

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## Q: How do I apply for the Alachua County CARES Act Individual Assistance Program?

A: Alachua County residents can apply by completing an online application. If you are unable to access the Internet, please call Community Support Services at 352-264-6700 as they will have computers available for applications.

## Q: Who is eligible to receive financial assistance from the Alachua County CARES Act Individual Assistance Program?

A: Individuals are eligible if they meet all of the following:

- They are an Alachua County, Florida permanent resident,
- They are a US citizen or legal US resident
- Their current annual household income is less than 120% of the median income in Alachua County,
- They have suffered an economic loss due to the pandemic (either reduction in income or increase in expenses),
- They are experiencing difficulty paying bills and/or living expenses, and
- They are in compliance with Alachua County's Emergency Orders related to COVID-19

## Q: How is permanent residence defined?

A: Your permanent residence for this application is your primary residence for the entire period from May 1, 2020 to the date of application with the intent to make this address your permanent residence.

## Q: How much money will I receive?

A: You will be eligible to receive the lesser of: 1) \$2,500; 2) your total economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and 3) your financial difficulty due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Your economic impact of COVID-19 is the total of any lost income or increase in expenses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Your financial difficulty is the total amount of living expenses you are having difficulty paying due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The amount you will receive is subject to funding availability and approval.

## Q: When will I receive my money?

A: Applications are expected to take at least two weeks to process after the complete package with all necessary documentation is provided.

## Q: How will I receive the money?

A: Payments will be made via one of the following methods: Direct Bank (EFT/ACH); Mailed Check; or, Mailed Preloaded Debit Card. When completing the application, you will be given the opportunity to choose your payment method. Checks and prepaid debit cards will be mailed out to the address provided in the application and may take longer to process.

## Q: May multiple individuals in my household apply for assistance?

A: Only unrelated individuals living in the same address may submit individual applications. If the individuals within the address are legally related, then they can only submit one application. Examples of legally related individuals include: spouse, daughter, son, mother, father, parents, siblings, cousins, aunt, uncle, grandparents, etc.

## Q: What is the deadline for me to submit my application?

A: Applications will not be accepted after December 30, 2020, or when the funds are depleted, whichever comes first.

## Q: What documents do I need in order to apply?

A: The following documents will need to be attached to the application:

- A recent utility bill showing the name of the applicant and their address as proof of Alachua County Residency.
- Driver's license, State ID, passport, or immigration papers
- Proof of current annual household income (e.g., most recent pay stub, unemployment report)
- Proof of reduction in income, if applicable (e.g., letter from employer, pre and post-impact pay stubs, prior year's tax returns)
- Proof of increased expenses, if applicable (e.g., receipts, invoices, bills, cancelled checks, bank statements)
- Proof of late/delinquent bills, if applicable
- Social security numbers for all household members will be required to be submitted after approval of application but prior to payment of award.

## Q: Why do I need to provide my phone number and/or email address?

A: The review committee may need to contact you with questions regarding your application. Also, we need to be able to contact you regarding whether your application is approved or denied.

## Q: I currently rent an apartment and the utility bill is in my roommate's name. What do I attach for my documentation of residence?

A: You can attach a copy of your rental agreement, which will show your name and the address of the apartment.

## Q: Why do I have to provide a list of the unrelated individuals living with me?

A: This information will help the review committee to determine individuals at the same address who are eligible for separate awards. If this information is not provided, then applications with the same address may get denied even though the unrelated individual is eligible for a separate award.

## Q: What does "financial impact" mean?

A: This relates to the negative financial impact incurred by an applicant as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are two potential types of COVID-19 financial impacts: 1) a reduction in income, or 2) an increase in expenses. Examples of loss of income would include (other eligible scenarios may apply): reduced wages due to fewer hours worked, reduced income due to pay-cut, reduced income due to furlough, income stopped due to being laid-off, income stopped due to business temporary or permanent closure. Examples of increases in expenses would include (other eligible expenses may have been incurred): COVID-19 related medical expenses, childcare required due to school closures, purchases of additional personal protective equipment or face masks, purchase of additional cleaning supplies or sanitizer.

## Q: If I'm not delinquent on any of my bills, but am having difficulty making payments, do I still qualify?

A: Yes. You do not need to be delinquent on any bills to qualify for assistance.

## Q: Why do I have to split my bills between delinquent and difficult to pay if both are qualified expenses?

A: Delinquent bills will be given priority over difficult to pay bills on a weekly basis.

## Q: How is "difficulty making payments" defined?

A: Difficulty making payments is based on whether the applicants have sufficient funds available to maintain their normal standard of living. If an applicant is only able to pay for the basic essential services because they have cut out other normal living costs then they are having difficulty making payments.

## Q: What evidence do I need to provide to support the expenses that are not delinquent but I'm having difficulty paying?

A: To submit their application, applicants do not need to provide evidence to support the expenses that they are having difficulty paying; however, applicants must attest to the fact that the information included in the application is true and accurate and the county may request additional evidence after the application has been submitted when it is being reviewed.

## Q: Where can I get a copy of my paystubs?

A: Employees receive their paystubs through the mail or online during their typical pay period. Workers can also contact their employer directly for a copy of their paystubs.

## Q: Will certain residents be prioritized?

A: Funding will be provided to applicants on a first-come, first-served basis for eligible residents until the funds are depleted. Funding will be distributed weekly and priority will be given to delinquent payments within each weekly batch.

## Q: Am I able to save and come back to my application?

A: No. The website platform being used does not allow for saving or changing the application. Please have all information and documentation available before you start the application process.

