



WICOMICO ERAP REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION:

Rent Status / Obligation	Income	Financial Hardship	Housing Instability
Households must be able to document the following three criteria:	Households must have an annual income at or below 80% Area Median Income	Households must meet <u>one</u> of the following:	Households must meet <u>one or more</u> of the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They have a rent obligation for a residential dwelling <i>The location of the unit where the household resides</i> <i>The amount of the monthly rental payment</i> <p><i>Self-certification of rent obligation is not permitted for Maryland ERAP funds.</i></p>	<p>To verify applicant income eligibility, one of the four methods listed below must be utilized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorical Eligibility Annual Income for 2020 Monthly Income at Time of Application Other Income Proxies <p>*** PLEASE REFERENCE PAGES 3-6 FOR THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION NEEDED FOR EACH CATEGORY ***</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or more adult individual in the household qualifies for unemployment assistance OR One or more adult individuals in the households has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or other financial hardship due, directly or indirectly, to the COVID19 outbreak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A past due utility or rent notice Eviction notice or warrant of restitution Failed habitability inspection or violation of housing code notification Overcrowding (more than two persons per bedroom), documented by a letter from the landlord or third party that can attest to living conditions Utilities are not in service, as documented either by utility shut off notice/statement

*** PLEASE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH CATEGORY LISTED ABOVE ***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Lease Agreement</i> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Rental Ledger (Must show previous 6 months OR duration of requested funding)</i> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>IN THE EVENT OF NO LEASE:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of rental residence may include evidence of paying utilities for the residential unit or an attestation by the landlord who can be identified as the verified owner or management agent of the unit <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the amount of a rental payment may include bank statements, check stubs, receipts, digital payment app records (ex: Venmo, Cashapp), or other financial documentation that reasonably establishes a pattern of paying rent, or a written attestation by a landlord who can be verified as the legitimate owner or management agent of the unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorical Eligibility: Households who receive benefits through other federal, state, or local government programs that have income eligibility at or below 80% AMI can use documentation of their benefits as proof they meet the income requirements for ERAP Annual Income for 2020: 2020 Tax Returns, 2020 W-2, or other wage statement documentation Monthly Income at Time of Application: Income reported for the last 30 days will be annualized based upon the provided 30-day documentation Other Income Proxies 	<p>***</p> <p>PLEASE REFERENCE PAGE 7 OF THIS DOCUMENTATION FOR SPECIFIC FINANCIAL HARDSHIP REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>***</p>	<p>***</p> <p>PLEASE REFERENCE PAGE 8 OF THIS DOCUMENTATION FOR SPECIFIC HOUSING INSTABILITY REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>***</p>
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Wicomico County								
Persons in Household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
30% AMI	15,150	17,420	21,960	26,500	31,040	35,580	40,120	44,660
50% AMI	25,200	28,800	32,400	36,000	38,900	41,800	44,650	47,550
80% AMI	40,350	46,100	51,580	57,600	62,250	66,850	71,450	76,050

Section 5: Rent Obligation Determination & Documentation

Definition of Rent Obligation

Households must be able to document the following three criteria:

1. They have a rent obligation for a residential dwelling
2. The location of the unit where the household resides
3. The amount of the monthly rental payment

Documentation Requirements

If available, the applicant must submit a copy of the lease signed by the tenant and landlord or sublessor. Self-certification of rent obligation is not permitted for Maryland ERAP funds.

If a household does not have a signed lease:

1. Documentation of rental residence may include evidence of paying utilities for the residential unit or an attestation by the landlord who can be identified as the verified owner or management agent of the unit
2. Evidence of the amount of a rental payment may include bank statements, check stubs, receipts, digital payment app records (ex: Venmo, Cashapp), or other financial documentation that reasonably establishes a pattern of paying rent, or a written attestation by a landlord who can be verified as the legitimate owner or management agent of the unit

Section 6: Household Income Determination & Documentation

Households must have annual income at or below 80% of the 2021 HUD Area Median Income for their county (see Appendix for list of income limits by county).

