



City of Santa Ana Eviction Prevention Program Frequently Asked Questions Revised November 20, 2024

These Frequently Asked Questions provide answers to the most common questions regarding the Eviction Prevention Program:

Q1) Who can apply for rental assistance?

- Tenants with a current lease or sublease agreement with an address in the City of Santa Ana who qualify as a low-income household according to the income limits below:

Family Size	Maximum Family Income (80% AMI)	Family Size	Maximum Family Income (80% AMI)
1	\$88,400	5	\$136,350
2	\$101,000	6	\$146,450
3	\$113,650	7	\$156,550
4	\$126,250	8	\$166,650

(HUD Income Limits effective 6/1/24)

- Additionally, one or more individuals within the household must meet both of the following eligibility criteria:
 - Has qualified for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or sustained other financial hardships due, directly or indirectly, to COVID-19. See **Q10** for further details on COVID-19-related financial hardships.
- AND
- Can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability, which may include a rent ledger from the landlord documenting an accumulated rental arrears, a past due utility bill with shutoff notice, or an eviction notice.
- Please note that submitting an application does not guarantee that you will receive rental assistance. Your household must meet all eligibility criteria outlined above and both you and your landlord must conform to requests from the service provider for additional information and documentation. See **Q15** for further details.

Q2) Do I have to be a U.S. Citizen to apply?

- No, while we do require identification for all members of your household, we will not ask about your citizenship status.

Q3) How do I apply for rental assistance?

- **Applications are available** on the Rent Stabilization Division – Eviction Prevention Program website (www.santa-ana.org/renter-protections) or can be requested directly from Families Forward.
- **If you do not have internet access** or need assistance applying please contact Families Forward at familynavigator@families-forward.org or (949) 552-2727 or the City of Santa Ana at ERA@santa-ana.org or (714) 565-2655.

Q4) What do I need to apply?

- You will need to submit the following documents with your application for it to be considered complete:
 - A valid photo I.D for each adult family member.
 - Your landlord or property manager's name and contact information including phone number, email, and/or fax number.
 - A complete copy of your current lease agreement up to and including the signature page, which must include your signature as well as that of your landlord or property manager. You must also include any notices of rent increase received since first signing your lease agreement.
 - Documentation indicating a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability, which must include at least one of the following:
 - A past due utility bill with a shutoff notice or rent notice.
 - An eviction notice.
 - A rental ledger from the landlord documenting an accumulation of rental arrears.
 - A written attestation of unsafe or unhealthy living conditions.
 - A written attestation that the household is doubling or tripling up with other households.
 - Documentation of income eligibility for each member of the household over the age of 18, which may include:
 - Paystubs, W-2s, tax filings, bank statements indicating regular income, or an attestation from an employer.

AND / OR

- A written statement detailing household income IF part or all of a household's income is received in cash or cannot be verified due to the impact of COVID-19 (for example, because a place of employment has shut down)

Q5) What if I don't have a signed lease?

- You must submit a typed or hand-written statement signed by both the tenant and landlord indicating the residential unit address, the monthly rental amount, who the tenant is and who the landlord is.

OR

- While a typed or hand-written statement is preferred in the absence of a signed lease, the City will accept one of the following as documentation of residence:
 - Evidence of paying utilities for the residential unit, which may include a past-due utility bill.
 - A written statement by a landlord who can be identified as the owner or manager of the unit.

AND

- In addition to the above documentation of residence, you will need to submit one of the following as evidence of your monthly rental payment:
 - Bank statements, check stubs or other documentation that establishes a pattern of paying rent.
 - A rental ledger provided by the landlord or property manager indicating payments made by the tenant as well as the balance of rental arrears owed by the tenant.

Q6) I have a sublease. Can I apply?

- Yes, households with a sublease may apply for rental assistance. In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria outlined above in **Q1** and **Q4**, you must provide the following:
 - An agreement between you (the sublessee) and the primary leaseholder (the sublessor) that clearly identifies who is responsible for which portion of the rent as well as other household costs.

AND

- An agreement between the primary leaseholder (the sublessor) and the property owner/landlord that clearly identifies who is responsible for which portion of the rent as well as other stipulations of the agreement.

Q7) I live with a roommate / co-tenant. Can I apply?

- Yes, co-tenants who operate as individual households with separate incomes may apply and will be treated as separate households for purposes of assistance. In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria outlined above in **Q1** and **Q4**, you must provide the following:
 - A co-tenancy agreement that clearly identifies who is responsible for which household costs.
 - Documentation of household size such as tax returns or other subsidy program documentation.
 - Documentation of your portion of rental arrears as well as certification of your inability to make current and prospective rental payments.

