



“I’m grateful for the extra support during this pandemic.”

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COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance



#### Greetings from RentHelpMN.

We write to provide helpful tips and common questions to help you and your tenants navigate the application process. We also outline the steps we take to review every application to show what happens behind the scenes. We all want this program to work as efficiently as possible and appreciate your partnership and patience.

#### Newly required federal guidance

RentHelpMN must now require that property owners/managers agree not to evict tenants for nonpayment of rent for the months assistance is received. This will now appear on the certification owners sign when approving payment.

#### Tips:

- **Send us your portfolio:** For management companies or owners of portfolios, determine a point of contact and send that name and contact info to [Landlords@renthelpmn.org](mailto:Landlords@renthelpmn.org) along with a quick summary of your company and/or portfolio if you have it.
- **Provide your tenant(s) with a ledger of rent due.** Because of federal data requirements, we have to collect the total rent charge, amount paid and amount due per month. If the tenants have a ledger in their application that matches your information when you approve payment, the process can move much more quickly.

#### Common questions about the online registration system:

- **Need to update your property info?** Once you enter your information and documentation into the portal you can't change it in order to prevent fraud. Email [landlords@renthelpmn.org](mailto:landlords@renthelpmn.org) to update the information.
- **See an error on your dashboard?** Tenants use any information they have to connect to your registered properties, but don't always get it right. While your dashboard may show errors, our team corrects these errors when reviewing applications and processing for payment.
- **Is the payment glitch fixed?** Yes. If you encountered the glitch, we apologize and realize this must have been frustrating. Fortunately, the glitch did not impact our ability to keep moving your tenants' approvals forward to payment. If you encounter a stall on a payment approval in the future, please email [Landlords@RentHelpMN.org](mailto:Landlords@RentHelpMN.org) and we'll push you through.
- **Wondering why you have a limited view of tenant status?** On your dashboard, you can only view see tenant status. Tenant information and communication with case managers is private. Once applications are "pending initial review" they start moving through the review process toward approval or denial.

#### The steps in an application review by Minnesota Housing:

Here is a current look at the life cycle of the average application to RentHelpMN that is processed by Minnesota Housing. Every application is unique and the steps are subject to change. We provide this list to give you a glimpse at the breadth of review.

- Tenant submits application online or mails in a paper application
- A team manager assigns the application to a file reviewer.
- The reviewer checks for all required basic documents and components.
- If pieces are missing, illegible or inconsistent (e.g. rent on the lease isn't the same as rent requested), the reviewer will reach out to the tenant for clarification.
  - If clarifications can be made by phone, the reviewer corrects the information. If the application needs corrections only the tenant can provide, the reviewer will "re-open" the application for the tenant to update and re-submit.
  - If a tenant is working with a partner and case manager in the field, the reviewer can also communicate with those partners for updates.
  - Note: It can take many days between contact to receiving the needed information. Number of contacts required range from one to dozens.
  - The team always works an application to resolution.
- Reviewers confirm the following in the tenant application
  - That the household is eligible:
    - A renter in Minnesota applying at their primary address
    - Within the income guidelines, including a determination of total household income and AMI %COVID-19 impact for hardship and housing instability
  - That expenses requested are eligible:
    - Rent, utilities and other eligible housing expenses
    - Incurred March 13, 2020 or later
    - No more than 15 months (soon to be 18) of total assistance per household
  - That required documents per federal guidance are submitted:
    - Income documents
    - Rent agreement or lease
    - Bills, ledgers and invoices for requested assistance
  - That the landlord is registered and set up for payment:
    - This now appears on the file reviewer's dashboard as part of the tenant application so the reviewer can flag early if the landlord isn't set up for payment.
    - If not, they reach out to make contact and start the process or connect the right file to the landlord.
- Once all of the review is complete, the file reviewer sends to a quality control manager to check over.
  - That the landlord is registered and set up for payment.
  - If denied, a letter with the reason is sent to the tenant.
  - In some cases, a denial can be appealed.
  - Tenants can re-apply in 30 days if their circumstances have changed.
- Once accepted by the owner, payment information is sent to the bank. Checks are printed and mailed, which can take 7-10 day
  - ACH/EFT can take a few business days after being initiated to show up in accounts
- When an application is approved, the owner or manager will get an email request to approve the payment.
  - Owners can also make corrections to the assistance amount. It's important that this be accurate.
- Once accepted by the owner, payment information is sent to the bank.
  - Checks are printed and mailed, which can take 7-10 days
  - ACH/EFT can take a few business days after being initiated to show up in accounts
- The tenant file will be updated to show payment was made.

#### Reach out with your questions.

Emailing [Landlords@renthelpmn.org](mailto:Landlords@renthelpmn.org) will connect you to a customer service team for owners and property managers. We are increasing the size of this team to help get to all of your questions and get your properties set up for payment.

Thank you.



[www.mnhousing.gov](https://www.mnhousing.gov)

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