

IHDA CARES

Assisting Households Impacted by COVID-19



Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program

Program Assistance and Frequently Asked Questions

Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program

IHDA developed the Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (EMA) to support Illinois homeowners unable to pay their mortgages due to a COVID-19 related loss of income. If approved, homeowners will receive a grant for up to \$15,000 to cover missed mortgage payments beginning as early as March 2020 and prepay mortgage payments through December 2020, or until the \$15,000 is exhausted. Not all households will receive \$15,000 and an application alone is not a guarantee of assistance. Assistance will be paid directly to the mortgage servicer on the homeowner's behalf. The EMA program will only pay full mortgage payments; no partial payments will be made.

Application Period

Applications for EMA will be accepted **August 24th through September 4th**. Due to anticipated high volume, the application window may close early. IHDA will use a third-party entity to select a pool of applications to be reviewed for eligibility. Approximately 10,000 homeowners are expected to receive funding.

Help Applying

If you need help applying for this program, IHDA has partnered with 62 Community and Outreach Assistance organizations who can assist you at no cost. You can find a directory via the Resource button on ema.ihda.org. Services are available in English, Spanish, Polish, Italian, French, Romanian, Albanian, Serbian, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, Cantonese, Tagalog, Mandarin, and ASL. For additional assistance you may also call IHDA's call center at (312) 883-2720, or toll-free at (888) 252-1119. For those who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired, please contact Navicore Solutions for free assistance at (877) 274-4309 (TTY).

Legal Assistance

If you are at imminent risk of foreclosure and need legal assistance, a legal aid clinic may be able to assist you. All services are free. You can find a list of legal assistance clinics via the Resource button on ema.ihda.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (EMA) for Illinois homeowners?
 - EMA was designed to assist homeowners who have a COVID-19-related loss of income and are struggling with mortgage payments. If you are approved for EMA, you will receive a grant of up to \$15,000 that will be sent to your mortgage servicer to be applied against your mortgage payments. Not all households will receive \$15,000 and an application alone is not a guarantee of assistance.

- Assistance will cover your past due or forbearance balance and your regular mortgage payments through December 30, 2020, or until your grant is exhausted, whichever comes first. Payments may include all escrowed first mortgage expenses including property taxes, insurance and certain fees. Assistance will not pay for homeowners' association or special assessment fees. The Program will only pay full mortgage payments; no partial payments will be made.
2. What are the eligibility requirements?
 - Your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) from your 2019 Tax Return must be less than the maximum allowed for your area;
 - You, or an adult member of your household, has had a loss of income due to COVID-19 on or after March 1, 2020;
 - Your mortgage was current as of February 29, 2020;
 - You have a past due balance or a forbearance balance that began sometime on or after March 1, 2020;
 - Your mortgage balance is \$425,000 or less;
 - Your mortgage is in 1st lien/mortgage position;
 - The property is your primary residence;
 - The property is 1 or 2 units;
 - Your lender must be willing to accept payments; AND
 - Loan cannot be a reverse mortgage.
 3. How do I know if my income qualifies?
 - To qualify, your adjusted gross income (AGI) from your 2019 Tax Return had to be at or below 120 percent of the Area Median Income. If the applicant and co-applicant file separately, the total combined household AGI is used to calculate income. Please input your income and zip code on ema.ihda.org to see if you are eligible:
 - i. Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties: \$109,200
 - ii. Grundy County: \$106,680
 - iii. Kendall County: \$128,760
 - iv. McLean County: \$114,360
 - v. All Other Counties: \$100,920
 4. Who should be included in the application?
 - All borrowers who appear on the mortgage statement should be included in the application.
 5. What if my household income was over 120% AMI?
 - Unfortunately, you are ineligible for this assistance if your household income exceeds the maximum threshold. Please reach out to one of our housing partners via the Resource button on ema.ihda.org.
 6. What is required for proof of a COVID-19-related loss of income after March 1, 2020?
 - The application requires a self-certification of income loss due to COVID-19. You must certify under penalty of perjury that all the information in your application is true and accurate.
 7. Must I have lost my job to qualify for the program?
 - No. A reduction in hours or pay due to COVID-19 is also acceptable.
 8. If I have received other, COVID-19-related mortgage assistance, may I still apply?
 - Unfortunately, you are ineligible for this assistance if you have received additional COVID-19-related mortgage assistance from another organization. Forbearance from your servicer does not disqualify you from applying.
 9. Am I eligible to apply if I put my mortgage in forbearance?
 - Yes, if your mortgage is currently in forbearance, you are still eligible and encouraged to apply. Assistance will cover the past due or forbearance balance, and your regular mortgage payments through December 30, 2020, or until your grant is exhausted. Payments may include all escrowed first mortgage expenses including property taxes, insurance and certain fees.
 10. Am I eligible to apply if I previously received mortgage payment assistance from the Illinois Hardest Hit Fund?

