

City Launches COVID-19 Household Assistance Program

The City of Portland program opens to the public Tuesday to help Portlanders pay for household needs. The program is part of a \$36 million City investment in COVID-19 housing relief.

(October 23, 2020) – On Tuesday, October 27, Portlanders struggling from health or financial impacts of COVID-19 will have the opportunity to apply for \$500 in household assistance through a new City of Portland program to help with costs such as food, dependent care, medicine, rent and utilities, and transportation.

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette has partnered with the City to distribute 2,800 prepaid debit cards through two open application windows. The cards will be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. The application window for the first 1,400 cards opens on October 27 beginning at 9am and the remaining 1,400 will be distributed on October 30 beginning at 1pm. All applications must be submitted online at www.pdxassist.com.

To be eligible, applicants must be at least 18 years old and living in the City of Portland; have experienced a loss of income or elevated health risk related to COVID-19; and have a household income at or below 80% of Area Median Income (*see income eligibility chart*).

“The City of Portland’s emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis prioritizes housing stability, food security and support for the most vulnerable in our community,” Mayor Ted Wheeler said. “This household assistance program will help ease the daily struggle of those who are most deeply impacted by the pandemic’s severe economic impact.”

The \$15 million Household Assistance Program was rolled out by the Portland Housing Bureau earlier this month. To ensure assistance would reach Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) communities, and those facing barriers to accessing a public application, the majority of the funds are being distributed in collaboration with approximately 35 culturally specific community-based organizations—most of which represent new partnerships for the City, in an effort to create new opportunities with City resources and better serve BIPOC communities.

“We know that it is Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color who are most deeply impacted by economic crises and most often left behind by economic recovery,” said Portland Housing Bureau Director Shannon Callahan. “In a time of such great need, having these broad community-based partnerships is critical to getting this assistance to those in need who are too often left out and left behind.”

Through a partnership with the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS), prepaid cards will also be provided to families and individuals experiencing homelessness and living in shelters and on the streets. Those cards will be made available through sheltering organizations and outreach teams that contract with the Joint Office.

“The pandemic has only deepened the crisis for people experiencing homelessness in our community. Especially as we head into winter, these household assistance funds will be a lifeline for people who are struggling to face COVID-19 without even the basic protections a home,” said Marc Jolin, Director of the Joint Office of Homeless Services.

In total, the Household Assistance Program is expected to assist 27,000 Portland households between now and December 30.

The program is part of a \$36 million investment in housing relief measures by the City of Portland and the Portland Housing Bureau in response to COVID-19, including \$19.5 million in City funds for rent assistance and \$1.6 million in housing stabilization support for low-income BIPOC homeowners. Members of the public seeking rent assistance should call 211.

For more information on how to apply for the Household Assistance Program, go to www.pdxassist.com or email United Way of the Columbia-Willamette at info@pdxassist.com

Income Eligibility			
Family Size	Max. Annual Income	Family Size	Max. Annual Income
1	\$51,600	5	\$79,600
2	\$58,960	6	\$85,520
3	\$66,320	7	\$91,440
4	\$73,680	8	\$97,280

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