

## **National Fuel Customers are eligible for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program to Help Pay Past Due Utility Bills**

New York state is now accepting applications for \$2.7 billion in funding for income-eligible renters who fell behind on rent or utility payments during the COVID-19 pandemic. National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation (National Fuel) is encouraging all eligible customers to apply for up to 12 months in back rent and up to three months of future rent payments, **as well as up to 12 months of overdue gas bill payments.**

The [Emergency Rental Assistance Program or ERAP](#) is funded largely by the most recent federal stimulus package and provides the money directly to landlords and utility companies on the renter's behalf.

To be eligible for the utility or rent assistance under the state's program, customers must meet three criteria:

1. Household gross income has to be at or below 80% of the area median income, which varies by county and household size. You can use either your current monthly income or your 2020 annual income to apply.
2. Someone in the household must have received unemployment benefits or experienced some sort of reduction in income or another financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic on or after March 13, 2020.
3. A renter has an overdue rent balance at their residence for payments that were owed on or after March 13, 2020.

For those who need help determining area median income, the state Office of Temporary Disability Assistance has more information on the rental program's website – [nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov](https://nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov) – including an [income eligibility chart](#).

Renters and landlords can apply online at [nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov](https://nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov) or by calling 1-844-NY1-RENT (1-844-691-7368) from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Seven local governments in New York [opted to administer the rental-assistance program on their own](#) rather than go through the state, including [Monroe County and the City of Rochester](#).

For Monroe County residents (including the City of Rochester), you can apply for assistance by dialing 211 or 1-877-356-921. Landlords who are applying on their tenants' behalf should visit [www.providencehousing.org](http://www.providencehousing.org) or email [epi.app@dor.org](mailto:epi.app@dor.org).

New York will prioritize certain applicants to ensure they get assistance throughout the month of June:

- Households with income that's at or below 50% of the area median income and a household member who has been unemployed for the last 90 days; is a veteran; is experiencing domestic violence or has survived human trafficking; has an eviction case pending; resides in a mobile home; lives in a ZIP code that was hit disproportionately hard by COVID-19; or lives in a building with 20 or fewer units.
- Households with income at or below 50% of the area median income.
- Households with income at or below 80% of the area median income and a household member who meets one of the criteria listed earlier.
- Households with income at or below 80% of the area median income.

After the first 30 days, applications will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, please visit [nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov](https://nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov).

Numerous other payment assistance programs are available. National Fuel encourages its customers to contact a customer assistance representative to discuss their situations. A quick call can provide information on the following programs: **Neighbor For Neighbor Heat Fund** - open year-round and helps qualified customers, aged 55 years or older, or have a certified medical condition, or are disabled, or are currently receiving unemployment benefits or are a veteran, to prevent an energy emergency; a **Deferred Payment Agreement** allows the potential to negotiate a repayment plan in the event of a problem or special circumstance; **Special Protections** are available for households where all residents are aged 62 years or older, 18 years or younger, blind or disabled. Customer assistance is available each weekday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. by contacting 1-800-365-3234. For customers who want to have level, predictable monthly gas payments this winter, National Fuel suggests **budget plan** billing as a way to stabilize monthly heating bills. For more information, please visit [www.nationalfuel.com/utility/payment-assistance-programs](http://www.nationalfuel.com/utility/payment-assistance-programs).

National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation is the Utility segment of National Fuel Gas Company, a diversified energy company that is engaged in a number of natural gas-related activities. The Utility provides natural gas service to more than 740,000 customers in Western New York and northwestern Pennsylvania. For more information, visit [www.nationalfuel.com](http://www.nationalfuel.com).

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