**Q: May I edit my documents after I submit my application?**

A: No. Documents cannot be edited after the application has been submitted. If you need to make changes to your application after it has been submitted, please email the details, including documents, to CARESindividuals@alachuacounty.us

**Q: Do I have to repay the money to the County?**

A: Eligible residents do not have to pay back the money. However, if funding is provided to an individual who is later found to be ineligible (whether due to fraud or error) some/all of the funding may need to be repaid.

**Q: What is the approval process?**

A: A review committee will evaluate the application, including all attached documents, for eligibility to make sure they are complete and accurate. Applicants will be notified by email if their application has been approved or denied or if they are required to provide additional information.

**Q: Who can I contact if I have any questions?**

A: If you have questions that are not covered in these Frequently Asked Questions or the Applicant Instructions you can call 352-309-2505 or email CARESindividuals@alachuacounty.us.

**Q: How do you provide proof of reduction in hours if you are self-employed?**

A: Self-employed residents can provide their bank statements to prove their reduced income. Additionally, self-employed residents can show their documentation for their award of unemployment assistance. Also, your business may be eligible for the Alachua County CARES Act Business Relief Grants if you conduct business at a location other than the owner home. Please check out the eligibility criteria and FAQs at LINK.

**Q: My income comes from rental properties and my tenants have been unable to pay me. How do I show proof of reduction in income?**

A: Landlords can provide bank statements to prove their reduction in income.

**Q: If my application is approved or denied, will I get a notification?**

A: Yes, you will receive an email to notify you if your application has been approved or denied or if you are required to provide additional information.

**Q: What if I am exempt from public records?**

A: If you believe you are exempt from public records pursuant to Florida Statute 119.071, please contact 352-309-2505 or CARESindividuals@alachuacounty.us, only after you have successfully submitted your application and received your confirmation code. Program staff will mark your record exempt from public record requests.

**Q: Is there a way for me to track the status of the application?**

A: If you have inquiries about the status of your application please contact CARESindividuals@alachuacounty.us or 352-309-2505. Please note that applications are expected to take at least two weeks to process after the complete package with all necessary documentation is provided. You will receive an email to notify you if your application has been approved or denied or if you are required to provide additional information.

**Q: What are the income limits for this program?**

A: The maximum income limits for the entire household must be at or below 120% of the Alachua County Area Median Income. The income is based on estimated 2020 total household income, including COVID-19 health emergency impacts.

120% of the Alachua County Area Median Income is found in the following chart:

Household size	Income Limitation
1	\$58,680
2	\$67,080
3	\$75,480
4	\$83,760
5	\$90,480
6	\$97,200
7	\$103,920
8 or more	\$110,640

**Q: How do I calculate my 2020 total household income?**

A: First, you calculate each household members estimated 2020 income by multiplying the person's gross salary/wages from their most recent pay stub times how many times they get paid in a year. If you get paid every week, you would multiply your gross wages times 52. If you get paid every other week, you would multiply your gross wages times 26. If you get paid monthly, you would multiply your gross wages times 12. Next, you add each household members estimated 2020 gross income together to calculate the 2020 total household income.

**Q: I was laid off due to COVID-19 and am currently collecting unemployment. Do I include the unemployment payments in my 2020 household income?**

A: Yes, include any income received post-COVID-19, including unemployment payments, when estimating 2020 household income.

**Q: I was laid off and have applied for unemployment. However, I have not yet been approved but I think I will be. Do I include this unemployment income in my 2020 estimated household income?**

A: No, as you are not yet entitled to that income.

**Q: I was laid off and have applied for unemployment. I have been approved but have not received any payments yet. Do I include this unemployment income in my 2020 estimated household income?**

A: Yes, since this income has been approved.

**Q: How do I prove I lost my job or experienced a reduction in hours at work?**

A: Applicants must submit one form of documentation showing a loss of income (only one is required), such as:

Employer notice of reduced hours, furlough, or layoff

Two paystubs that show reduction in income, one (1) 2020 paystub to show your pay prior to impact, and one (1) paystub to show a reduction in pay

Unemployment letter showing award or other information related to COVID-19

Any other document that shows a reduction of income related to COVID-19

**Q: If I'm behind on multiple bills and having difficulty paying even more, do I need to include all of them if I'm well over the maximum grant amount?**

A: No, applicants are not required to provide all of the bills they are having difficulty paying if the total amount exceeds the maximum assistance amount; however it is encouraged to do so in the event some of the bills provided are deemed ineligible or if the funding maximum is increased at a later date.

**Q: Am I still eligible to receive assistance if I've received other pandemic-related funding?**

Yes, if you have received other pandemic-related funding you are still eligible to apply for assistance; however, you must disclose the other funding you have received and it may impact the amount of assistance you are eligible for. Please note that any CARES Act Economic Impact Payments received directly from the federal government will not impact the amount of assistance you are eligible for. Similarly, if you received the EBT debit card for Alachua County students, this will not impact the amount of assistance you are eligible for.

**Q: I received my prepaid debit card, but have questions about it. Who should I contact?**

A: The debit cards are provided through Bank of America and questions should be directed to them using the contact information on the back of the card.

**Q: Where do I find my bank routing number and account number?**

Each bank has a separate 9-digit routing number or ABA number. You can ask your bank for this number or it is the first number at the bottom of your checks. Your account number can be found on your statements, you can ask your bank, or it is the second set of numbers (after the routing number) on your checks. There are examples of check images on the web which show these numbers.