Q8) What are some examples of financial hardships?

- Loss of income caused directly or indirectly by the COVID-19 pandemic such as job loss or reduced hours at work.
- Increased out-of-pocket expenses directly related to performing essential work during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increased expenses directly or indirectly related to health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increased costs for childcare or for attending to an elderly, disabled, or sick family member directly or indirectly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Other circumstances directly or indirectly related to the COVID-19 pandemic that have reduced your income or increased your expenses.

Q9) Can I receive assistance for my utility bill?

- Utilities included in your monthly rental amount as indicated on your lease, sublease or other agreement will be included in your assistance. Utilities billed separately are not eligible for assistance.

Q10) How much assistance will I receive?

- If your household meets all eligibility criteria outlined above, you may be eligible to receive assistance for your rental arrears / past due rent owed on or after April 1, 2020, including fines, fees and penalties, up to a maximum of 18 months.

- If you have previously received assistance for rental arrears through this program and you recertify that your household still meets all eligibility criteria, you may be eligible to receive additional assistance for further rental arrears. Total assistance for rental arrears cannot exceed a maximum of 18 months.
- Please note that submitting an application does not guarantee that you will receive rental assistance. Your household must meet all eligibility criteria and both you and your landlord must conform to requests from the service provider for additional information and documentation. See **Q14** for further details.

Q11) How long does it take to receive assistance?

- The average length of time is expected to be four weeks from the date the application is assigned to a service provider until the payment has been processed and issued to the landlord. If you have provided incorrect or unverifiable information in your application or you have submitted multiple applications for the same household, the four-week turnaround time may be longer.
- You can view the status of your application by going online and logging into your account at <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/SANTAANACA/Participant>. You will need the username and password that you used to complete your application as well as the application number / case ID assigned to you.

Q12) How many people will receive assistance?

- The number of families receiving assistance will vary based on the amount of rent owed by each household.

Q13) If I receive assistance will I have to pay it back?

- No, this assistance is a grant and does not need to be paid back.

Q14) Who receives payment for my rental assistance?

- Families Forward will reach out to your landlord or property manager to obtain their cooperation and collect the documentation necessary to issue payment on your behalf. This includes collecting a W-9, Landlord Agreement and verification of identification.

- Both your household and your landlord will be notified of your rental assistance payment. The notification will identify your household and apartment number, the total amount of rental assistance, the time period for which payment is provided, and the date the payment was issued by the Families Forward; this notification will also include a check number or transaction number to assist your landlord or property manager with tracking receipts and payments.

Q15) What if my landlord refuses to accept payment?

- Outreach to your landlord or property manager will be considered complete once the following steps have been taken:
 - Families Forward will make at least 3 attempts by phone, text or email over a 5-calendar day period to request the participation of your landlord or property manager.

OR

 - A request for participation will be sent by Families Forward in writing, by mail, to your landlord or property manager; they will have 7 calendar days after mailing to respond.

OR

 - Your landlord or property manager notifies Families Forward in writing that they choose not to participate in the program.
- If your landlord or property manager does not respond to Families Forward's requests within the timeframe outlined above or notifies the Families Forward in writing that they choose not to participate, Families Forward may make payment directly to your household. The City must be notified of these cases and conduct their own review into the case.
 - Additional documentation may be required of you for the Families Forward to issue payment and you must pay the full rental assistance amount to your landlord or property manager within 15 days, excluding holidays and weekends.

Q16) Should I tell my landlord that I'm applying to this program?

- Yes. Communication between renters and landlords is important. Most landlords do not want to lose good tenants and communication goes a long way to help maintain a good relationship.

Q17) My landlord is trying to evict me. What should I do?

If your landlord is attempting to evict you, it's important to understand that you have legal rights. Follow these steps:

