telephone service can be downgraded to the most basic level. For help paying your utilities, go to: [dc.gov/page/utilities-shutdown](https://dc.gov/page/utilities-shutdown), or call your utility provider to ask for payment relief.

