

MaineHousing changes to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program effective June 1.

To extend the benefit to those most in need new rules will limit benefit amounts and cap hotel lodging rates to federal standards.

In an effort to extend the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA), funded by the federal government, MaineHousing is announcing new eligibility standards and benefit limits effective June, 1.

Four key changes are being made to the program including:

1. Payments to hotels will be capped to federal General Services Administration (GSA) limits based on season and location.
2. Participation in the ERA program will be limited to 12 months instead of 18 months.
3. Income eligibility for the program will be reduced from 80 percent of area median income (AMI) to 50 percent of AMI.
4. To increase efficiency the program will now only cover rent, back rent, security deposits and electric utility expenses. The program will also no longer be available to those already living in subsidized housing.

The new area median income requirements and hotel rates can be found [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.

The length an individual or household can remain eligible for the benefit will also now be capped to one year, the previous length was 18 months. Any applicant currently in the program at or above 11 months would automatically get two additional months unless the additional months put them beyond the program limit.

Administered in partnership with 10 local community action agency partners and two cultural based organizations, MaineHousing's ERA program was among the first in the nation to start and to date has help tens of thousands of people, including more than 25,000 children, remain stably housed and sheltered paying more than \$189 million in benefits.

Thousands of tenants have avoided eviction because of payments to landlords for rent and back rent under the program, while about 1,700 households have used ERA funding to pay for hotel or motel lodging during the pandemic.

Without the new program limits, MaineHousing estimates program funding would expire in the fall of 2022. These changes are being made to extend the funding, through next winter.

More information on the program in Maine can be found at MaineHousing's website:

www.mainehousing.org Current ERA dashboards can be found [here](#).

New FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) pages for tenants and landlords are also available on MaineHousing's ERA program page.