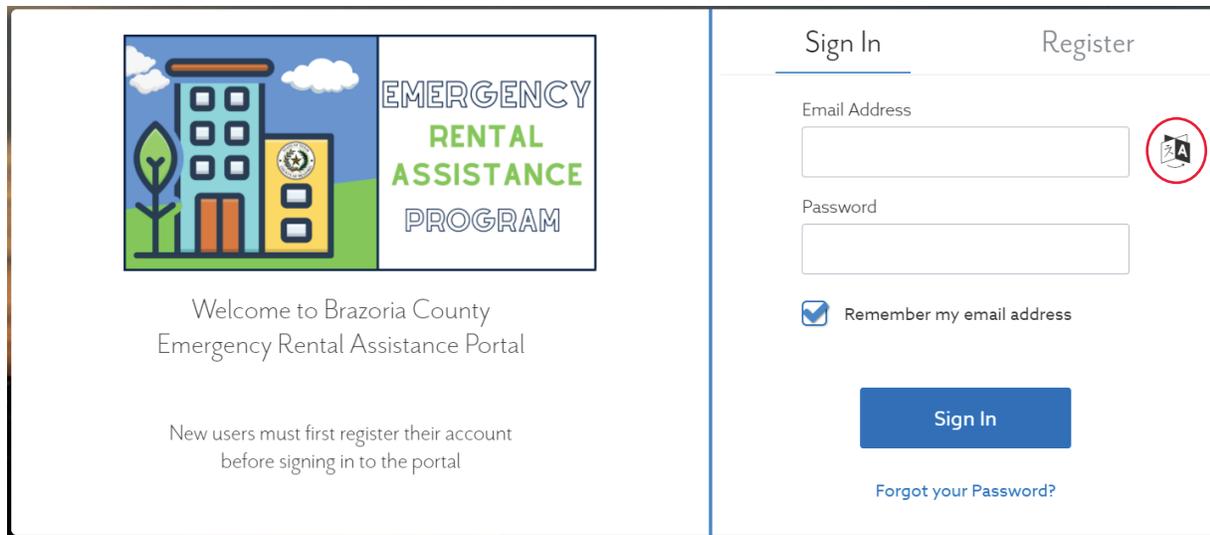


## Detailed Guide to Applying for Brazoria County ERAP Funding

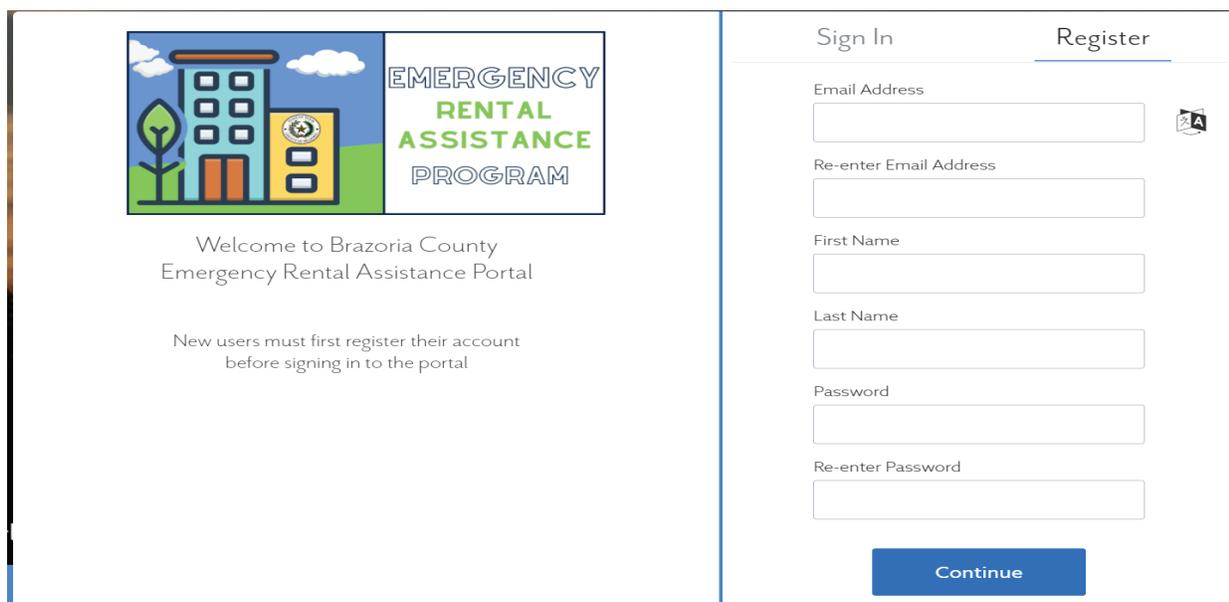
**Click here** to get the Neighborly application portal (<https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/ERAP-BRAZORIACOUNTYTX/Participant>). The Neighborly application portal can also be found on the Brazoria County's ERAP webpage, [www.brazoriacountytx.gov/ERAP](http://www.brazoriacountytx.gov/ERAP).

