

**Legal Alert: Legislature Expands COVID Rent Relief Program Through February 1, 2021**

**December 21, 2020**

New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal has announced that it has extended the COVID Rent Relief Program, established by the New York State Legislature, to assist both fair market and rent regulated households experiencing an increase in their rent burden due to a loss of income during the COVID-19 crisis.

The COVID Rent Relief Extension Program will provide eligible households with a one-time rental subsidy that will be sent directly to the household's landlord. Applicants will not need to repay this assistance. The COVID Rent Relief Extension Program is not first come, first served. Applications will be accepted throughout the application period, which is December 18, 2020 through February 1, 2021. DHCR will prioritize eligible households with "greatest economic and social need."

Significantly, the Program's eligibility has been changed **to no longer require households to have been considered "rent burdened" prior to the pandemic in order to qualify**. Rent burden is defined as paying more than 30% of monthly gross income towards rent.

Accordingly, we encourage you to advise all tenants that DHCR has expanded the COVID Rent Relief Program. If your tenants are interested in ascertaining whether they are eligible to receive benefits pursuant to this program; the requirements to obtain assistance; and/or any other specific details and benefits of the program, including accessing the Application, they should be directed to DHCR's COVID Rent Relief Program website, [here](#).

Owners should note that *previous applicants for COVID Rent Relief will not have to reapply to be reconsidered*. DHCR will re-evaluate all applications that were denied according to the new criteria and issue revised determination letters to applicants.

Please feel free to contact Randi B. Gilbert, Esq. at [rgilbert@hwrpc.com](mailto:rgilbert@hwrpc.com) or Jillian N. Bittner, Esq. at [jbittner@hwrpc.com](mailto:jbittner@hwrpc.com) of the Administrative Law Department with any further questions.