



Household Economic Relief Grant (HERG) Program Policy

GRANT PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

Purpose

The City of Homer’s Household Economic Relief Grant (HERG) Program provides economic relief to eligible households within the City of Homer that have suffered economic hardship due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Using Federal CARES Act funding, HERG offers grants up to \$1,500 per household to assist those who have lost wages or experienced increased expenses due to COVID-19. Grants are intended to help stabilize residents in their homes and help pay for necessary goods and services. For purposes of the HERG Program, household is defined as “a social unit composed of those living together in the same dwelling for a primary place of residence.” A household can be one individual.

Eligibility Criteria

1. At least one adult member (18 or older) of the household must be a City of Homer resident, permanently living within the city limits prior to March 1, 2020. This person will be considered the “Head of Household” by the City and will complete the application on the household’s behalf. Applicants must provide valid photo I.D., two forms of residence verification, and a completed W-9 form from the Internal Revenue Service.
2. The Head of Household must be a U.S. Citizen or permanent legal resident in order to receive grant funding.
3. Only one grant is available per household. All members of the household over the age of 18 must be listed in the application.
4. The Head of Household, on behalf of the household, must agree the household was/is negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and disclose, certify and document how the household has experienced, or continues to experience, economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, between March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020.
5. HERG funds cannot be used to reimburse an expense that was already covered by or anticipated to be covered by another COVID-19 assistance/relief grant.
6. The City reserves the right to interpret the terms of this program.

Forms for Identification and Residence Verification

The Head of Household must submit a copy of valid photo ID and two forms of residence verification with their completed application. The following are acceptable forms:

Valid Photo ID	Forms of Residence Verification	
	Homeowners	Renters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers License • State ID • Passport • Certified copy of U.S. Birth Certificate • I-551 Resident Alien/ Permanent/Resident Card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortgage Statement • Kenai Peninsula Borough Property Tax Statement • Home Utility Bills • Employment Documents • Two pieces of postmarked first class mail with name and address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Lease Agreement • Letter of verification on official letterhead from housing authority/shelter • Employment Documents • Two pieces of postmarked first class mail with name and address



Grant Spending Requirements

1. Grant funds may only be used to cover costs that are eligible COVID-19 emergency related expenses. Eligible expenses include those that were previously paid out-of-pocket by the grantee, are currently unpaid, or are past due between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020.
2. Upon receipt of grant funds, it is the sole responsibility of the Head of Household to distribute funds in accordance with the itemized list provided in their application.
3. Recipients must fully expend HERG funds by December 30, 2020.
4. Any unspent funds must be returned to the City via mail or in person at City Hall. Payments may be made in cash or via check payable to the City of Homer.
5. Grants received are subject to audit and the Head of Household may be randomly selected to produce documentation for program evaluation. Grantees are required to maintain records and receipts for grant expenditures for a period of 6 years and make them available upon request.
6. Any misuse of funds or falsification in an application will result in repayment of the funds and potential fines and may result in criminal prosecution.
7. It is up to the applicant to determine the tax ramifications and/or whether the receipt of a grant under this program might preclude eligibility for any other grant or aid programs.

Grant funds may be used for:

1. Payment of rent or required monthly mortgage/loan payments
2. Payments of utilities (i.e. electricity, heating fuel)
3. Childcare fees
4. Other expenses that are necessary for household stability (i.e. food, transportation, etc.) that are not covered by current wages or other forms of support (i.e. unemployment, SNAP, etc.)
5. Purchase of personal protective equipment
6. Other measures recommended by the CDC to enhance COVID-19 safety measures (i.e. expenses related to quarantine, home-based learning, telecommuting, etc.)
7. Medical bills incurred as a result of COVID-19 (i.e. COVID-19 testing, doctors visits, hospitalization, medical supplies, etc.) not reimbursable by insurance or other government programs

Grant funds may not be used for:

1. Expenses above and beyond those needed for household stability
2. Political contributions
3. Charitable contributions
4. Gifts or events
5. Business operations/expenses, even if business is located at or within residence
6. Paying down or paying off debt by more than required in underlying debt instrument
7. Any expenses that have already been reimbursed by other funding sources (grantees will be required to keep payment records to show how the funds were used)
8. Any expenses considered ineligible under the State of Alaska CARES Act grant program and any expense that would not be considered an eligible expense by IRS rules
9. Any other activity not listed under the "Grant Funds may be used for" section

Process

1. An individual 18 years of age or older, considered "Head of Household", must fill out a submit a complete application on behalf of the household no later than 5:00 pm, October 16, 2020.
2. The application must be submitted with a valid form of photo ID, two forms of residence verification (i.e. mortgage statement, utility bill, landlord certification, etc.) and a completed, signed W-9 form from the Internal Revenue Service. Household information provided in the HERG application will be kept confidential to the extent authorized by the law.
3. After complete applications have been submitted, the Head of Household will receive emailed notice of their application status. Applicants will be alerted when their application has been approved. Applicants who submit incomplete applications will be required to resubmit their amended application before the submission deadline. Applicants whose requests are denied may appeal (in writing) to the City Manager no later than 5 pm the 10th calendar day after the applicant receives notice from the City.
4. Upon receipt of a completed application and verification that the Head of Household meets all eligibility requirements, a grant payment covering eligible, documented expenses up to \$1,500 may be issued on a rolling basis.
5. An IRS 1099 Misc. income form will be issued by January 31, 2021.