Detailed Guide to Applying for Alachua County ERAP Funding

From Alachua County's home page, click on the Emergency Rental Assistance Program link. That link will bring you to the Neighborly application portal.

To easily change languages, please click the circled box and it will allow you to choose between English, French, and Spanish.

If you have never used Neighborly for applications, please select "Register". Enter your email address in both boxes. Please use an email address that you check regularly, as most grant communication will come to that email address from Neighborly or from AlachuaERAPhelp@alachuacounty.us. Please create a password which must be at least eight characters and contain at least one letter and one special character. Click "Continue".

Neighborly will send you an email at the address you provided to verify your account. Please check your email and click on the link provided in it. Once your account is verified, you may sign into the Neighborly portal to begin your application. Don't forget to review the FAQ on the County's website for the program, many of your questions may already have been answered.

Your application may be saved at any time by selecting "Save" at the bottom of each page. You may track your progress by looking for green check marks next to each of the sections on the left side of the application page. When all boxes have a green check mark, your part of the application is complete.

- **Program Overview***

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Program Overview

The first page of the application contains important eligibility rules and contact information. Please take the time to review this page to make sure that your household is eligible and that you understand that the grant requires the County to process "high priority" applications (based on household income below 50% or current unemployment that has continued beyond 90 days) before processing other eligible applications.

After reviewing this page, please click on "Complete & Continue". This will generate a green check mark next to "Program Overview"

Save	Complete & Continue	↺ Reopen

If you need to reopen any page to change or add information before the final submit is complete, you may click on "Reopen".

Eligibility

This page has the four eligibility requirements for the program. If your household does not meet ALL four requirements, you will not be able to receive assistance from the grant. Please only apply if you believe your household meets all four requirements. If you are uncertain, you may call (M-F 9am to 5pm) or email the help desk at 352-704-0301 or AlachuaERAPhelp@alachuacounty.us.

A.1. Is your household income at or below the 80% area median income level?

○ Yes

○ No

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Income 80%	$39,100.00	$44,700.00	$50,300.00	$55,850.00	$60,350.00	$64,800.00	$69,300.00	$73,750.00

A.2. Are you currently late on your rent and/or utility payments or otherwise at risk for homelessness or housing instability (including living in unsafe or unhealthy living conditions)?

○ Yes

○ No

A.3. Are you currently responsible for paying rent in Alachua County as your primary residence?

○ Yes

○ No

A.4. Have you qualified for unemployment benefits on or after March 13, 2020 OR has your household experienced a reduction in household income on or after March 13, 2020 due to the coronavirus outbreak?

○ Yes

○ No

STOP IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. FOR REFERRAL TO OTHER PROGRAMS, PLEASE CALL 211.

Please answer all question. If you are able to answer "Yes" to all four, please then select "Complete & Continue". If you answer no to any of the basic eligibility questions and continue to submit an application, it will not be able to be approved.

Applicant Information

On the applicant information page, please enter your information as requested. A co-applicant is allowed but is not required. Please ensure that the applicant (and co-applicant if listed) is a household member residing at the rental unit and who is listed on the lease.

Please make sure to provide your apartment or unit number in "Address Line 2".

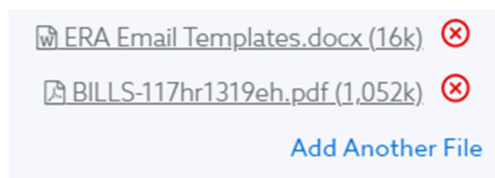For question B.9., please select yes and provide a description and any supporting documents available if you or another adult household member listed on the lease are currently unemployed and have been continuously unemployed for at least the last 90 days. If not, select No.

To upload a file, please click "Upload File" on the application page wherever documentation is requested/required.