Methods for Determining Annual Household Income

There are four options to verify income eligibility (in order of DHCD preference):

1. Categorical Eligibility
2. Annual Income for 2020
3. Monthly Income at Time of Application
4. Other Income Proxies

Categorical Eligibility

Households who receive benefits through other federal, state, or local government programs that have income eligibility at or below 80% AMI can use documentation of their benefits as proof they meet the income requirements for ERAP:

- A household may provide a letter or other documentation dated on or after January 1, 2020 showing that the household receives benefits from **one** of the following programs:
 - Head Start
 - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI), for head or co-head of household
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Tribal TANF, for head or co-head of household
 - Veterans Affairs Disability Pension, Survivor Pension, Enhanced Survivor Benefits, or Section 306 disability pension (**not** standard VA pension)
 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) for households with three or fewer members
 - Other income-based programs with eligibility based on 80% AMI or below
- If a household is living in a rent-restricted or income-based property, the tenant or landlord can provide evidence of the household's most recent tenant income certification as long as it is no older than one year from when they apply for assistance.
- If an applicant qualifies through Categorical Eligibility, the program **does not** need to re-determine the household income eligibility if the household reapplies for assistance in the future.
- Self-certification of income is not permitted under this option

Annual Income for 2020

Acceptable forms of documentation include:

- Filed 2020 IRS Form 1040 if the household has completed their 2020 federal income taxes. Household income will be calculated as the adjusted gross income.
- A 2020 IRS Tax Return Transcript will suffice for a 2020 tax return
- Source documents evidencing annual income (e.g., wage statement, W2s, interest statement, unemployment compensation statement).
- Unsigned tax returns are accepted as part of the application. They do not need to be signed.
- Self-certification of income is not permitted under this option

Monthly Income at Time of Application

Income reported for the last 30 days will be annualized based upon the provided 30-day documentation. Reviewers should use whatever recent monthly income information was provided by the applicant, even if by the time they review such information, significant time has already passed due to application backlogs and the information is already dated. If an applicant qualifies based on monthly income, the program must redetermine the household income eligibility every three months for prospective assistance. Income sources that should be evaluated include:

- Gross pay at time of application: Pay stubs covering the most recent thirty day-period or current letter from employer verifying gross wages (pay rate, hours/week, pay date)
- Cash Income
- Self-Employment
- Alimony and child support
- Current Pension/Retirement Benefit letter (if applicable)
- Investment income
- Pension
- Retirement
- Social Security
- Unemployment compensation
- TANF cash payments, vouchers, and certain supportive services that meet the requirements in 45 CFR 260.31

Self-certification of income is allowed under this option if the household is claiming zero income, has income from self-employment that is not documented, or has cash income.

Other Income Proxies

A grantee may rely on a self-certification from the applicant as to household income if the grantee also uses any reasonable fact-specific proxy for household income, such as reliance on data regarding average incomes in the household's geographic area.

Income Determination Policies

- *Recent Loss of Income.* If a household's annual income from their 2020 W-2 forms exceeds 80% AMI, but the household has experienced a more recent loss of income, they may still meet the income test if their income documentation submitted for the last 30 days shows an income below 80% AMI.
- *Changes in Income.* If an applicant submits income information when they first apply, and then submits different/additional income information that is more current prior to receiving assistance, then income determination must be based on the most recent income documentation provided.
- *Unemployment Insurance.* For Unemployment Insurance (UI), the annual income determination will be calculated by multiplying the "Weekly Benefit Amount" in the Statement of Benefits letter by 52, not actual payments made. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) or any other unemployment compensation received in addition to this weekly benefit will not be included in income calculations for ERAP. Unemployment benefits may be from another state for purposes of documenting income, however the unit assisted must be their current primary residence and be in Maryland.

