



PARTNER OP-ED TEMPLATE  
ROUGH WORD COUNT: 344  
UPDATED MAY 13, 2021

*Partners: This is a template op-ed you can use to personalize and submit to your local paper. The goal is to make residents aware of relief available. See suggestions in brackets [...] for areas where you can personalize the column to your region and the community you serve.*

It's been more than a year since COVID-19 hit America, but thanks to the strong leadership from Governor Ron DeSantis and his efforts to help us reopen and accelerate our rebuild, Florida is on the road to recovery.

[Consider adding a paragraph here about an uplifting story in your community. Explain how your Main Street has reopened and residents are back to work.]

Still, many residents are past due on rent payments and utilities bills. Nevertheless, Floridians are resilient and are working step by step to come back from this public health emergency. In order to fully recover, some Floridians need additional assistance to get back on track with their rent and utility bills.

[If you serve a community impacted, include a paragraph here about the challenges and struggles residents face. Perhaps folks are back to work, but lost three months of wages. Perhaps a family was able to pay their bills, but could not also afford utilities.]

Now there's a program to help recover. OUR Florida – which stands for Opportunities for Utilities and Rental assistance – provides relief to renters who are behind or at risk of falling behind on payments. This program will give relief to residents and businesses, empowering them to fully recover and rebound.

OUR Florida aims to help Florida families remain safely in their rented homes while pursuing pathways to economic self-sufficiency. OUR Florida also supports property owners with relief for lost rental income to support their continued recovery.

The program is funded by federal dollars for emergency rental assistance and administered by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Eligible Floridians can apply now at [OURFlorida.com](https://OURFlorida.com). The online portal is the most efficient way for applicants to supply documentation, receive verification and obtain relief.

For applicants who qualify, the payments will be made directly to the business, landlord or utility. Qualified applicants may receive up to 15 months of rent payments. This includes 12 months of past due rent and utilities, and three potential months of forward-looking rent payments.

With COVID-19 in the rearview mirror, Floridians are making great strides toward recovery. For those still struggling, OUR Florida is here to make the difference.

Visit [OURFlorida.com](https://OURFlorida.com) to check your eligibility and start your application.

[Include here in italics two to three sentences of biographical information about the author for the publication to include.]

[Include a link here to or attachment of a headshot for the author. Newspapers prefer to include a visual of the author next to the column when published.]

###