Upload File

Once you have uploaded files, the option to "Add Another File" will appear. You may upload as many files as are necessary to provide supporting documentation. You may delete files uploaded in error by selecting the red circled "x" next to the uploaded file.
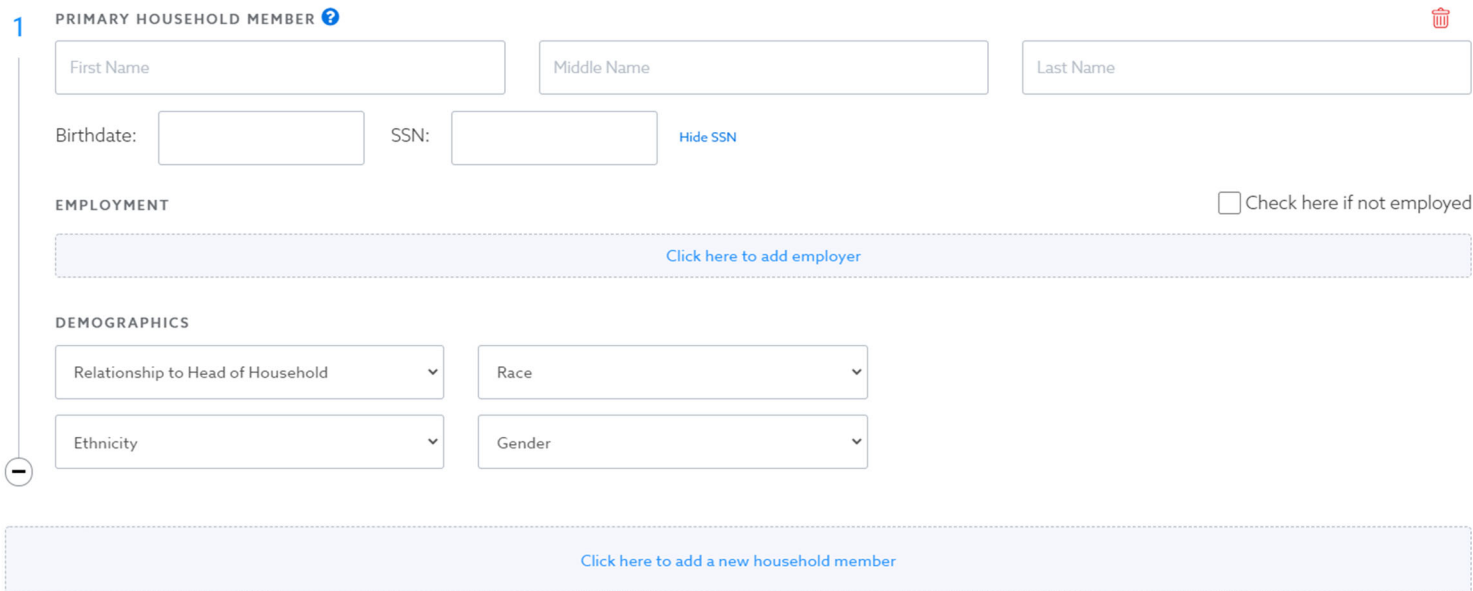

Please upload a Photo ID for the applicant (and co-applicant if listed). Only the applicant and co-applicant will be able discuss the application status with the help desk to prevent identity theft.

Please review the information you have entered and select "Complete & Continue".

Household Members

Please add information as requested for all members of the household. Please include children as well as this will determine your household size for income eligibility in the next section.

The APPLICANT should list themselves as the "Primary Household Member". Every application will require at least one primary household member. All information is required and your application will not be considered complete without the inclusion of all household members and their:

- o Name
- o Birthdate
- o Social Security Number
- o Race
- o Ethnicity
- o Gender
- o Employment Status

For each household member listed either click the box that says "Check here if not employed" or click the box that says "Click here to add employer".   For employed household members, please list the employer information as requested.

To add each new household member, please click the box that says "Click here to add a new household member" until all household members are listed. The household is all individuals living in the residential rental unit. If there are adults listed on the lease that are no longer residing at the unit, please do not list them here but you will need to describe that situation in section F. Rent Assistance Requested.

When all household members and their information is complete, please click "Complete & Continue". Remember that you can save your progress at any time by clicking "Save".

Income – Household Income Verification

The top of this page describes the two different options applicants may use to verify their household income. The preferred method is to provide copies of all household members' 2020 tax returns. With this option, if the household is eligible for future rent payments, you will not be required to provide additional income information to remain in the program.

For this option, select "I will certify all household annual income by using household members' 2020 Federal Income Tax Return(s) and enter the amount listed as "Adjusted Gross Income" on your tax return. If you filed a 1040 or 1040-SR return, this is line 11. Please add the amounts listed on line 11 from all tax returns filed by all members of the household for 2020 together and put the total in the box that says "Enter the Total Household Adjusted Gross Income from all household members 2020 Federal Income Tax Return(s)".

You will need to upload the 2020 tax returns filed by all members of the household.

The alternate method is to provide current income documentation for each income source for all adult household members. If this method is selected, you will be required to provide updated income information and documentation every three months to remain in the program. Document examples for this method include most recent pay stubs, bank statements, unemployment income statements, child support orders/statements, social security statements, W-2s for 2020, 1099s for 2020.

For each household member listed on the prior page, you must click "Add an Income Source" for each source of income for that individual. This includes wages, self-employment income, tips, alimony, child support, social security income, pension/retirement income, investment income, and unemployment income. You may exclude the direct stimulus payments received from the Treasury from this amount.

Select the source, include a description if it will be helpful to you or the reviewer and estimate the annual amount of income you receive from that source. For example, if you receive child support of $100 weekly, you would multiply that by the 52 weeks of the year for an annual income of $5,200. There is a calculator that assists if you only receive partial year income, or which can convert hourly and monthly income into annual income, embedded in the program right next to the annual income field. If a household member has no income, select "No income" as the income source.

You will need to upload documentation of the income as described above. If you are unable to obtain documentation or the household member has no income, please click the "Documentation Waiver Form" link on this page, complete the appropriate sections and upload that file in place of the documentation requested.   Select "Complete & Continue" when done.

COVID-19 Impact

Complete this section as directed on the page. At least one member of the household must be able to answer yes to either E.1. or E.2. for the household to be eligible for the program. To assist in reviewing the application, please provide a description of the situation in section E.5.

