

# Help for Utahns Struggling to Pay Rent

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Photo by *Louis* from *Pexels*

If you've followed the Institute for Disability and its projects on social media, you already know rent relief in Utah has been a big topic this year. (Scroll down for a list of resources that can help.)

So what is the connection of rent relief to disability? Statistically, almost 26 percent of Americans with disabilities were living in poverty in 2019, compared with 11.4 percent of people without disabilities.

Jennifer Holland, who has penned a number of blog posts for IDRPP, has written a lot about housing insecurity as a person with a disability. "There's still a very deep and lasting perception in the majority of people's minds that if you're poor, it's due to lifestyle choices," she said.

But for Holland and so many others, the cause was economic. Rising rents were especially hard to deal with on a limited or fixed income. Holland wrote about being [priced out of her apartment](#) at the end of 2018. Since then, the housing market has become even more expensive, with rents in Salt Lake City up [an estimated 8 percent](#) since January 2020. Utah as a whole is showing a 9 percent increase over the same period.

The [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#) estimates that Utahns will need to earn \$20.21 to afford a two-bedroom house, or work 112 hours per week at minimum wage.

It's a bleak picture that can add almost-crippling fear to an already difficult situation. But Holland has a message for those facing housing insecurity: Don't despair. After spending months on waiting lists and filling out a lot

of paperwork, she now qualifies for a housing choice voucher, which has given her a much more stable outlook.

She is also telling her friends to take advantage of programs offering relief to renters.

## Here are some resources:

Utah's [rent relief website](#) can direct people who are facing COVID-related housing instability to help. Help is also available to [landlords who have been affected](#).

Salt Lake County offers sign-up assistance for COVID-related rent relief through many partners throughout the county, including some who can [assist people who speak languages other than English](#).

The Utah Assistive Technology Program, part of IDRPP, has compiled a list of tips for help with [rent, utilities and more](#).

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau also offers these [resources to help you make financial decisions](#), including mortgage and housing assistance, student loans, managing finances and avoiding scams.

[Housing authorities in Utah](#) can offer options to renters with disabilities.