



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 5, 2020

Media Contact: Anne Deacon, Human Services Manager
Phone: (360) 778-6054
E-mail address: adeacon@co.whatcom.wa.us

New Funding to Support Rent and Mortgage Payments Now Available in Whatcom County

BELLINGHAM, WA – The Whatcom County Health Department is working with local partners to implement two new housing assistance programs funded by the CARES Act that will provide over \$3,300,000 for Whatcom County households that have been financially impacted by COVID-19. The health department expects that approximately 200 households earning between 50% and 80% of the area median income will be served with the CARES Housing Assistance funding, which will be available until the end of the year, or until funds are exhausted, and significantly more households will benefit from the CARES Eviction Rent Assistance Program (ERAP), which will also be available until the end of the year, or until funds are exhausted.

The first program, CARES Housing Assistance, will spend approximately \$700,000 of federal CARES funding to support local households that lost income due to COVID-19 and are behind on housing payments or lack the resources to pay current rent or mortgage payments. Whatcom County residents earning 50-80% of the area median income are encouraged to apply. In addition to meeting the income requirements, eligible households must have experienced income loss due to COVID-19, lack resources to pay their rent or mortgage, hold the lease or mortgage contract for their home, and not be receiving other funding intended for the same purpose.

Household Size	1 Person	2 People	3 People	4 People	5 People	6 People	7 People	8 People
Area Median Income of 50% (monthly)	\$2,491	\$2,845	\$3,200	\$3,554	\$3,841	\$4,125	\$4,408	\$4,691
Area Median Income of 80% (monthly)	\$3,983	\$4,550	\$5,121	\$5,688	\$6,146	\$6,600	\$7,054	\$7,508

Households earning 80% of the Area Median Income or less are eligible for assistance through the CARES Housing Assistance program. Household earning 50% of the Area Median Income or less are eligible for the Eviction Rent Assistance Program. This table shows the monthly maximum income for the two programs.

Households in the 50-80% AMI range who are seeking assistance through the CARES Housing Assistance program are encouraged to contact the Opportunity Council at 360-734-5121 x316, LAW Advocates at 360-671-6079 x15, or the Salvation Army at 360-733-1410 to make an appointment to verify eligibility and complete an application.

A second, larger pool of funding will also be made available to Whatcom households earning less than 50% of the area median household (\$2,492/month for one person or \$3,554 for a family of four). This funding is provided by the Washington State Department of Commerce and is called the Eviction Rent Assistance Program (ERAP). The ERAP program will distribute approximately \$2,689,000 and will be available until the end of the year or until funds are exhausted.

Both programs will issue checks directly to landlords or mortgage lenders on behalf of residents after collecting the necessary documents that verify eligibility. Households eligible for ERAP funding will have earned 50% AMI or less over the previous two months and should contact the Opportunity Council at 360-734-5121 x316 to schedule an appointment to verify eligibility and complete an application.

###

