

## Regional Program Standards

**Focus:**  WorkSource Centers  Youth Program Services  
 Other: Economic Opportunity Program and Workforce Navigator Program

**Topic: COVID-19 Rent & Household Assistance**

Date: November 2, 2020

New  Revised

Page 1 of 7

### Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a widespread impact on households in the Portland Metro Local Workforce Area beginning in March 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 December 31, 2020. Renters have until June 30, 2021 (six months) to pay the deferred rents. The moratorium and deferral apply to all residential rental properties in Oregon. Tenants do not need to provide documentation of financial hardship.

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

### Contents

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COVID-19 Rent Relief Program .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Eligibility .....	2
Priority .....	2
Roommate Situations .....	2
Public Housing Residents .....	2
Disclosures .....	2
Signatures .....	2
Allowable Rent Assistance Expenses .....	3
Current Rent Payments .....	3
Rent Arrears .....	4
Reporting and Invoicing .....	4
I-Trac Data Entry .....	5
Forms .....	5
Best Practices .....	5
<b>Household Assistance Program .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Eligibility .....	6
Priority .....	6
Household Assistance .....	6
Covid Impact Statement/Signatures .....	6
Card Access .....	7
I-Trac Data Entry .....	7
Forms .....	7

## COVID-19 Rent Relief Program

### Eligibility

To be considered for assistance through the COVID-19 Rent Relief Program (CVRRP) 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 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 Intake data collection.

### Public Housing Residents

Households currently receiving federally subsidized assistance are eligible to receive CVRRP 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 *CVRRP City-County Release of Information* (parent signature required for participants under age 18). All participants must be given the *CVRRP 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 Intake form is not to be sent, as it contains PII. Staff should review the CVRRP Intake form with the participant virtually, including the attestation statement above the signature lines.

### 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.

**Regional Program Standards**

Topic: COVID-19 Rent &amp; Household Assistance

Date: November 2, 2020

Page 3 of 7

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 where indicated 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 required documentation. Contractors should follow their own fiscal processes relative to collection of W-9 and 1099 reporting.

**Current Rent Payments**

Current rent payments are limited to the months of October, November and December 2020. Rent payments must be made directly to the landlord. Obligations for participants may be established for multiple months, but rent may not be pre-paid more than 10 days and must be paid each month. 80 percent of the funding is limited to three months' rent payment for any participant. Contractors may receive approval from Worksystems staff for exceptions to these requirements, including months paid and the 80% funding restriction.

**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 Intake form, which includes 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

**Regional Program Standards**

Topic: COVID-19 Rent &amp; Household Assistance

Date: November 2, 2020

Page 4 of 7

program must be made aware by staff of the attestation statement on the English version of the Intake form.

- Completed and properly signed *CVRRP City-County Release of Information*.
- Completed and signed *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 Intake* form if approved payments changed.
- Completed and signed *Agreement to Assign Rental Assistance* (if 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).

**Rent Arrears**

Up to 20 percent of the 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. Contractors may receive approval from Worksystems staff for an exception to the 20% funding restriction.

**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 Intake* form, which includes attestation of need, rental status and unit/landlord details, with participant as Head of Household.
  - Completed and properly signed *CVRRP City-County Release of Information*.
- Completed and signed *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).

**Reporting and Invoicing**

A CVRRP 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.

Contractors may invoice weekly for reimbursement of CVRRP rent payments. All documentation for each transaction (payment) is to be submitted with the corresponding invoice as follows:

**Regional Program Standards**

Topic: COVID-19 Rent &amp; Household Assistance

Date: November 2, 2020

Page 5 of 7

- 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. The documents are to be “Submitted For” Jennifer Fox.

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

**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</li></ul> <p>CVRRP must be noted in the Fiscal Reference to distinguish this project.</p>

**Forms**

CVRRP Agreement to Assign Rental Assistance (Fillable PDF document)

CVRRP City-County Privacy Notice (PDF document)

CVRRP City-County Release of Information (Fillable Word Template form)

CVRRP Guarantee of Payment (Fillable Word Template form)

CVRRP Intake Form (Fillable Word Template form)

**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:
  - 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?

## Regional Program Standards

Topic: COVID-19 Rent & Household Assistance

Date: November 2, 2020

Page 6 of 7

### Household Assistance Program

This CARES funded program provides household assistance to participants in WorkSource Portland Metro participating programs.

#### Eligibility

- Be enrolled in one of the participating Contractor programs.
- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Have a household income of not more than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Have been negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Priority

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) CARES program 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.

#### Household Assistance

Assistance is provided through a \$1,000 Visa card. An application must be completed and signed – electronic email signature (outlined below) is acceptable – which includes the COVID impact statement.

Household uses include, but are not limited to:

- Food and basic household needs (utilities, internet, cell phone, rent, cleaning supplies)
- Childcare for participating in work and/or healthcare treatment
- Expenses related to Oregon Health Plan enrollment/health insurance premiums
- Medical/Dental/Optical expenses
- Transportation expenses (bus, ride share, gas, insurance, car repairs)
- Mental health treatment and counseling

No follow-up information or receipts are required. Customers must sign the Application that includes the need attestation.

**Required Documentation:** Participant attestation (included in the application form) of their need for the assistance.

- Completed and signed COVID OHA Household Assistance application.
- The email or electronic form of customer agreement/signature for the application.

#### Covid Impact Statement/Signatures

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

Review the application with the participant – **Please Note:** *Do not send the completed application via email as it contains PII.* Send an electronic signature email (see required content below) to the participant's email address

**Regional Program Standards**

Topic: COVID-19 Rent &amp; Household Assistance

Date: November 2, 2020

Page 7 of 7

and ask that they reply that they agree. The returned email agreement is to be saved and retained electronically.

**Email Content:**

[Name of Participant] – Please reply to this email after reviewing the information below with “I Agree” if you do agree and wish to receive the Household Assistance we discussed. Thank you.

This email from my personal email account is my certification that I and/or my household have been negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and need this income assistance to help support our household. I certify that the information on this Application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I will be spending this assistance on support for my household. I understand that if I have provided false information, I may be held responsible for the cost of the assistance I received.

I further certify that staff reviewed the completed Application with me via a telephone or virtual meeting.

**Card Access**

Completed and signed applications (and a copy of the email/virtual signature if used) are to be uploaded through the I-Trac File Exchange system to ensure PII is not sent in via unsecure email. The document is to be “Submitted For” Shaneille Battle.

Worksystems staff will submit card requests directly to the financial institution twice each week. The participant must activate the card by calling a provided phone number or using the bank’s website. Instructions and required disclosures will be included with the card.

**I-Trac Data Entry**

The household assistance payment will be tracked in the customer’s I-Trac record in the Payments tab, Partner Payments control:

Payment Type	Paid To	Partner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Household Assistance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participant</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>OHA CARES</li></ul>

**Forms**

OHA CARES Household Assistance Application