

FINANCIAL RESOURCES- SUFFOLK COUNTY

Help for rent, security deposits, and utility bills

Suffolk County has received \$1.5 million in federal government stimulus funds, while Islip and Babylon have qualified for \$840,000 and \$520,000, respectively. The money is coming from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, better known as the stimulus program. The local towns, cities, and counties are partnering with the **Family Service League and Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk, Inc.** (phone 631-289-2124) to assist individuals and families with rent arrears, security deposits, unpaid utility and heating bills, and even rental assistance, as well as other needs such as moving costs and credit repair. The grants will help keep people housed, prevent evictions, and also provide financial support to individuals and families that are in the process of getting back on their feet.

The assistance program is geared toward families that are behind on their rent or energy bills, and that may be on the verge of homelessness but who at the same time have a strong opportunity of becoming self-sufficient over the long term after receiving the funds. The goal is to help reestablish families and individuals that are experiencing temporary financial problems due to loss of illness or employment.

Note that rental assistance and other services are limited to a period of a maximum of 18 months.

The various local municipalities are working with the Family Service League and Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk, Inc. to assist people who are behind with their rent and utility bills, and money can even be provided to help with security deposits and providing longer term rental assistance.

The funds will assist with keeping people housed and provide financial support to individuals and families who are in the process of getting back on their feet.

Another group to contact is **Our Lady of Lourdes Church**. Dial (631)661-9262. The church covers Suffolk County and Islip, and it provides emergency free food and payment of rent, monthly mortgage, heating and utility bills when in arrears.

The **West Islip Church of Christ** runs a food pantry for those in need. They will see applicants strictly by appointment. In addition to the food, they also offer a very limited amount of financial assistance and funds to families in transition or in a crisis situation. Priority is given to requests from social service agencies on behalf of a client in need of utility payment or rent assistance. Funds offered to applicants are very limited and assistance is offered each month only until funds are depleted. (631)587-1156

Catholic Charities (Phone number (516)733-7045) may be able to provide help from the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. This federal government funded program can provide financial assistance for emergency situations for rent or mortgage expenses. Westhampton Beach and Centereach New York. All of Suffolk County is eligible.

Society of St. Vincent Depaul has several locations around the area. Numerous assistance programs, counseling, and information is offered. Examples include limited rent and utility bill help, thrift stores, free food, information on government assistance programs such as section 8 housing, prescription medications, and much more. (516)822-3132

Long Island Council of Churches - Provides information on charities and government programs, and referral and an Emergency Services Program includes 3 day supply of free groceries and food 12 times per year, rent/mortgage/utility payment when bill is in arrears or facing an eviction and also prescription assistance. Riverhead New York. (631)727-221

West Islip Church of Christ - The non-profit center can provides a food pantry and very limited funds for other expenses. Referrals from social service agencies are recommended. Get help with utility bills or rent. Money is very limited. (631)587-1156

Parish Outreach Center - Suffolk County residents facing an emergency can get free food. In addition, limited assistance with providing prescriptions, transportation, basic needs, money for paying rent and/or mortgage payments and advocacy when there is a threat of eviction, foreclosure and utility shutoff. For example, get referred to assistance programs from lenders like Bank of America (learn more). Or dial the center at (631)281-5634

Riverhead Salvation Army - This non-profit provides both rent and utility bill help. Also get referrals to such assistance programs as offered by utility companies. Learn more on NY utility bill assistance programs. Or call the Salvation Army at 631-727-3338.

Suffolk County Department Of Social Services - The government agency provides emergency grants and financial assistance for families and individuals. The agency can help Suffolk County individuals meet the emergency needs of rent assistance, shelter, food, heating bills and utilities. Energy needs and help for utilities are currently handled at local HEAP fuel sites including community action agencies. Hauppauge, New York 11788-8900. Dial (631)854-9935

Bellport, Hagerman, East Patchogue Alliance, Inc. - Offers a variety of housing and rent assistance programs. Crisis funds may be available to assist with the payment of bills and expenses such as rent, utilities and mortgages. Housing assistance programs provide information on reverse mortgages, tenants and landlord rights, information on loans and grants to use for first time home buying, government foreclosure prevention, and mortgage counseling. Bellport, New York 11713, (631)286-9236