



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### BOARD IMPLEMENTS \$16 MILLION FOR LOCAL RENT RELIEF

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday voted unanimously to join a State rent relief program that makes more than \$16 million in federal funds available to local renters unable to pay their rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, \$25 billion is available nationwide for emergency rent support. Under that program, approximately \$16.8 million in funding will be available to low-income renters within Santa Cruz county to pay for rent, utilities and home energy costs, rent and utilities arrears, and related housing costs of the eligible tenant.

Renters in all cities and unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County are eligible for the program, which is expected to launch next month. An application portal will be available through the State's [HousingKey.com](https://www.housingkey.com) website. Eligible applicants are renters with household income at or below 80 percent of area median income, with preference for households at or below 50 percent of area median income.

Renter households must also include at least one individual who qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19, or demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Rental assistance may not be duplicative of any other rental assistance programs.

Landlords agreeing to participate may receive payment of 80 percent of rental arrears incurred by their program-eligible tenants during the period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021, and must accept the amount as payment in full. Tenants with landlords declining to participate are still eligible to receive up to 25 percent of back rent owed.

The County previously allocated \$1.1 million of its federal CARES Act funds for a similar rental program for residents impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.