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Gov. Beshear Launches $264 Million Healthy at Home Eviction Relief Fund

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FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 11, 2021) – In partnership with the Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC), Gov. Andy Beshear relaunched the *Healthy at Home* Eviction Relief Fund today with an additional $264 million to keep Kentuckians safe and housed throughout the pandemic.

“The *Healthy at Home* Eviction Relief Fund follows earlier, similar efforts to help our people stay in their homes, while also providing relief to landlords and utility companies,” said Gov. Beshear. “This is so important. With more Kentuckians rolling up their sleeves and receiving these safe and effective vaccines, we see the light at the end of the tunnel growing brighter by the day. But it will take months before everyone can receive their shot of hope, and until then, we need to ensure our people can stay healthy at home as much as possible.”

Starting Feb. 15, tenants who qualify can apply for rent and utility assistance to cover their past-due and future bills. If approved, lump sum, direct payments will be made to landlords and utility providers.

“Nearly a year into the pandemic, Kentuckians are still grappling with the economic effects of COVID-19,” said Winston Miller, KHC executive director. “This assistance will help keep renters housed, allow landlords to get substantial payments for back rent and reduce the number of evictions in Kentucky courts.”

The U.S. Treasury Department recently allocated $297 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Funds to the state of Kentucky, Lexington-Fayette County Urban County Government and Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government to help renters impacted economically by COVID-19. The money will be distributed as three separate programs:

- For 118 counties other than Fayette and Jefferson: teamkyhherf.ky.gov (http://www.teamkyhherf.ky.gov)
- To apply in Fayette County: covid19renterhelp.org (http://www.covid19renterhelp.org)
- To apply in Jefferson County: stopmyeviction.org (https://www.stopmyeviction.org/)

The Team Kentucky *Healthy at Home* Eviction Relief Fund (representing 118 counties) will receive $264 million of the $297 million allocated for the state.

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All of the funds will offer the same benefits to approved applicants – 100% of past-due rent, dating back to April 2020 – and up to three months of future payments.

Those applying through the Team Kentucky portal also can receive help with past-due and future utility bills.

“Throughout the pandemic, many households have struggled with expenses,” said Wendy Smith, KHC’s deputy director of housing programs. “This essential eviction relief can help renters get caught up on rent and utilities.”

The Beshear administration offered a similar plan last year – from September to December, the state helped 4,135 households avoid eviction with nearly $15 million in assistance. The new fund’s structure and requirements are similar to those of the original *Healthy at Home* Eviction Relief Fund:

- Renters in the 118 counties covered by the state program must have at least one household member who experienced one of the following during the pandemic: qualified for unemployment benefits; experienced a reduction in income; or experienced other financial hardship.
- Renters must be at risk of eviction as evidenced by a pending court eviction, or a past-due notice.
- Tenants must meet certain income guidelines. An income calculator is available at teamkyhherf.ky.gov (http://www.teamkyhherf.ky.gov).
    - Household income must not exceed 80% of Area Median Income, adjusted by county and for household size.
    - Income determination will be based on the documents the tenant submits with their application.
    - Tenants can submit either their 2020 IRS tax return or documentation of income for the past 60 days (paystubs/unemployment insurance statements, etc.). They should submit whichever demonstrates that they fall under the program income limits.
- To qualify, both the landlord and tenant should apply at teamkyhherf.ky.gov (http://www.teamkyhherf.ky.gov). Applications are processed more quickly when both the landlord and the tenant apply online.
- Maximum rent relief: 100% of past-due rent since April 1, 2020, and three months future rent.
- Maximum utility relief: 100% of past-due utilities since April 1, 2020, and three months of future utilities. Assistance can cover gas, electric, water, sewer and/or wastewater bills.
- If approved, lump sum, direct payments will be made to landlords and utility providers.
- Landlords must forgive any late fees, penalties and interest related to non-payment of rent.
- Landlords must also agree to not begin eviction proceedings until at least 45 days after the period covered by assistance.
- Tenants/landlords may reapply subject to funding availability.

The Governor asked landlords and utility companies to please exercise patience with low-income tenants who are behind on payments.

“If a tenant is evicted, this fund cannot cover past-due bills. If the utility gets shut off, we won’t be able to get a prompt direct payment to the utility,” said Gov. Beshear.

Finally, he announced that a third party can help tenants apply if a tenant does not have access to a smart phone or computer, or if they are elderly or disabled. This could be family, a friend, fellow church member, caseworker, community organization staff member and so on. The helper will be able identify themselves as someone helping the applicant and can provide contact information in case we need to gather more information.

A detailed description of the program can be found at teamkyhherf.ky.gov (http://www.teamkyhherf.ky.gov).

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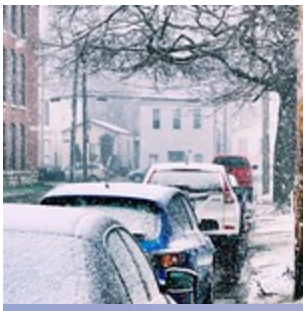
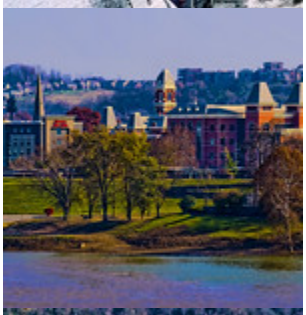
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/7372926@N06/47218320672/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184596121/in/pool-773339@N20)
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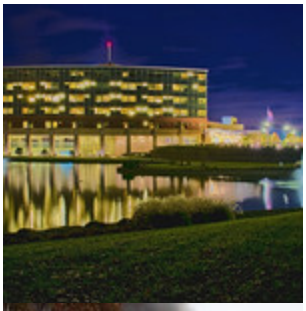
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/32275086277/in/pool-773339@N20)
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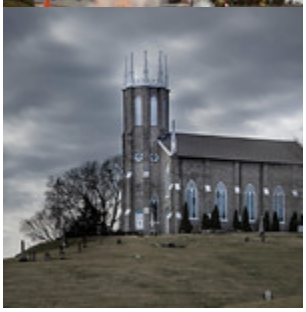
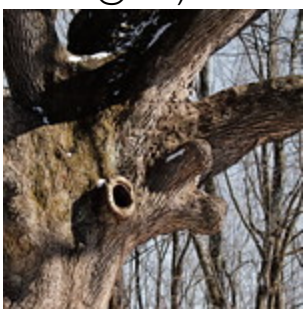
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/127721144@N05/46918072332/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcconnell_springs_photo_journal/46864760851/in/pool-773339@N20)
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