



Walker River Paiute Tribe Emergency Rental Assistance Program Launches April 13, 2021

Dear Members of the Walker River Paiute Tribe:

In late December 2020 Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 providing \$25B in funding for an Emergency Rental Assistance program. Of the \$25B allocated to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) \$800M was set aside specifically for Indian Tribes to provide rental and utility assistance to eligible enrolled members of Tribes and their household who meet the eligibility requirements set forth in the Consolidated Appropriations Act.

The Walker River Paiute Tribe received \$2.73M in funding to develop, implement and administer an Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Over the past month the Tribe has worked to develop policies, procedures, an application portal and FAQ's that fully comply with the guidelines set forth in the Consolidated Appropriations Act and guidance issued by the U.S. Treasury. We are excited to launch the WRPT Emergency Rental Assistance Program as another program to assist our members who have been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

General eligibility and program guidelines as defined in the Consolidated Appropriations Act are listed below:

Eligibility Requirements

- Enrolled members, 18 years or older, of the Walker River Paiute Tribe (WRPT) who are obligated to pay rent on a residential dwelling (only one application per household, regardless of the number of WRPT members residing in the household) and the Tribe determines that:
 - one or more individuals within the household has qualified for unemployment benefits or experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due, directly, or indirectly, to the COVID-19 outbreak;
 - one or more individuals within the household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability; and
 - the household has a household income at or below 80% of area median income
- Landlords, property managers or utility providers (on behalf of WRPT clients). If a landlord or utility provider submits on behalf of a tenant, the landlord or utility provider must notify the tenant and obtain the tenant's written consent.

Income Qualifications:

Per the ERAP grant regulations, the household income cannot be greater than 80% of your area median income, using HUD guidelines. Area Median limits for your County/Area can be found at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html>. Eligibility will be determined

using the area median income for the where the member resides.

Type of Rental Assistance Available:

- Eligible Tribal members may apply for a maximum of 12-months of rental assistance, which can include rents due in arrears if the past due rents can be shown to be due to COVID-19.
- Rent for future months is paid monthly and only certified for 3-months. Additional months can be applied for, if the maximum of 12 months has not been reached, upon submission of a new application and all required supporting documentation.
- If 12-months of arrears rent is requested, an additional 3 months may be approved for future rents if funding allows for rent stabilization.
- Rent in arrears cannot be requested prior to March 13, 2020.

Type or Utility Assistance Available

- Eligible Tribal members can apply for assistance for normal household utilities (e.g., electric, gas, propane, trash, sewer).
- Utilities that are covered by the landlord within rent will be treated as rent.

Cable and Telephone are excluded from utility assistance.

Payment Disbursement

- Payments will be made directly to landlords, utility or other service providers as required in the ERAP guidelines.

Walker River Paiute Tribe ERAP Application Process:

Members wishing to apply for assistance through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program can apply by visiting:

<https://wrpt.collective-strategies.com/>

Members wishing to apply for assistance through the ERAP program will be required to complete all sections of the application and provide the required supporting documents before applications can be processed. In order to provide rental or utility assistance as quickly as possible it is **imperative** the member be prepared to submit a complete application.

- Applications and supporting documents should be submitted through the online application portal for immediate processing.
- Applications may be submitted by U.S. Mail but will be processed after all applications submitted online have been processed which could result in a delay in receiving assistance.
- Assistance is available to members who do not have internet access or are unable to mail in the application by calling 775.773.2306 ext. 2304. Applications will not be processed until all required supporting documentation is received.
- Applications and supporting documentation may be delivered to the drop box located on the east side of the parking lot of the Administration Building. Applications hand delivered to the drop box will be processed after all applications submitted online have been processed which could result in a delay in receiving assistance.
- Requests for incomplete information on an application must be received within five (5) business day. If the requested information/verifications are not received timely, your application will be denied and you will need to reapply.

Required Application Documents:

- Completed and signed application.
- Identification for all household members 18 and older
 - Government Issued Driver’s License or identification; AND
 - Proof of Tribal Enrollment
- Household Income Verification
 - If household is receiving current income, at least 30-day documentation is required or
 - 2020 1040 Tax Statement
- Proof of COVID-19 financial impact:
 - Proof of Unemployment Benefits
 - Experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experience financial hardship due, directly or indirectly, to the COVID-19 outbreak.
 - Unemployment Award Letter
 - Bank Statements
 - Receipts
 - Correspondence with employers
 - Written Attestations from employers, case workers, landlords, or others with knowledge of the household’s circumstances
 - Written attestations from applicant or any household member
- Signed Application for all adult household members
- Copy of lease or rental agreement signed by applicant and landlord
- Eviction notice or late notice (if received).
- Current Utility bills (if requesting utility assistance applying)
- Documentation of all costs for which assistance is requested

Applications will be prioritized using the following criteria as required in the Act:

Completed applications submitted with all required documentation are reviewed in the order received, with the exception of ERAP regulations prioritizing the following households:

- Households that include an individual who has been unemployed for the 90 days prior to application for assistance.
- Households with income at or below 50 percent of the area median income.

Application deadlines:

- Applications can be submitted beginning April 13, 2021.
- The ERAP program runs from April 13, 2021 through December 31, 2021. Applications must be submitted prior to December 10, 2021 for assistance requests.
- For applicants who are requesting ongoing rental assistance and are using current income verifications, recertification of the application is required every 3- months.

Application review and notification process:

- It is your responsibility to submit a complete application (all sections complete) and all required supporting documents. If your application is incomplete, you will be notified in writing as to what is needed to complete the application. Once all required documents are received, the ERA team will begin the process of confirming verifications and determining eligibility.
- Once the completed application requirements are met, an eligibility determination will be made within ten (10) business days.
 - If the household has been determined eligible, payments will be **issued directly to vendors** and you will receive a “Receipt of Awarded Assistance” letter, OR
 - If your application has been denied, you will receive written notice of denial.

- no person may be denied assistance based on race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or political belief.

Request for decision review process:

WRPT has established a fair process for requests for application decision review. The applicant has 10-days from date of decision to submit an appeal, in writing, to WRPT by submitting a written request to wrptcares@wrpt.org. Written requests for a secondary review must be submitted within ten (10) days of the notice of decision and clearly state the reason(s) for the request for secondary review. A final determination will be made within ten (10) days of receiving the written request and a letter will be sent to the application indicating the final determination status.

Where to get help:

Please email wrptcares@wrpt.org or call 775.773.2306 ext. 2304 for assistance or ERAP program questions

Program Administration

The Tribe has contracted with an independent third party to assist with the development, implementation, and administration of the ERAP program. The use of an independent third party ensures that applications are evaluated using the established criteria outlined in the ERAP regulations for each application received. The independent third party is required to strictly adhere to the Tribe's confidentiality policy. The Tribe selected an independent third party with extensive experience in the development, implementation and monitoring of both entitlement and grant funded public benefit assistance programs, such as the ERAP program. The contractor's familiarity and experience with developing and implementing programs that are in full compliance with federal funding guidelines is an added benefit to ensure the Tribe is using its ERAP monies appropriately and will not risk having to repay funds in the future.

Paper copies of the application and Frequently Asked Questions will be mailed to enrolled members 18 years and older to the address on record with the Enrollment Department on April 13, 2021. Information on the Walker River Paiute Tribe Emergency Rental Assistance Program will also be made available on the Tribe's website at www.wrpt.org.

The Tribal Council is excited to offer this program to eligible members as part of the Tribe's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please continue to stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,



Amber Torres
Chairman
Walker River Paiute Tribe