



# WORKSOURCE PORTLAND METRO

## Regional Program Standards

**Focus:** WorkSource Centers Youth Program Services Other: Economic Opportunity Program and Workforce Navigator Program**Topic: COVID-19 Rent Assistance**

Date: March 1, 2021

 New Revised

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### Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a widespread impact on households in the Portland Metro Local Workforce Area beginning in March 2020 when local businesses began temporary closures and both temporary and permanent workforce layoffs.

For renters, a moratorium on eviction and deferral of residential rents was put in place by the Governor and extended by the legislature. The moratorium allows for deferral of rent owed during the period April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Renters have until July 31, 2021 to pay the deferred rents. The moratorium and deferral apply to all residential rental properties in Multnomah County. Tenants do not need to provide documentation of financial hardship. **Note:** These dates may change if State or Federal legislative action is taken. Changes in moratorium and deferral dates will be communicated via email to contractors.

The COVID-19 Rent Assistance program is designed to assist households impacted by the COVID pandemic.

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### Eligibility

To be considered for assistance through the COVID-19 Rent Relief 2 Program (CVRRP-2) participants must:

- Be enrolled in one of the participating Contractor programs.
- Live in a rental unit located within Multnomah County.
- Have a household income of not more than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Have experienced a financial or income loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Priority

CVRRP-2 assistance will be prioritized for:

- Households whose members are Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color (BIPOC).
- Households with household incomes at or below 50% of AMI.

### Roommate Situations

Where the participant is one of multiple members of a household (family, extended family or non-related roommates), the entire rent may be paid based on the participant's qualifications for assistance. The participant is considered the Head of Household for purposes of CVRRP-2 Intake data collection.

### Public Housing Residents

Households currently receiving federally subsidized assistance are eligible to receive CVRRP-2 funds to pay the *tenant-portion of their rent only*. Households residing in a Portland Housing Bureau financed affordable housing unit should consult with their property manager about whether the landlord intends to pursue these funds on their behalf.

### Disclosures

All participants must sign a completed *Client Consent to Release of Information for Data Sharing* (parent signature required for participants under age 18). All participants must be given the *CVRRP-2 City-County Privacy Notice*.

### Signatures

Where the participant is working with Contractor staff virtually, follow these guidelines for securing signature via email.

Send electronic signature email (see required content below) to the participant's email address and ask that they reply that they agree. The returned email agreement is to be saved and retained electronically. **Please Note:** *The participant's completed CVRRP-2 Intake form is not to be sent, as it contains PII. Staff should review the CVRRP-2 Intake form with the participant virtually, including the attestation statement above the signature lines.*

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**Staff Email Content**

The staff email to the participant must include the following verbiage:

[Name of Participant] – Please complete the Release of Information form as we discussed and reply to this email after reviewing the information below with “I Agree” if you do agree and wish to receive the Rent Assistance services we discussed. Please attach the completed Release of Information form. Thank you.

This email from my personal email account is my certification that the information I provided to staff for Intake for Rent Assistance services is true to the best of my knowledge as of the Intake date. I further certify that staff reviewed the completed Intake form with me via a telephone or virtual meeting.

If requested later, I agree to provide documentation to confirm the information being used to determine my eligibility. I understand that providing false or inaccurate information could lead to removal from the program and deem me liable for all costs expended on my behalf.

I have reviewed the Release of Information form and indicated the level of information sharing I agree to by initialing the appropriate box on the form. I am returning the form with this email.

**Youth Under 18**

When a participant is under age 18, staff are to forward the email sent to the applicant to their parent or guardian’s email account to secure approval of Rent Assistance services. The parent or guardian email is to include this verbiage:

[Name of Parent or Guardian] – [Name of Applicant] has applied for Rent Assistance services with [Name of Contractor Agency]. In order to provide these services, your approval of the Release of Information agreement is required. Please review the email below and the attachments included that [Name of Applicant] is being asked review and reply their approval to. If you agree with the Release of Information selection, please reply to this email with “I Agree.” If you do not approve of the Release of Information selection, please reply “I Do Not Agree” and the Release of Information selection will be changed. Thank you ... if you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

**Note:** Staff should include contact information for the parent to use if they have questions.

## Allowable Rent Assistance Expenses

The project allows for the following types of assistance with the required documentation. Contractors should follow their own fiscal processes relative to collection of W-9 and 1099 reporting.

### Current Rent Payments and Move-In Costs

Current rent payments are limited to the months of April, May and June 2021. Rent payments must be made directly to the landlord. Obligations for participants may be established for multiple months. Contractors may receive approval from Worksystems staff for exceptions to these requirements, including months paid and when they are paid.

Rent assistance is limited to a maximum of six (6) consecutive months of CVRRP-2 assistance payments per participant.

Security deposits and application fees may be paid when required for a residence change.

**Required Documentation:** Participant attestation (included in the Intake form) of their status as a renter, the address of the rental unit where they reside and the rent amount the assistance is supporting. Payment must be made to the leaseholder/owner.

