



# Rental Assistance Guide for Landlords

## Asheville & Buncombe County

Landlords and property managers play a vital role in reducing housing instability and promoting recovery after a disaster. One resource that benefits landlords **and** tenants is rental assistance. One-time or ongoing payments of rent ensures that tenants stay in their homes and landlords receive the money for their unit(s). Often households and individuals seeking rental assistance are seeking stabilization in the safe and secure housing they are currently residing within. There are several advantages to accepting rental assistance.



**Guaranteed rent payments:** Rental assistance programs are specifically designed to make sure that landlords get paid and keep tenants housed.



**Security deposits, arrears, utility payments and more:** Rental assistance can be more than just a regular monthly payment, many tenants are eligible for security deposits, arrears, utility assistance, and even support to cover accidental damages.



**Less vacancy time:** When tenants move out, it takes time to find someone new and empty rentals do not generate rental income. By accepting rental assistance from an existing tenant, landlords continue to receive payment and reduce the time and headache of changing occupants.



**More potential renters:** Accepting more forms of rent gives you access to a bigger pool of potential ready-to-rent tenants.



**Additional support:** Many rental assistance programs work with households to provide additional support like case management, transportation, meals, medical care, and other resources necessary to maintain a safe, healthy, and sustainable home.



**Satisfaction from helping others:** Everybody needs a little help sometimes. By accepting rental assistance, landlords become an important partner in the community safety net that allows neighbors to maintain a place to call home.

## Best Practices

- Reach out to your tenant(s).
- Honor the lease and be flexible when possible.
- Include flexibility with existing tenants to arrange for late payments through assistance providers.
- Seek help to find solutions.



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### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

#### **Who pays the rent?**

Typically, rental assistance programs pay landlords directly each month assistance is needed. This ensures the landlord receives the funds.

#### **Where could I refer my tenant for assistance?**

Many charitable organizations provide rental assistance to households in need and have varied requirements. Some organizations serve specific tenants (low-income households, families with children, or seniors). For a list of rental assistance providers, visit [buncombeready.org](http://buncombeready.org) or call the One Buncombe Call Center at 828-250-6100.

#### **How much rental assistance is available?**

Rental assistance providers may have varying assistance thresholds based on program guidelines. These thresholds could be a monetary cap, a time limit, or may be limited based on Federal standards for Fair Market Rent. To best understand what assistance may be available to a household, contact each provider to learn more about their program.

#### **What is Fair Market Rent?**

Each year the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calculates the average rents in the region and sets the maximum amount that federally funded programs can pay. Non-federal programs and non-profits often use the same standard. To view Fair Market Rent amounts, visit <https://bit.ly/ashevillefmr>.

#### **How do tenants qualify for rental assistance?**

Qualifications will vary between each organization. Tenants may need to demonstrate the need for assistance and be income eligible in accordance with Area Median Income (AMI) levels. Area Median Income levels are determined by the number of people in the household and are published by HUD annually, to view these income levels visit <https://bit.ly/ashevilleami>.

#### **What documentation do landlords need to provide?**

Documentation that may need to be provided by a landlord will vary. Generally, landlords provide a copy of the lease agreement (if not provided by the tenant), a W9, and contact information for the landlord. In some cases, a signed attestation to accepting the assistance will be required.

#### **How can I trust the payment will be valid?**

Providers of rental assistance are typically certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations with proper funding and a mission directly connected to the assistance they provide to the community. These organizations have a variety of grant funding with third parties like government agencies or foundations that often hold them accountable to ensure funds are expended properly and not misused.

#### **Can landlords apply for rental assistance on behalf their tenants?**

Landlords cannot apply directly for rental assistance on behalf of their tenants. Program eligibility requirements are based on the needs of the tenants. However, landlords can encourage tenants to apply for such assistance to receive payment from a provider on behalf of their tenant.