

## Pennsylvania rental assistance.

A number of rental and housing assistance programs are available in Pennsylvania. Low income individuals can get help moving into affordable housing or apartments, receive funds for paying security deposits, and can also apply for assistance to pay the rent for their current home. Several of these Affordable Housing Programs in Pennsylvania are in place to help the less fortunate.

Several non-profit agencies and organizations are working together to provide this housing assistance to the needy. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, some local non-profits, as well as the Department of Public Welfare offer many of the rental programs. They all partner together to prevent evictions or foreclosures, and also operate Homeless Assistance Programs for people that need a place to live.

The services have many goals. There are resources available that can help prevent evictions, try to avoid homelessness, and assistance is even offered for those people who are currently homeless. Families can find financial assistance, case management, and advice in moving toward self-sufficiency.

Pennsylvania realizes that affordable housing and the security that comes with it is a key component to an individual or family's path to self-sufficiency. So local non-profit or county service agencies will arrange services for people who, because of their household income, their health condition, and/or a disability, may be able to qualify for housing or rental assistance.

The state of Pennsylvania Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) helps families pay their rent and ensure that homelessness can be avoided. Services are offered for people who are in danger of being evicted from their home or apartment. Individuals who have already been evicted can use this program to get advice on solutions. For example, get information on low income housing units, assistance with moving costs and paying for security deposits, and other help. Some of the specific services available from HAP include the following.

Emergency rental assistance is offered for people who are in danger of being evicted from their home or apartment. Qualified individuals may be able to get help with their payments for mortgage, rent, security deposits, moving costs and utilities. Your county Homeless Assistance Program provider will coordinate services with you and your landlord.

Case managers will work hard with your landlord to maximize your chances for staying in your home or apartment and mediate a solution. If you just can't afford to stay where you are living now, then a case manager will work with you to find a more affordable apartment in the region. In addition, the HAP program can also be used to move you out of shelter or transitional housing into an affordable apartment.

**Call the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare at 1-800-692-7462, or you can call your local community action agency or social service office. They can help you meet your housing needs. Clients can learn about all the rent assistance programs that are available to them.**

## Emergency rental assistance.

Non-profit agencies, charities, and government organizations near you provide emergency rent assistance to individuals who are faced with an eviction or notice to quit from their landlord. Or there may be loans or other funds to pay rent that is due in a very short period of time, even today. The type and amount of rental assistance provided will vary by agency as well as the amount of funding that is available.

While the various programs that may be available are very different, the main goal is to prevent evictions and homelessness of lower income families. ***There is information below regarding rent help in the Pittsburgh region*** to see what type of emergency financial or rental assistance is available today at the local level.

Many of the rental assistance programs near you have limited funding and resources available to them. Usually low income families with children, senior citizens, the disabled, and people who are faced with a short term crisis will qualify for help before others. The longer term unemployed or individuals who are not able to get back on their feet over the mid to long term may not receive help. Note that even though emergency financial aid may not be provided to them for any past due rent that is owed, the applicant may still be given referrals to other programs that can assist.

People who are applying need to show the willingness and ability to be improve their financial situation in the future as in general the programs are intended to be short term in nature. The emergency grants that are issued for paying rent are for solving a crisis only. In some cases, the money may be issued to the applicant within a matter of days.

**Most of the resources available are not never-ending charity type programs so the applicant needs to become self-sufficient in very short order. So, they need to be able to prove their ability to pay future rental and housing costs on their own, as this form of assistance is for short term emergencies only.**

A number of the local non-profit agencies and government organizations will also have staff who will work closely with the applicant to provide them with additional support. So, any **emergency financial aid for paying rent combines case management**, counseling, and referral to other social services as well as local assistance programs. Almost all non-profit agencies will take part in this activity.

This additional case management type service will always be provided for free to anyone that is in a crisis situation, such as the unemployed or households facing a medical emergency. For example, clients can learn about the process in applying for emergency rent assistance today from federal government grant programs like homeless prevention and rapid rehousing, section 8 vouchers, low income housing, motel vouchers, as well as security deposit assistance.

The primary goal of the local agencies that provide one time rent assistance near you is to help people deal with any emergency housing or crisis situation that they may be facing. Any funds issued for paying the rent that is due on the home will provide the tenant additional time so they are not faced with imminent homelessness. At the same time this is occurring, the client will be provided long term support in an effort to avert any future emergencies from occurring.

