

Friedman Place Rent Assistance Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The purpose of the program is to financially support people who are blind or visually impaired and have low incomes so that they may remain and succeed in the community in their own apartment within Cook County. Subsidies are 50% of rent up to \$300 per month and once accepted to the program, the individual may continue receiving subsidies for three years as long as they remain eligible (e.g., income, blindness, active lease, etc.).

Q. Can I be in the program if I live in a motel or hotel?

A. No, unless you can provide a lease and have been living there at least three months.

Q. Can I be in the program if I live in a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) or a YMCA?

A. Yes, as long as you have been there at least three months and can provide a lease, or a comparable written agreement with the landlord.

Q. Can I participate if I am renting but don't have a lease?

A. No, a lease is required.

Q. Can I be in the program if I am living in a low-income housing or residential program?

A. No, you cannot be receiving other housing subsidies such as a Housing Voucher or living in a low-income housing program, long-term care program, or any other residential program.

Q. Can I be in the program if I live outside Cook County but plan on moving there soon?

A. No. You cannot apply until you have been living in Cook County and have been renting an apartment (with a valid Lease) for at least three months.

Q. Can the subsidy check be written directly to me?

A. No, the subsidy checks are written only to the landlord as identified on the Lease, although it can be mailed to you so you can submit it to the Landlord along with your own check at the same time if you would like.

Q. Can I be in the program if I have poor vision but not legally blind?

A. No, records or a letter from an ophthalmologist must indicate legal blindness.

Q. Can the program help me with a security deposit or first month's rent?

A. No. The program does not provide anything towards a security deposit and you must be living in the apartment at least three months when you first apply.

Q. If I am in the program and receiving the subsidy, can I move to a different apartment?

A. Yes, you will just need to submit additional information such as the new lease. This is an exception to the "three month" rule.

Q. What if my income changes while in the program and it goes over the program's limits?

A. You will need to let us know and we will then provide one additional (final) month of subsidy to give you an opportunity to transition.

Q. What if I have a roommate?

A. Only you would be eligible for the subsidy. We would only consider your situation to qualify and the subsidy would be calculated only on what you pay for rent. Your name must be on the lease.

Q. Can I complete the entire application remotely, by phone and mail or email?

A. No, while most of the application process can be done remotely there must be at least one in-person meeting at Friedman Place to do a final review and sign an agreement.

Q. What if I am renting an apartment with my spouse and/or child?

A. The income for the entire household will be considered a household and only your portion of the rent will qualify for the subsidy. If there are two adults in the household your portion of rent will be 50% - minor children are not expected to pay rent so while they count as a member of the household they are not considered when calculating the amount of rent owed by the adults.

Q. Will the rent subsidy payments affect my taxes or benefits?

A. Maybe, but probably not. It is unlikely that the relatively small payments will significantly affect taxes or benefits, but they might. We encourage you to consult with a tax preparer and/or the provider of your benefits.

Q. Can I apply if I am a former resident of Friedman Place's Supportive Living Program?

A. Yes. You are welcome to apply and are subject to the same eligibility rules, although you also must also have no outstanding debts to Friedman Place before your application will be considered.