- Yes, you may be eligible. The Illinois Hardest Hit Fund was not a COVID-19-related mortgage assistance program, and you may still apply for this program.
11. If I own a two-unit building, could I apply for EMA and a tenant in another unit apply for ERA?
- Yes, both you as the homeowner may apply for EMA and your tenant as a renter may apply for ERA so long as you're both eligible under the requirements. However, you must apply the ERA payment to your mortgage before the EMA payment.
12. Can I apply if I have a Reverse Mortgage?
- Unfortunately, Reverse Mortgages are not eligible for assistance.
13. What documents will I be asked to upload?
- 2019 Tax Return(s) for all borrowers on the mortgage;
 - Driver's License or other Photo ID for all applicants; and
 - Mortgage Statement.
14. What is the timeline for applications?
- Applications will be accepted during the application period. Your mortgage servicer must agree to accept payments on your behalf. We will reach out to your servicer directly to obtain approval. The response times from the servicer will impact how fast assistance is processed.
15. Once I apply, am I guaranteed to receive the grant?
- No. An application alone is not a guarantee of assistance.
16. When will I know if my application has been approved?
- You will receive an email notifying you of approval.
17. If I am approved, when and how can I expect to receive assistance?
- Funds will be sent in two payments to your mortgage servicer. You will receive an email prior to your first payment and the second payment will occur up to one month after the first payment.
18. How will you determine how much EMA I will receive?
- Based on information received from your mortgage servicer, the EMA program will pay your balance due in full if it does not exceed \$15,000.
19. Do I have to pay the funding back to IHDA?
- No, this assistance is a grant and repayment is not required.
20. Will I be taxed on the grant amount?
- No. The assistance is due to an emergency. It is structured as a grant and is not taxable.
21. Is there a way that I can check on my application status?
- Unfortunately, we cannot provide you with an application status. We understand that waiting can be difficult, and we are deploying all resources to process applications as quickly as possible. We appreciate your patience.
22. I have a foreclosure pending, can this program assist me?
- Yes, so long as you maintain ownership of your home, please apply for assistance. However, your mortgage must have been current as of February 29, 2020. Also, inform your mortgage servicer, legal representation and the county judge (if applicable) that you have applied for the program. Please reach out to one of the legal aid organizations via the resource button on ema.ihda.org if you need legal assistance.
23. I do not have a computer or email. How can I apply for assistance?
- Applications must be submitted using the online application portal. Please contact a trusted friend or family member for assistance.
 - You can also contact one of the 62 Community and Outreach Assistance organizations who will assist you in preparing and submitting your application at no cost. You can find a list of available agencies via the Resource button on ema.ihda.org or by contacting IHDA's call center at (312) 883-2720, or toll-free at (888) 252-1119.

For those who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired, please contact Navicore Solutions for free assistance at (877) 274-4309 (TTY).

24. How is this program funded?

- The U.S. Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136) which allocated \$3.5 billion in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) to the State of Illinois to cover certain expenses.

The Illinois General Assembly then allocated \$396 million in CRF dollars to IHDA in the FY2021 Budget (P.A. 101-0637). This money must be used to fund affordable housing grants, for the benefit of persons impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency, for emergency rental assistance, emergency mortgage assistance and subordinate financing.