If you expect to fall behind on your rent in the future, have an eviction notice, or if you need help in finding a new, more affordable home or apartment, then contact a program for help. It is important to ask for financial aid as soon as possible, as the more money that is due to your landlord for the back rent the fewer options that will be available to that family.

## Rent help in Pittsburgh region

Rental assistance is available for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County residents. A number of agencies, churches, non-profits, and government programs focus on providing low income housing, security deposit and rent help. There are grants or loans to qualified seniors, the disabled and low income as well as struggling families in the region.

Information is provided below on who to call and where to apply in Pittsburgh for emergency rental assistance. Many of the agencies and programs listed have limited funding, and they will have their own separate application process, **but call and ask for help**. Even if the agency can't provide you or your family with emergency or ongoing rental assistance, they can usually refer you to another service that can help. Other resources may include the federal government or state of Pennsylvania rent assistance programs and resources.

- **Pittsburgh Presbyterian Lazarus (412-323-1400)** can offer at most \$250 in one time assistance to help with rental evictions, pay utility bills, and even such expenses as medical bills.
- **Careline from Catholic Charities** is an option for emergency assistance. The main office is at 212 9th Street in Pittsburgh, PA. **Call 412-456-6999**. Some of the financial assistance offered can help during a short term hardship or emergency, and can, in limited circumstances, be used for housing and/or rent.
- **Allegheny Churches (AVAC)** have formed a partnership known as the Allegheny Valley Association. The main office is in Natrona Heights. **Dial 724-226-0606**. Residents of East Deer, Brackenridge, Tarentum, , Fawn, Frazier, Harrison, Lower Burrell, Verona, New Kensington, or Arnold can apply for help. A wide variety of bills and expenses can be paid for, including rent, security deposits, food, and more.
- **Allegheny County Bureau of Hunger and Housing Services (phone (412) 350-4354)** runs a homeless assistance program and also provides rental assistance for Allegheny county low income residents.
- **Allegheny and Pittsburgh Salvation Army** is a great resource for information, and also possible limited amounts of financial aid. **Call them at 412-394-4850** for emergency assistance. There are several other Salvation Army Centers that may offer financial aid for paying rent and housing costs, such as energy bills. Locations include **Brackenridge (call 724-244-6310)**, Braddock (412-271-2407), and Carnegie (dial 412-276-4757).
- **St. Vincent De Paul Society** also partners with local churches and religious organizations. **Dial 412-321-1071** to be put into touch with local charities, volunteers, or churches who may be able to provide help for housing needs, rent, and/or low-income housing. Some local agencies may offer loans for paying rental payments or manage shelters in the region.
- **ACTION-Housing** is a leading non-profit housing agency in Allegheny County. It does not offer monetary rental assistance, however the agency does have a program called Homeless Families Program **(412 824-2444)**. This helps homeless individuals and families identify what their various options are, including giving information about local shelters. Also, ACTION-Housing's subsidiary, Supportive Housing Management Services **(412-829-3910)** manages a number of apartment buildings with subsidized housing units, including at least one property with limited shelter beds. There is even information on how to rent an apartment with past eviction.
- **Urban League of Pittsburgh** administers a number of resources including a rental assistance program. The non-profit provides qualified individuals with security deposits, rent payments, utility and heating bill payments and general housing assistance. **Call (412) 727-2640, or stop by 2320 Hill Street Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15235.**
- **Allegheny County Housing Authority** administers the section 8 housing program for the very low income, seniors, and poor in the region. This is federally funded and the program provides rent subsidies and vouchers for living in private single houses or apartments. The agency also has information on other housing resources. They offer advice, counseling, information on emergency housing, and run the state of Pennsylvania Section 8 housing voucher program for Pittsburgh. Call the center at **412-355-8940**.
- **Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA** and Allegheny administers the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF). Veterans and their families can receive government grants to pay rent and information on permanent housing placement. Other programs include funds for security deposits for the homeless, transportation, shelter, and more. Call the Pittsburgh agency at **412-481-8200**.
- Get information from the **Allegheny County Bureau of Homeless Services**, which is a referral service. They help tenants close to eviction or power shut off as well as the current homeless. Grants, cash aid for rent, hotel vouchers, and more may be offered from referrals.