To easily change languages, please click the circled box and it will allow you to choose between English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and French. If you have selected Vietnamese as your language to complete the tenant application, you can find a step-by-step Vietnamese video, on how to complete the application and clarifies any translation difficulties, on the Brazoria County's ERAP webpage noted above.



The screenshot shows the 'Sign In' page of the Emergency Rental Assistance Portal. On the left, there is a logo for the 'EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM' featuring a stylized building and a tree. Below the logo, the text reads: 'Welcome to Brazoria County Emergency Rental Assistance Portal' and 'New users must first register their account before signing in to the portal'. On the right, the 'Sign In' tab is selected. It contains an 'Email Address' field with a red circle around a language selection icon (showing 'A'), a 'Password' field, a checked checkbox for 'Remember my email address', and a blue 'Sign In' button. A link for 'Forgot your Password?' is located below the button.

If you have an existing Neighborly account please sign in using your existing account details. 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 Center or from [erap@brazoriacountytx.us](mailto:erap@brazoriacountytx.us). Please create a password which must be at least eight characters and contain at least one letter and one special character. Click "Continue".



The screenshot shows the 'Register' page of the Emergency Rental Assistance Portal. On the left, the logo and welcome message are identical to the Sign In page. On the right, the 'Register' tab is selected. It contains an 'Email Address' field with a language selection icon (showing 'A'), a 'Re-enter Email Address' field, 'First Name' and 'Last Name' fields, a 'Password' field, and a 'Re-enter Password' field. A blue 'Continue' button is located at the bottom of the form.

Neighborly will send you an email at the address you provided to verify your account. Please open the verification email from Neighborly 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 FAQs on the County's website for the program, [www.brazoriacountytx.gov/ERAP](http://www.brazoriacountytx.gov/ERAP), 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\***
- A. Eligibility
- B. Applicant Information
- C. Household Members
- D. Income
- E. COVID-19 Impact
- F. Rent Assistance Requested
- G. Utility Assistance Requested
- H. Internet Assistance Requested
- I. Prior Assistance Received
- Submit

These instructions now describe the content of each page of the application and provide guidance on what information and documentation is required to complete each page.

### **Program Overview Page**

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% of the Area Median Income 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”.

## Page A - 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 979-300-7145 or email [erap@brazoriacountytx.us](mailto:erap@brazoriacountytx.us).

### A. Eligibility

The following questions will help determine whether your household meets basic eligibility for the County Emergency Rental Assistance program.

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%	\$54,150.00	\$61,850.00	\$69,600.00	\$77,300.00	\$83,500.00	\$89,700.00	\$95,900.00	\$102,050.00

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 a resident of Brazoria County?

- 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



IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, YOU MAY NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE. FOR REFERRAL TO OTHER PROGRAMS, PLEASE CALL 211

Please answer all questions. 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.

### Page B - Applicant Information

On the applicant information page, please enter your information as requested. Please ensure that the applicant is a household member residing at the rental unit and who is listed on the lease.

