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PRESS RELEASE

GASTON COUNTY RECEIVES \$6.7M TO HELP RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY COVID-19 IMPACTS WITH RENT, UTILITY PAYMENTS

GASTONIA, N.C. – Gaston County’s Department of Social Services was awarded \$6.7M by the federal government to help residents affected by the COVID-19 crisis with rent or utility payments.

Gaston County DSS applied for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program on Jan. 12 and found out late last month it was awarded the funds to aid residents. The assistance is available now through the end of 2021.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for us to be able to help folks knocked down by this crisis to get back on their feet,” DSS Director Angi Karchmer said. “Based on how we’ve helped people over the past year with our CARE Plan, we suspect there is a large need for this program in our community.”

Karchmer said the funds are available to anyone economically impacted by COVID-19, fell behind on rent or utility payments and meets the criteria for the program set out by the federal government.

Those interested in applying for the program should call (704) 862-7901 and leave a message with their name and phone number. A caseworker will call back within 48 hours to set an appointment and provide further information about the income limits and other program criteria.

Karchmer said her hope is the money from the program can help get many in Gaston County back to a level playing field as the county and the country pushes forward in its economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The money can go toward rent and utility payments as far back as March 2020 and residents can be approved for as much as 15 months’ worth of rent and utility payments, based on need.

“We know right now there’s a moratorium on evictions, but once that’s lifted, we want to make sure we don’t have this huge wave of residents getting put out on the street,” Karchmer said.

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