Excluded Income

Excluded Income for purposes of determining ERAP income eligibility:

1. Income from Children, which is income from the employment of children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years and child support.
2. Payments Received for the Care of Foster Children, including foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the family, who are unable to live alone).
3. Lump-Sum Payments, including additions to family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (e.g., health and accident insurance, and worker's compensation), capital gains and settlement for personal or property losses [except as provided].
4. Reimbursement for Medical Costs, including all payments received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, medical expenses for any family member.
5. Live-in Aide, including the income of a live-in aide employed because of a medical condition or disability of a family member. A live-in aide is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the person, not obligated for the support of the person, and would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services.
6. Education Assistance, including the full amount of educational scholarships paid directly to the student or to the educational institution, and government funds paid to a veteran for tuition fees, books, equipment, materials, supplies, transportation and miscellaneous personal expenses of the student. Any amount of such scholarship or payment to a veteran not used for the above purposes that is available for subsistence is to be included in income.
7. Government Programs, including the following:
 - a. Amounts received under training programs funded by HUD
 - b. Earnings and benefits from participation in qualifying State or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government.)
 - c. Amounts received by a disabled person that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligibility and benefits, because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS).

- d. Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs, which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred (special equipment, clothing, transportation, childcare, etc.) and made solely to allow participation in a specific program.
 - e. Amounts specifically excluded by any other Federal statute from consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under the U.S. Housing Act of 1937.
 - f. Amounts paid by a State agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member living at home.
8. Temporary Income, considered temporary, nonrecurring, or sporadic in nature (including gifts).
 9. Income of Full-Time Students, earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older attending school or vocational training (excluding the head of household and spouse).
 10. Property Tax Refunds, including amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under State or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling of the unit.
 11. Adoption Assistance Payments, in excess of \$480 per adopted child.
 12. Income from Stimulus checks, that is income from any of the stimulus checks received during the pandemic.

Section 7: Financial Hardship Determination & Documentation

Households can meet the eligibility requirements for financial hardship by meeting one of the following criteria:

1. One or more adult individuals in the household qualifies for unemployment assistance, or
2. One or more adult individuals in the households has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or other financial hardship due, **directly or indirectly**, to the COVID19 outbreak

Qualified for Unemployment Assistance

Households can document they meet the qualified for unemployment assistance criteria by providing a copy of their current benefits statement or determination letter from the Maryland Department of Labor. If a grantee/subgrantee has access to the unemployment benefits portal to see the status of the household's application or benefits, a written attestation from the person processing the application may be used as acceptable documentation.

If documentation is not available, the grantee must accept self-certification from the tenant that they are qualified to receive unemployment benefits.

Note that if an adult in the household receives unemployment assistance, their overall household income still cannot exceed 80% of AMI.

COVID-19 Related Financial Hardship

Examples of financial hardship that would be considered directly or indirectly related to COVID19 include, but are not limited to:

- A parent leaving employment to care for a child impacted by school or daycare closures
- An adult having a reduction in work hours, loss of employment, or reduction in cash income due to workplace closure or loss of self-employment business
- An adult having a reduction or loss of cash benefits due to inability to recertify eligibility
- Costs related to COVID-19 infection, need to isolate or quarantine, or other medical needs
- Increase in household expenses or living costs

If documentation is not available, the grantee must accept self-certification from the tenant that they experienced a financial hardship that meets the “directly or indirectly related to COVID19” standard.

Section 8: Housing Instability Determination & Documentation

Households must have a demonstrated risk of housing instability, as evidenced by one of the following:

1. A past due utility or rent notice
2. Eviction notice or warrant of restitution
3. Pending or existing rent escrow case which substantiates unsafe or unhealthy living conditions, documented by Maryland Case Search, court documents, or other third-party documentation
4. Failed habitability inspection or violation of housing code notice
5. Overcrowding (more than two persons per bedroom), documented by a letter from the landlord or third party that can attest to living conditions
6. Documentation or self-certification that applicant is paying more than 30% of household income for rent and utilities.
7. Utilities are not in service, as documented either by utility shut off notice/statement
8. Current homelessness as documented by Homeless Management Information System records or caseworker/intake worker attestation. Eligible living situations include staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing, in a place not meant for human habitation, doubled up with family or friends on a temporary/emergency basis, or in hotel/motel (paid for by household or charitable/government agency).

Self-certification of housing instability is not allowed under Maryland ERAP