Documents to be collected with the first rent payment request:

- Completed *CVRRP-2 Intake* form, which includes percent of MFI checkbox, attestation of need, rental status and unit/landlord details. The participant is the Head of Household on this form.
- **Important Note:** *The English language Intake Form is the only version with the accurate attestation statement* – participants that utilize the forms in other languages to understand the program must be made aware by staff of the attestation statement on the English version of the Intake form.
- Completed and properly signed *CVRRP-2 City-County Release of Information*.
- Completed *Agreement to Assign Rental Assistance*.
- Copy of rent payment check from Contractor fiscal system or copy of GL which reflects detail for the rent payment (date, payable to, amount, participant name).

Documents to be collected with each subsequent payment for same participant:

- Updated *CVRRP-2 Intake* form if approved payments changed.
- Updated *Agreement to Assign Rental Assistance* (if total changes and/or payment month was not shown on the Agreement submitted with initial payment).
- Copy of rent payment check from Contractor fiscal system or copy of GL which reflects detail for the rent payment (date, payable to, amount, participant name).

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### Rent Arrears

Funding may be used for participant rent payments that were due April 2020 or later and were not paid by participant under the moratorium. Accrued late fees are allowable as part of the rent arrears calculation. One check may be sent for multiple months of arrears payments.

**Required Documentation:** Participant attestation (included in the Intake form) of their status as a renter, the address of the rental unit where they reside and the rent amount the assistance is supporting. Payment must be made to the leaseholder/owner. Documents to be collected are:

- If not already collected for a current rent payment:
  - Completed *CVRRP-2 Intake* form, which includes attestation of need, rental status and unit/landlord details, with participant as Head of Household.
  - Completed and properly signed *CVRRP-2 City-County Release of Information*.
- Completed *Agreement to Assign Rental Assistance* showing the months of rent arrears to be paid.
- Copy of rent payment check from Contractor fiscal system or copy of GL which reflects detail for the rent payment (date, payable to, amount, participant name).

### Unallowable Expenses

Utilities, mortgage payments and direct client assistance (i.e., payments made to participants) are not eligible expenses.

Some rental agreements may list, and include as part of the total rent, associated expenses such as utilities. In such cases, the Contractor may pay the full amount of the rent payment that includes the utility(ies) as long as payment is made to the leaseholder/owner.

### Reporting and Invoicing

A CVRRP-2 Rent Assistance Reporting workbook will be provided to each Contractor. All transactions are to be reported via the workbook with each invoice submission and updated cumulatively. An invoice worksheet is included in the workbook which is to be copied and used for each payment request – the final workbook should have the total cumulative of all payments and a worksheet for each invoice submitted.

Invoices are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for reimbursement of the subsequent month's rent payments. All documentation for each transaction (payment) is to be submitted with the corresponding invoice as follows:

- Updated reporting workbook with the invoice worksheet for the period is to be emailed to [fiscal@worksystems.org](mailto:fiscal@worksystems.org).
- The backup documentation for each payment is to be organized by customer and submitted through the I-Trac File Exchange system to ensure PII is not sent in via unsecure email.

Worksystems will review invoices and payment backup documentation and approve invoices for payments as submitted. Incomplete documentation will not be accepted, and Contractor staff will be notified of issues to be resolved; the total invoice will be held to avoid disallowed costs until all documentation is received.

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## I-Trac Data Entry

The rent assistance payments will be tracked in the customer's I-Trac record in the Payments tab, Support Services Payments control:

Payment Type	Fiscal Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• COVID RA – Rent</li><li>• COVID RA – Rent Arrears</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CVRRP-2</li></ul> <p>CVRRP-2 must be noted in the Fiscal Reference to distinguish this project.</p>

## Forms

### Required

CVRRP-2 Agreement to Assign Rental Assistance  
CVRRP-2 City-County Privacy Notice  
CVRRP-2 City-County Release of Information  
CVRRP-2 Intake Form

### As Needed

CVRRP-2 Staff Signature Attestation *if customer does not sign forms in person*

## Best Practices

- Consider providing the participant a copy of the Agreement to Assign Rental Assistance that is sent to the Landlord for signature. This way the participant knows which months have been agreed-to for payment.
- Consider discussing these elements with the participant before beginning the paperwork for CVRRP-2:
  - Does the landlord know they live in the unit? If not, is it OK for the landlord to know that they're living in the unit?
  - Regarding the Release of Information – are you and any others living in the household willing to allow at minimum your name and date of birth to be put into the housing database and used for reporting?
- Consider inviting Jennifer Fox to individually meet with staff and conduct a personalized review of their initial set of forms. This review may help decrease the number of documentation errors that must be corrected before payments can be approved. For assistance on how to complete each form, refer to its annotated "How To" version that documents what to do to properly complete the form. These are collected in a PDF titled "COVID Rent Assistance Form Guide."