



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Addabbo: Relief for renters, landlords and small businesses is here as NYS announces \$3.5 billion for assistance programs

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. June 1, 2021

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Help is here for renters, landlords and small businesses that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as last week Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a total of \$3.5 billion in assistance programs to help those groups recover from financial hardship.

The New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program will provide \$2.7 billion in funding for eligible households experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Small Business Recovery Grant Program will provide \$800 million in funding to small and micro businesses, as well as small for-profit independent arts and cultural organizations to help them recover from the economic impact of the pandemic.

"I am happy to announce that New York State is providing real relief for renters, landlords and small businesses in the way of \$3.5 billion in assistance and grant programs," State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. said. "Housing and small businesses play a major role in our city and across the state, so we need to ensure that individuals are able to get the help they need during the difficult time. I encourage all those who meet the programs' requirements to apply and get the financial relief they deserve."

Administered by the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program will provide assistance for households behind on their rent and that have experienced financial hardship, that are at risk of homelessness or housing instability and that earn at or below 80 percent of area median income. Eligible renters will receive up to 12 months of past-due rent, three months of prospective rental assistance and 12 months of utility arrears payments to eligible New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status. This program is expected to serve between 170,000 and 200,000 households.

During the first 30 days, the program will prioritize the unemployed, those with income at or below 50 percent of area median income and other vulnerable populations. After the first 30 days, applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, as long as funds remain available. The Senator noted that since funds for the program are limited to \$3.5 billion statewide, individuals are encouraged to file an application at their earliest convenience.

Once approved, eligible households will receive up to 12 months of past due rent. Those eligible could also receive up to 3 months of additional rental assistance, if the household spends 30 percent or more of its gross monthly income on rent. The program also will provide up to 12 months of utility arrears for eligible applicants.

In addition to fiscal relief, ERAP will provide significant tenant protections. In order to receive assistance, the landlord must agree to waive any late fees due on past-due rent; and not increase the tenant's monthly rent or evict them for one year, except in limited circumstances.

In order to ensure that the program is not being abused, OTDA will undertake fraud prevention efforts to identify unreported income and to prevent duplicate rental payments.

Online applications for this program are now being accepted. For more information on the ERAP, applicants and landlords can visit otda.ny.gov/erap.

“Many renters and landlords across the state have been in need of real assistance to help pay their rent, mortgages and utilities, as millions of New Yorkers lost their jobs due to the pandemic,” Addabbo said. “The ERAP will go a long way in ensuring that thousands of New Yorkers are able to stay in their apartments, while homeowners get the rent they are due. By working together we can all help each other bring New York back.” The Senator pointed out that with most new programs, problems may exist early on, and urged his constituents to contact his office with any issues in filing an application.

In addition to providing housing relief, the Small Business Recovery Grant Program will provide funding to small and micro businesses and small for-profit independent arts and cultural organizations with priority given to socially and economically disadvantaged business owners, including minority- and women-owned business enterprises, service-disabled veteran-owned businesses and veteran-owned businesses, and businesses located in economically distressed communities.

Grants will be for a minimum award of \$5,000 and a maximum award of \$50,000 and will be calculated based on a New York State business' annual gross receipts for 2019. Reimbursable COVID-19 related expenses must have been incurred between March 1, 2020 and April 1, 2021 and can include:

- Payroll costs;
- Commercial rent or mortgage payments for NYS-based property;
- Payment of local property or school taxes;
- Insurance costs;

- Utility costs;
- Costs of personal protection equipment (PPE) necessary to protect worker and consumer health and safety;
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) costs;
- Other machinery or equipment costs; and
- Supplies and materials necessary for compliance with COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

Over 330,000 small and micro businesses are potentially eligible for this program, including 57 percent of New York's certified MWBEs. Applications for the program will be accepted starting June 10 for small and micro businesses, and small for-profit independent arts and cultural organizations.

"Small businesses are what keeps our communities thriving, and seeing so many of them closed down — some of them permanently — due to COVID was devastating," Addabbo added. "I am glad that relief is now here for our small business owners at a time when things are opening up once again. If you or someone you know owns a business that would benefit from a grant, please apply to this program and make sure you get the assistance you deserve."

For more information on resources available to support small businesses seeking pandemic relief, visit [NYSBusinessRecovery.ny.gov](https://nysbusinessrecovery.ny.gov).

"Previously, I was hopeful, given the federal stimulus package, that more could have been done for our renters, landlords and small businesses. Now that the New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program and Small Business Recovery Grant Program have

been established, I am hopeful many individuals will find the financial relief they need and deserve," Addabbo concluded.