- **Don't ignore the situation:** Ignoring notices from your landlord or the court won't make the problem go away and can negatively affect your rights.
- **Carefully review all notices:** Check if the notice complies with the requirements of Santa Ana's Rent Stabilization and Just Cause Eviction Ordinance. Note if your landlord has marked "at-fault" or "no-fault" just cause, as this will determine your potential defenses.
- **Determine if the eviction is valid:**
 - **At-fault just cause:** This usually means you violated the lease, such as by not paying rent.
 - **No-fault just cause:** This includes reasons like the landlord wanting to move into the unit. In such cases, the landlord may be required to provide relocation assistance or a rent waiver.
- **Seek mediation:** Santa Ana's ordinance provides voluntary mediation services, which can help you and your landlord reach an agreement and potentially avoid court.
- **Contact legal assistance:** It's critical to seek legal advice from an attorney or legal aid organization as soon as possible. They can offer guidance tailored to your specific situation.
- To better understand your rights as a tenant you may wish to contact the following organizations:
 - **Public Law Center** - 601 W Civic Center Dr, Santa Ana - (714) 541-1010
 - **Fair Housing Council of Orange County** – 2021 E. 4th St., Suite 122, Santa Ana – (714) 569-0823
 - **Community Legal Aid SoCal** – 2101 N. Tustin Ave, Santa Ana – (714) 571-5200

Note: The information provided here is for general purposes and should not be taken as legal advice. Always consult with a legal professional to discuss your individual circumstances.

Q18) I already received assistance. Am I eligible for more assistance?

- If you've already received assistance, you may be eligible for additional assistance IF all the following conditions apply:

- Your household still meets all eligibility criteria outlined above. See **Q1** for more details.
- Your household is still experiencing a financial hardship due to COVID-19. See **Q9** for more details.
- The total amount of assistance—including your first payment for assistance—does not exceed 18 months of rental arrears / past due rent owed. See **Q10** for more details.
- Please also note that submitting an application for assistance does not guarantee that you will receive rental assistance. Your household must meet all eligibility criteria and both you and your landlord must conform to requests from the service provider for additional information and documentation. See **Q14** for further details.

Q21) My application was denied? What can I do?

- Applicants may contest any determinations or denials based on program policy or calculations. However, an applicant may not challenge the application of federal law and requirements. Applicants may file an appeal, for example, if they believe there is an error within the program eligibility determinations.
- The process for applicant appeals of a determination is called the “informal review”. Informal reviews are provided for program applicants and will be administered by the City. An applicant is someone who has applied to the program (submitted an application) but has not been approved for assistance.
- A request for an informal review must be made in writing and delivered to the City of Santa Ana via email or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 14 days from the date of notice of denial of assistance. The City of Santa Ana will schedule and send written notice of the informal review within 14 days of the family’s request. A request for an informal review may be e-mailed to: ERA@santa-ana.org.

Q22) How are applications selected?

- Each application is assigned a number and assigned to Families Forward on a weekly basis. Additionally, the City follows the State of California’s statutory prioritization criteria when sorting applications:
 - Priority one shall be eligible households, as specified in Section 501(c)(4) of Subtitle A of Title V of Division N of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260), to expressly target assistance for eligible households with a household income that is not more than 50% of the area median income or any eligible households that

receive a notice described in Section 1179.10 of the Code of Civil Procedure or a summons described in Section 1179.11 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

- Priority two shall be communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, as determined by the City.
- Priority three shall be eligible households that are not otherwise prioritized as described in (1.) and (2.), to expressly include eligible households with a household income that is not more than 80 percent of the area median income.
- Please note if you do not complete all steps in the application and your Neighborly account does not have a status of “Application Submitted”, it will not be included in the above sorting process.

Q23) I already submitted an application. How do I check its status?

- You can check the status of your application online by logging into the Neighborly application system that you used to submit your application. You should have a username and password that you created to complete your application. Please write these down as well as the application number that is assigned to you upon opening an application.

Q24) Is the application available in languages besides English?

- Yes, in addition to English, the application is available in Spanish and Vietnamese.

Q25) Why are you asking about my race and ethnicity?

- The application asks about your race and ethnicity on the application as part of the Department of Treasury’s data collection purposes. It may even help Santa Ana get more federal and/or state funds to help our residents. Your race or ethnicity does not impact your eligibility for rental assistance.

Q26) If I have other questions, who do I contact?

- The City of Santa Ana has partnered with Families Forward to act as the service provider to review and process applications. Please contact Families Forward if you have any questions or need assistance completing an application. If you’ve



already completed an application, please have on hand the application number / case ID assigned to you as well as any other identifying information.

Families Forward
(Languages Spoken: English and Spanish)
1801 E. Edinger, Ste 200, Santa Ana, CA 92705
&
8 Thomas, Irvine, CA 92618
(657) 210-2628
familynavigator@families-forward.org

If you have any additional questions or you are unable to reach Families Forward, please contact:

Rent Stabilization Division - Eviction Prevention Program
City of Santa Ana
(714) 565-2655
ERA@santa-ana.org