

Defined Terms

Utility Allowance

When utilities are paid directly by the tenant, a calculation called the Utility Allowance must be made to determine a reasonable cost to associate with those utilities. In Alameda County, the Housing Authority of Alameda County (HACA) determines what the reasonable cost is associated with those utilities and publishes annually a Utility Allowance Schedule based on the # of bedrooms in a unit.

Maximum Allowable Rent

The maximum amount of rent a property can charge BMR tenants, assuming there is no utility allowance or required tenant fees. It is published annually by the City of Emeryville based on the # of bedrooms in a unit and the income tier associated with the unit.

Maximum Tenant Rent

The maximum amount of rent a tenant shall pay for a BMR units. It is calculated by deducting the applicable Utility Allowance, and any required tenant fees, from the Maximum Allowable Rent.

Sample Calculations

A. Maximum Allowable Rent

One Bedroom (50% AMI) \$1,598

B. Utility Allowance (1 Bedroom)

Electricity Heat	\$ 37
Electricity Cooking	+ \$ 9
Other Electricity	+ \$ 65
Electricity Water	+ \$ 52
Water	+ \$ 69
Trash	+ \$ 40

Utility Allowance Total \$ 272

C. Required Tenant Fees

Rental Insurance \$ 20

D. Maximum Tenant Rent

A. Maximum Allowable Rent	\$1,598
B. Utility Allowance	(-) \$ 272
C. Other Required Fees	(-) \$ 20
Maximum Tenant Rent	\$1,306

Maximum Allowable Rent & Utility Allowance For Emeryville BMR Tenants

What utilities can be included in Utility Allowance?

Gas, electricity, water, sewer, and trash can be included in the Utility Allowance Telephone, internet and cable are not considered utilities.

What is purpose of Utility Allowance?

A Utility Allowance ensures that BMR tenants can afford their housing costs and are not unfairly burdened by utility costs, especially in buildings where the tenant is responsible for paying utilities separately.

Do I actually receive payment for the Utility Allowance associated with my BMR?

No, tenants do not receive any funds to pay their utility bills. The Utility Allowance acts as a discount against the maximum allowable rent the property could charge you for your BMR unit.

What are required fees?

If you are required to pay for a service or amenity as a condition to renting your apartment, it is a required fee. Examples may include: renters insurance, amenity fee, parking, technology fee, etc.

Who ensures that BMR Property is not over-charging me?

The City of Emeryville monitors every BMR property, annually, to ensure they are not charging tenants more than the maximum allowable rent. If a property is found to be in noncompliance with the maximum allowable rent, due to the miscalculation of the Utility Allowance the BMR Property would be issued a Notice of Violation with a corrective action.

Visit for More Information

www.emeryville.org/568/Housing-Affordability



Email Questions
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