



Sept. 29, 2020

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County Council allocates an additional \$5 million for COVID-19 rent and mortgage assistance

With the pandemic still taking a financial toll, the Volusia County Council allocated another \$5 million on Tuesday to help local residents struggling to make their housing payments.

The council pumped the additional funds into the county’s COVID-19 emergency rent and assistance program on Tuesday, bringing the total amount of money that Volusia County has earmarked for the program to \$22.5 million. The council launched the grant program in May, staking it with an initial \$5 million before adding \$5 million more in July and another \$7.5 million in August. That’s in addition to the millions of dollars in COVID-19 relief funds that the county has channeled into grant programs for small businesses, home-based businesses and non-profit agencies as well as food aid, aid to cities and the purchase of personal protective equipment to help the community recover from the pandemic. The money for the programs is coming from coronavirus relief funds distributed to the county as part of the federal CARES Act.

The county’s COVID-19 rent and mortgage assistance program provides a maximum of \$1,500 for up to three months, with the money paid directly to the landlord or mortgage holder.

“That three months worth of assistance is so impactful for these families,” said Councilwoman Heather Post.

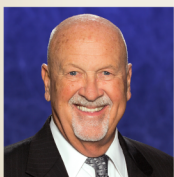
Thus far, the county has awarded approximately \$11 million in rent and mortgage assistance. But another 1,271 applications are under review for funding and the county continues to receive more than 60 new applications a day.

“This is a really big deal,” Councilwoman Deb Denys said about the housing assistance that the county has been able to provide. “There’s still a great demand and need for it.”

The rest of the council agreed, voting unanimously on Tuesday to allocate the additional \$5 million. The program’s aim is to help residents who’ve either suffered a job loss or a reduction in pay or work hours due to COVID-19. To qualify, the rent or mortgage must have been current as of March 13, 2020. Also, the dwelling unit must be located in Volusia County and be the applicant’s primary residence. Applicants must meet income eligibility criteria to qualify and certify that they’ve suffered a loss or reduction in income due to the pandemic.

Applications are being processed on a first-come, first-served basis and can be obtained and submitted online by clicking on www.volusia.org/services/community-services/community-assistance/. Paper applications can be obtained by calling Volusia County Community Assistance at 386-736-5955.

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