Supporting documentation is required for at least one of the conditions below:

- Unemployment eligibility
    - Notice from Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) of determination of eligibility for unemployment
    - Screenshots of DEO website showing household member's name and unemployment compensation eligibility determination and/or payments made on or after March 13, 2020
- Loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions
    - Signed letter on employer letterhead dated March 13, 2020 or later with notification or verification of lost hours, wages, or lost job.
    - Paystubs (or income reports from Uber/Instacart/Lyft etc) from before and after impact (reduction in hours or pay)
    - Tax returns from 2020 and 2019
    - Bank statements showing reduction in income (before and after impact)

If you are unable to obtain documentation, please complete the "Documentation Waiver Form" and upload that file in place of the documentation requested.

Select "Complete & Continue" when done.

Rent Assistance Requested

This section requests you to upload the eviction notice if you have received one.

You may request assistance with rent due (please EXCLUDE late fees and fines) beginning March 13, 2020 and for three months in advance (forward from the date of application). The amount included in each month's request should only be that amount of the rent that is due. If you have made a partial payment, please only list the remaining amount due for that month.

If you are not yet late on rent, you may request rent for future months if your household is otherwise eligible.

Please include the landlord or property manager's name and contact information. Payments will be made directly to the landlord or property manager. Please upload both your lease and your most recent rent statement showing amount due.

If you are unable to obtain documentation, please complete the "Documentation Waiver Form" and upload that file in place of the documentation requested.

Select "Complete & Continue" when done.

Utility Assistance Requested

Please select your utility company for the categories listed. If you have combined utilities (such as water/sewer, gas, and electricity) with one company, you may just enter the combined amount under one of the categories that is include. For example, if you have GRU for all utilities, leave the first two columns blank and just select GRU for the Electric Company Name and enter the full amounts for each month in that column only.

It is VERY IMPORTANT that you enter the utility account number correctly. Payments will be made directly to the utility company and if the account number is incorrect it will cause delays in the funds being applied to your balances due.

Please input the amounts due and UNPAID for each month in the appropriate boxes.

A utility statement showing the name of a member of the household as listed on the lease and the address of the property on the lease MUST be uploaded when requesting utility assistance. Please do not provide screenshots of balances. If you need a copy of your bill, please contact your utility company and they can provide it to you.

Remember you can save your application at any time. Select "Complete & Continue" when done.

Internet Assistance Requested

NOTE: Internet assistance is only awarded to those households qualifying as "High Priority" at this time. In addition, internet assistance is defined as a service delivered to a residence. Cell phone bills, hot spots, and wireless data plans are NOT allowed at this time by Federal Grant guidelines.

Please select your internet company. If it is not listed, select "Other" and enter the name in the field below. Please carefully input your account number.

Please input the amounts due and UNPAID FOR INTERNET ONLY for each month in the appropriate boxes. If you have a combined bill with multiple services, please include only the amount listed on the bill for internet. Phone, cable, and similar services are not allowed to be included by the Federal Guidelines for this grant.

A billing statement showing the name of a member of the household as listed on the lease and the address of the property on the lease MUST be uploaded when requesting internet assistance. Please do not provide screenshots of balances. If you need a copy of your bill, please contact your internet company and they can provide it to you.

Remember you can save your application at any time. Select "Complete & Continue" when done.

Prior Assistance Received

If you or anyone in your household has received assistance in paying for rent, utilities, or internet services for any month in which you are requesting assistance, please input it here with a brief description (Alachua CARES, GNVcares, Catholic Charities, UFcares, SFCcares, etc). The federal stimulus payments made directly to individuals is NOT included in this amount. Unemployment compensation, including the federal emergency unemployment compensation, is NOT included in this amount.

If you have notifications of the assistance, please upload, but this is not required.

Select "Complete & Continue" when done.

Submit

All boxes must be checked in this section. Many are attestations that are important for you to read and understand. Please read carefully and once you are able to check all of the boxes, please click "Click here to electronically sign". Type your name in the box that pops up and then click "Sign". This will generate an electronic signature.

If all of the sections have been completed and each sidebar section has a green checkmark, you may click "Complete & Submit". Please note that once you successfully submit at this page, you will no longer be able to edit your application or add/change documentation. Please do not submit this page until you are confident that your application is complete and correct.

If you do submit in error or later need your application reopened to add/change documentation or to edit any information submitted, please call 352-704-0301 or email AlachuaERAPhelp@alachuacounty.us.

Next Steps

When your application is complete, it will be reviewed by a team at the County and if determined to be preliminarily eligible, your landlord or property manager (if rent is being requested) will be notified to complete their required steps. We will work closely with both you and the landlord/property manager to review and process the application; however both the tenant and landlord/property manager must complete all required steps for award of grant funding.

When all required steps are completed and the application is deemed approved, both the tenant and the landlord will be notified via email (check your spam box regularly please) and payment will be made to the landlord/property manager and utilities/internet as applicable.

You may log into your application at any time to determine the status of the application. Your landlord/property manager will also be able to see the status, but not the details of your application. If we need more information we will email you and/or your landlord, so please monitor your email and check your spam box regularly.

We will also provide instructions on how to request future months' assistance after your application is approved and the first round of payments are made (if funding remains available).