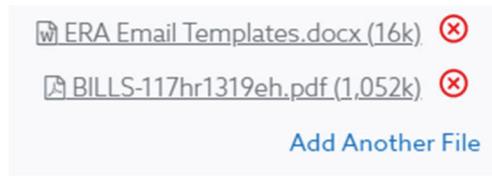
Please make sure to provide your apartment or unit number in “Address Line 2”.

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 to ensure it is complete and accurate and select “Complete & Continue”.

### Page C - Household Members

Please add information as requested for all members of the household. The Applicant should be listed as the primary household member. Please include children as well as this will determine your household size for income eligibility in the next section. The Treasury requires collection of demographic data.

#### C. Household Members

List all household members.

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:

- Name
- Birthdate
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- 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 Page 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”.

#### **Page D - Income – Household Income Verification**

The top of this page describes the three different options applicants may use to verify their household income.

The preferred method, Option 1, 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. Select “I will certify all household annual income by using household my 2020 Federal Income Tax Return 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 2nd method is if you or your household participate in another income-based state or federally funded assistance program and can provide a document showing that you participate in the program, you do not need to prove any additional income documentation. You will need to upload the most recent benefits letter dated after January 1, 2020 from that other assistance program. Also need to enter Household Annual Income total, include all members of the household.

The 3rd 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. Download, complete the appropriate section and sign a Documentation Waiver Form, which can be found in this section. Upload the completed form to this section.

If you have no or insufficient household income and/or reduction in household income (income loss) documentation, then you can submit a self-attestation. Select “Self Attestation” under Income Source. Download, complete the appropriate section and sign a Documentation Waiver Form, which can be found in this section. Upload the completed form to this section.

Select “Complete & Continue” when done.

## Page E - 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 Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) of determination of eligibility for unemployment
  - Screenshots of TWC 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 have no or insufficient unemployment eligibility documentation, then you can submit a self-attestation. Download, complete the appropriate section and sign a Documentation Waiver Form, which can be found in this section. Upload the completed form to this section.

Select "Complete & Continue" when done.

## Page F - Rent Assistance Requested

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

You may request assistance for rent due (including late fees and fines) beginning March 13, 2020 and up to three upcoming months (forward from the date of application). The amount included in each month's request should only be that amount owed by tenant of the rent that is due or will become due in the future. 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 up to three upcoming months if your household is otherwise eligible. Additional month(s) of assistance must have a subsequent application and is subject to availability of remaining funds; up to either \$25,000 or 12 months of assistance per household.

Please include the landlord or property manager's name and contact information in the applicable fields. 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 have no or insufficient rental agreement documentation, then you can submit a self-attestation. Download, complete the appropriate section and sign a Documentation Waiver Form, which can be found in this section. Upload the completed form to the Signed Rental Agreement Lease/Documentation line that requires an upload. Additionally, you will need to also upload a landlord verification form, a past pattern history of rent payments within the last two years and require alternate residency documentation (official mail) to verify residency. All of these documents can be uploaded to Signed Rental Agreement Lease/Documentation line as well.

Select "Complete & Continue" when done.

## **Page G - 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 must enter each one the separately in the correct the category.

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.

## **Page H - Internet Assistance Requested**

NOTE: Internet assistance is only awarded to those households qualifying as "High Priority". 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 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.

## **Page I - 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 (Medicaid, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), School Nutrition Programs (SNP), Subsidized housing (not including housing choice, project based, or Section 8 vouchers), 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 Page

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 979-300-7145 or email [erap@brazoriacountytx.us](mailto:erap@brazoriacountytx.us).

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## 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.

After submitting an application, if additional required information is requested applicants will have 10 business days to respond to the request. Failure to respond will lead to the application being categorized as "Pending - Nonresponsive".

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.

## Status Check

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).

## Application Assistance

If you need assistance in completing your application please go to the Brazoria County's ERAP webpage, [www.brazoriacountytx.gov/ERAP](http://www.brazoriacountytx.gov/ERAP) for details of assistance resources available.