

News Release



Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Executive and Council Approve \$16 Million for Rent and Utility Assistance

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—On Monday, March 1, 2021, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council authorized more than \$16 million in U.S. Department of Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Program aid for Summit County Cares, a rent and utility assistance program. The Executive’s Office is working with United Way of Summit and Medina, International Institute of Akron, Hope and Healing, Asia Inc, Fair Housing, Community Legal Aid, Community Action Akron Summit and Mustard Seed Development Center, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority and Summit County Department of Community and Economic Development to administer the program.

In 2020, Summit County Cares distributed more than \$15 million in federal CARES Act and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding to thousands of residents in need of rent, mortgage and utility assistance. Despite the success of this program, the ongoing pandemic and historic economic downturn have contributed to continued financial instability for many families and individuals. According to United Way, 2-1-1 requests for housing related requests increased 45% from 2019 to 2020, and requests have continued in 2021.

“We have now been living with COVID-19 for a full year and like the virus itself, the economic consequences of this pandemic will not disappear overnight. We know many individuals and families are struggling to make ends meet,” said Executive Shapiro. “The County’s top priority is to keep our residents safe and healthy. We are thankful to the many community partners helping us keep vulnerable residents in their homes with the lights, heat and water on.”

To qualify for assistance in this new iteration of the program, applicants must be Summit County residents, must have been financially effected by COVID-19 (or a member of the household), must have unpaid rent or utility balance and must have gross income at or under 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) Guidelines (see guidelines below). Landlords may assist tenants to apply for

assistance. At this time, this funding cannot be used for mortgage payments or utility payments for homeowners.

Summit County Cares will also serve as the front door for other state and federal assistance, such as the state’s Home Relief Grant program. Information about this program, including mortgage assistance, is available at <https://businesshelp.ohio.gov/home-relief-grant.html>. This funding is more limited.

“As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to negatively affect the economy, our constituents across Summit County are facing difficult financial decisions and many are unable to pay rent and utility bills,” said Council President Elizabeth Walters. “This new round of assistance will be used to support those most in need.”

Unlike the previous CARES Act funded rent and utility assistance program, this round of assistance is not designed as a first-come, first-serve program. Per federal requirements, households at or below 30% of the AMI guidelines will be prioritized. Pregnant women, occupants over 62 and households with a court eviction notice or utility shut off notice will also be prioritized. To qualify for utility assistance, the account must be in the name of the tenant or landlord.

Applicants approved for assistance may receive up to 12 months of rental payments, plus an additional three months if a need is demonstrated. Funds will be paid directly to landlords and the utility service providers.

“Every day, our 2-1-1 team members answer calls from residents in need of housing and utility assistance. Along with Summit County and our other partners, we will work diligently to get this assistance out to those in need,” said Jim Mullen, United Way of Summit and Medina President and CEO.

Eligible Summit County residents can apply for assistance at www.SummitCountyCares.org or by calling 2-1-1 beginning on March 8 at 8 a.m. The application process will take 10 to 15 minutes. Applicants should have household, income, landlord and utility information including account numbers, prior to starting the application online or by phone.

AREA MEDIAN INCOME GUIDELINES			
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	30%	50%	80%
1	\$16,050	\$26,750	\$42,750
2	\$18,350	\$30,550	\$48,850
3	\$21,720	\$34,350	\$54,950
4	\$26,200	\$38,150	\$61,050
5	\$30,680	\$41,250	\$65,950
6	\$35,160	\$44,300	\$70,850
7	\$39,640	\$47,350	\$75,700
8	\$44,120	\$50,400	\$80,600