## **Allegheny County Bureau of Homeless Services housing programs.**

Several different non-profit agencies work with the Bureau of Homeless Services to prevent and reverse homelessness in Allegheny County. They offer a number of potential solutions to tenants and anyone that is currently homeless in the county or the city of Pittsburgh. Another key government entity that participates is the Office of Community Services.

When seeking any type of financial assistance or housing, the non-profits or charities indicated below are the main point of contacts. The Bureau themselves do not provide funds, they just try to coordinate programs across the county.

Many of the agencies may have emergency funds for paying a housing expense. Or they may operate facilities such as shelters or transitional housing programs. Regardless of that they do, the focus is on eviction and homeless prevention. The Bureau of Homeless Services and these different partners know it is much less expensive to society, and better for the person, to keep them housed in the first place. So they work towards that objective.

However, for a family or person that is homeless, some of the options for them include the following. Across Allegheny County there are emergency shelters for short term stays. Clients can also use transitional housing type programs for more mid-term support. Or there will be cold weather shelters during the winter months. Throughout this process, the guest will be able to receive meals, case management, information on job training and other support.

The end goal is always to place someone into long term, permanent housing. As part of this, there may be government grants to pay a security deposit or first month's rent. Some of the agencies in Pittsburgh may issue the client a loan for their housing expenses. So financial support is always an option too.

No matter the situation, the supportive services offered by the agencies, along with case management, can help those people faced with eviction. The services will cover a variety of issues, ranging from lack of employment to rebuilding credit and more.

Some of the specific housing resources include shelter, information and referral, case management, advocacy and assistance with applying for funds to pay for rental expenses. The specific services include the following.

- Short term, emergency shelters are available in the county. They can provide an immediate place to stay, and clients should [dial 412-350-3837](tel:412-350-3837). There are locations for victims of domestic violence, youth, the homeless on the streets during winter, families, and the poor.
- **Eviction prevention and immediate rental assistance is offered. Dial 412-350-3837.** In almost all cases, the applicant needs to have a pay or quit notice from their landlord.

Other options available in the Allegheny County area are noted below. Once again, while the Bureau of Homeless Services coordinates and helps the non-profits, they do not offer direct aid themselves.

- The Bridge, or Transitional housing, is good for up to 2 years. It provides people a place to stay while they work towards independence and stability. The person staying their will need to pay some minimal rent, and this will be based on factors such as their total income. Another option is the PennFree Bridge housing, which is for those addicted to drugs or alcohol.
- As noted, there may be some long term, permanent housing or low income apartments available. There can be lodging for people with a disability or the elderly, among others. While the first step may be shelter and self-sufficiency, the permanent accommodations may be a solution too.

For more information on these and other programs, [call 412-350-3837](tel:412-350-3837).

- **Emergency Shelter Allowance** is run by the Welfare Department. This includes eviction prevention and funds for rent to those with a pay or quite notice. Short term housing or apartments, as well as no interest loans may also be issued for housing or rental expenses. **Call 412-565-2146 or 412-565-2232** in the southern part of the county.

Additional homeless prevention may be provided from ESA. The government both helps with rent and housing placement, which includes the possibility of free motel vouchers or money for a security deposit. Tenants facing eviction also may qualify for legal aid, in addition to the one-time rental assistance. More on Allegheny County eviction help.

- **Pittsburgh Northside Worship and Service Center** offers referrals, case management and more. The charity may have some limited rent eviction assistance for qualified low-income families or seniors. **Telephone is 412-321-0290.**
- **Allegheny Neighborhood Legal Services Association** coordinates free legal aid for qualified low-income families. They can offer help to prevent evictions, resolve landlord disputes, and ensure fair housing laws are followed. Get help in dealing with disputes over rent and landlord mediation too. Call 412-255-6700 or try the Pro Bono Center of the Allegheny County Bar Foundation at 412-402-6677 for referrals.

## Other Possible Agencies for Help:

### Salvation Army

917 Brackenridge Avenue  
Brackenridge, PA 15014  
(724) 224-6310

1101 Fifth Avenue  
New Kensington, PA 15068  
(724) 335-7221