

Overview: Rental Assistance Grants Pilot Program

- Name change to align with full vision of program, initial Pilot Program recommendations from subcommittee, and resident feedback.
- Pilot Program aligns with:
 - College Park Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 (Objective 8)
 - College Park Economic Strategy (Fall 2023)
- Helps address 2022 Community Survey concerns on Affordable Housing
- FY2024 Budget includes funds (portion of 3-cent tax on Commercial, Industrial and Apartment properties) in anticipation for this program
- Focuses on large population with demonstrated financial need
- Final Subcommittee report to Council by March 19th, 2024

Summary of Proposed Pilot Program

- Rental assistance grants (\$1,500 each is the current assumption)
- Eligibility limited to renters who demonstrate financial need (Pell Grant eligible OR income-eligible) and will live in an eligible rental property.
- Applicants fill out an online application hosted by the City of College Park
- Applicants selected via a lottery system.
- Eligibility verified prior to grant awards (by June 2024 if FY24 funds used).
- Participants required to participate in survey/data requests to learn about outcomes and experiences of the pilot program.

Eligibility Criteria 1: Pell Grant

- Qualified for a Federal Pell Grant in the 2023-24 or 2024-25 academic year (TBD after legal, administrative review)
- Proof of a signed lease at an eligible property in College Park
 - Eligible properties are apartments subjected to the 3-cent property tax rate increase (does not include on-campus apartments/dorms)
 - Optional eligibility: Single Family Home rentals
 - Minimum lease period: TBD (e.g. September – December 2024)
- Consent to participate in surveys and/or other data collection processes for program evaluation purposes

Eligibility Criteria 2: Income-Based

- Income-based where household is at or below 40% or 60% Area Median Income (AMI)
 - City staff to verify best practices for income verification
- Proof of a signed lease at an eligible property in College Park
 - Eligible properties are apartments subjected to the 3-cent property tax rate increase (does not include on-campus apartments/dorms)
 - Optional eligibility: Single Family Home rentals
 - Minimum lease period: TBD (e.g. September – December 2024)
- Consent to participate in surveys and/or other data collection processes for program evaluation purposes

Online Application

- City of College Park will develop and host an online application, including:
 - Attestation statement for financial eligibility requirements
 - Applicants select Pell Grant or Income-Based Eligibility
 - Upload copy of signed lease at an eligible apartment in College Park
 - Full name on lease must match applicant full name
 - Full address of property must be included in the lease
 - Lease must explicitly include the minimum TBD lease period
 - Consent for participation in surveys and/or other data collection processes for program evaluation purposes
- Elected officials, City employees, and their households would not be eligible.

Lottery Selection Process

- City would implement an equitable lottery process:
 - City-led lottery system or third party-led lottery system
- Applicants that indicated eligibility based on Pell Grants will be initially selected by a lottery. Upon selection, City staff will verify the uploaded lease information for the selected applicant meets the required criteria.
 - If the lease information is confirmed, the applicant will proceed to coordinate with City staff on providing Pell Grant eligibility documentation and distribution of award.
 - If the lease is not confirmed, City staff will return the lottery to select an additional number of applicants until a TBD # of applicants are confirmed to demonstrate eligibility by the required lease criteria.
- A similar process will be achieved for applications indicating eligibility based on income.
- To reasonably allocate City staff resources, no additional lottery selections would be taken for applicants that demonstrate a valid lease but are unable to verify Pell Grant or Income-based eligibility. If this occurs, the number of grants could be less than the number approved by Council.

Issuing Rental Assistance Grants

- Applicants would attest to financial eligibility in the online application process as a preliminary check. Lease information must be uploaded at application to mitigate gaming or sabotaging the process.
- Formal documentation demonstrating financial eligibility is required prior to grants being distributed.
 - Pell Grant documentation
 - Income documentation
- City of College Park staff would distribute grants directly to the applicants upon lottery selection and verification of eligibility. Recipient to demonstrate use of funds.
 - Disclaimer information provided that grant amount may be considered income and could impact eligibility for other financial assistance.

Advertising of Program

- City of College Park announcement and social media promotion
- UMD SGA & GSG announcement and social media promotion
- Diamondback article and advertisement
- CP Here and Now article and advertisement
- Other partnerships for announcements (e.g. Howard University)

Key Considerations in Discussion

- Number for grants (e.g. 200) and value of each grant (e.g. \$1,500)
- Distribution of grants by eligibility (e.g. 100 Pell Grants, 100 Income-based)
- Income-based eligibility criteria (e.g. 40% AMI or 60% AMI)
- Minimum lease period for grant eligibility (e.g. signed lease that includes the period of September –December 2024)
- If renters in Single Family Homes would be eligible
- Lottery system (e.g. led by City or third-party)
- Pell Grant and Income eligibility documentation requirements
- Disclaimer and guidance language (e.g. grant could be income; required participating in surveys/data collection)
- Timelines for application window (e.g. April) and eligibility reviews and awards (e.g. by June 2024 for FY24 funding)

13 D

Future Community Garden Locations at
Davis Field