

Norwood Planning Board

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Press Release
For Immediate Release August 13, 2020

**Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development COVID-19
Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA)**

The Town of Norwood in partnership with the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) is pleased to announce a new grant program, the Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance Program (ERMA). The new grant program has been established from Federal funding made available from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The grant program will provide financial assistance to income qualified individuals that have suffered financial hardship from the economic crisis caused by the pandemic. Grant funds can be used to help pay for rent, mortgage and utility payments. In order to qualify for this funding, a household must meet the following criteria at the time of application:

- Currently rent or own a house as a primary residence in Massachusetts;
- Have income that is between 50-80% of the Area Median Income (AMI); and
- Have a housing emergency due to a financial hardship related to or exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis (as verified through documentation or a written self-certification consistent with this Administrative Plan).

Up to \$4,000 is available per household over a 12-month period which can be utilized to assist with rental and mortgage arrears for payments due no earlier than April 1, 2020, and rental and mortgage stipends for payments due after the date of application. Individuals living in subsidized housing units where tenant rent is calculated and adjusted based on income are not eligible for rent stipends but are eligible for assistance with arrears when able to demonstrate sufficient justification for non-payment of past due rent. For those seeking general/financial assistance please complete the online RAFT/ERMA Pre-Application at <https://www.waitlistcheck.com/MA2977-1916> or call the Housing Consumer Education Center hotline at 508-872-0765 for more information. RAFT/ERMA online pre-applications are prioritized in the order that they are received. All clients are contacted by a SMOC staff once the online pre-application is received. For homeless families seeking shelter please call HCEC Intake Specialist, Amandalee Deleon Campos at 508-872-4853 x 2171. For all other questions/concerns please email the HCEC Department at HCEC@smoc.org. For more information locally please contact Paul Halkiotis, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development, at phalkiotis@norwoodma.gov or (781) 915 - 4749.