



## COVID-19 Housing Recommendations

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Detroit People's Platform

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*Detroit is a 53% majority renter city. The city residents must be protected during the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, and the aftermath. Low and median income Detroit renters and homeowners have been working hard to avoid displacement for years. Citizens have been able to hold onto their rental properties and maintain their homes with hard work and dedication. Now, they face losing their homes despite all their efforts. The money provided in the CARES Act must be thoughtfully distributed to meet urgent needs such as protecting housing for Detroit's longtime residents who are likely to experience permanent displacement. Detroit People's Platform (DPP) is offering the following recommendations centered in racial and economic equity with the aim of contributing to the Detroit's future prosperity. We prioritize the importance of secure and quality housing for our low and median income families in achieving that goal.*

### HOUSING STABILITY

- **Rent Moratorium: Keep the majority of Detroit's residents housed and protect and preserve the city's affordable housing.**
  - Renters who are cost burdened and/or unemployed or under-employed are not required to pay rent until 90 days after the end of the Michigan State of Emergency Declaration associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Rent Payments will be issued directly to landlords by the city.
  - All tenant past due rent payments, penalties, and late fees for 2020 must be cancelled by the landlord in order to receive rental payments from the city.
- **Rent Payment Extension for 2020: Provide tenants time to recover financially to preserve their homes.**
  - Tenants will have 6 months after the expiration of the MI State of Emergency Declaration to pay any past due rent, fees, or tenant debt owed to landlords.
  - Landlords may issue a written "Notice of Overdue Rent" once rent becomes 30 days past due.
  - Tenants and landlords must create a payment plan to outline the amount of past due rent that tenants can realistically repay along with an agreed upon payment schedule.
  - If an eviction is initiated for a tenant that has signed a payment plan, the Tenant/Landlord Payment Plan signed by both parties must be reviewed prior to initiating eviction proceedings.
  - If a payment plan cannot be agreed upon, or the payment plan is not adhered to, tenants will retain the 6 month timeframe after the end of the Michigan State of Emergency Declaration to pay past due rents before landlords can begin the eviction process.

- **Housing Affordability: Property owners preserve affordability in rental housing properties in exchange for public financial assistance.**
  - Rent is frozen at current rates for all tenancies until 120 days after the end of the Michigan State of Emergency Declaration. Rents may not be increased during lease renewals from now until 120 days after the end of the MI State of Emergency Declaration.
  - Landlords must maintain rent affordability for a period of 3 years after the Michigan State of Emergency Declaration has ended in order to participate in any city program or receive any funding that is related to the COVID-19 global health pandemic and the Michigan State of Emergency.
    - Landlords must agree to annual rent increases not to exceed the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Cost of Living Adjustment, whichever is less.
- **Utility Assistance: Preserve the health and safety of Detroit's vulnerable residents by preserving Water, Gas, and Electrical services in homes.**
  - All utilities will be paid for cost burdened renters from now until 90 days after the end of the Michigan State of Emergency Declaration. Cost burdened renters are renters paying 30% or more of their monthly income towards rent each month.
  - Utilities include water, electricity, and gas.
  - Payments will be made directly to utility companies at a negotiated rate that is lower full billed amount (in exchange for the savings generated by receiving all payments on time).
  - All past due utility debts for 2020 must be waived by the utility company.
  - Renters will not be assessed any administrative fees related to utility operations (shut offs/reconnection fees, late fees, etc. until 90 days after the end of the MI State of Emergency).
- **Grants and Loans to Small Landlords for Property Maintenance: Provide landlords financial assistance to maintain their low and median income properties.**
  - Small Landlords are defined as owning no more than 15 leased units total.
  - Provide grant and loan funding to low and median income landlords with rents that are affordable to residents earning 60% AMI or less. This funding must be used to cover the cost of emergency maintenance and to increase the accessibility of rental properties. Availability of grants vs. loan funding should be based on need.
  - Provide grant and loan funding for Property Tax Payment Assistance to low and median income landlords. Availability of grants vs. loan funding should be based on need.

## **COVID-19 ENVIRONMENTAL & HOUSING IMPACTS**

- **Local Safe Housing Programs Expanded:**
  - Funding to expand Bridging Neighborhoods Program to include communities throughout the city impacted by industrial development and operations. Programs will be available to all residents earning 60% AMI and below.
- **Increased Environmental Hazard Monitoring in High Risk Areas:**
  - Funding to institute state of the art air quality monitoring for communities with poor air quality, high exposure to PM<sub>2</sub>, or a history of disparate respiratory health outcomes.