

## **Kansas Legal Services**

A non-profit law firm and community education organization helping low and moderate income people in Kansas



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## **Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance program awards nearly \$52 million to protect tenants at risk of eviction**

### ***Pandemic relief measure provides rental, utility, and internet assistance to more than 9,000 Kansas families***

TOPEKA, Kan.— The **Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance (KERA) program** has provided more than \$51.9 million in relief funding to communities across the state. To date, KERA funds have supported 23,834 residents of 9,220 tenant households and 3,786 landlords facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID pandemic.

When Nick Baumgartner’s small business began to flounder in 2020, he could not afford to pay his rent and was barely keeping up with utility bills. “I never had to ask for any kind of financial assistance before,” said Baumgartner, whose Topeka business served local restaurants. “But because restaurants were so negatively impacted by the pandemic, my profits suffered too.”

That’s when Baumgartner’s landlord suggested they jointly apply for Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance (KERA). After receiving rental assistance, his landlord was made whole, and Baumgartner was able to keep his own business running, helping local restaurants bounce back financially. He has since reapplied for three prospective months of rental assistance.

KERA provides rent, utility, and internet assistance to households financially impacted by the COVID pandemic. Landlords and tenants apply via a joint application process, and payments are made directly to housing and service providers. Once eligible KERA applicants receive assistance for any past-due amounts, they are eligible to recertify for three prospective months of rental assistance at a time, for a total of up to 15 months of support.

***Thanks to recent changes in Treasury rules, KERA applicants can now self-attest to eligibility guidelines including household income, COVID hardship, and housing instability, easing the documentation***

## ***burden and shortening processing time.***

Recent program updates have streamlined application processing and provided additional resources to Kansans at risk of eviction:

- Thanks to recent changes in Treasury rules, KERA applicants can now self-attest to eligibility guidelines including household income, COVID hardship, and housing instability, easing the documentation burden and shortening processing time.
- The program's new Bridge to Housing Stability initiative has partnered with community organizations across the state, providing more than \$7.3 million to support Kansans experiencing homelessness. Bridge partners use KERA funds to provide hotel vouchers, housing counseling, and rapid rehousing solutions, helping tenants enter into new leases with KERA funding.
- KERA has prioritized applicants at imminent risk of eviction and utility shutoff, halting 349 active evictions, preventing utility shutoffs for more than 1,900 households, and restoring utility services to more than 100 homes.
- Through partnerships with the legal community, KERA has provided free representation to applicants engaged in eviction proceedings, as well as program resources and training to attorneys and judges. These efforts have helped tenants avoid eviction and helped landlords avoid legal action.

Funded by the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations act of 2021, the KERA program is administered by Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC).

**To learn more and apply, please visit: [kshousingcorp.org/emergency-rental-assistance](https://kshousingcorp.org/emergency-rental-assistance).**

**Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC)** is a self-supporting, nonprofit, public corporation committed to helping Kansans access the safe, affordable housing they need and the dignity they deserve. KHRC serves as the state's housing finance agency (HFA), administering essential housing and community programs to serve Kansans.

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Printed: January 27, 2022

<http://www.kansaslegalservices.org/node/2486/kansas-emergency-rental-assistance-program-awards-nearly-52-million-protect-tenants-risk>

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