



To: Board of Supervisors
From: Birgitta E. Corsello, County Administrator
Date: August 23, 2021
Subject: Significant Issues Update

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) Update

This is to update the Board of Supervisors on the status of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funded by CARES/COVID 19 federal allocations authorized in December 2020 and approved by the state in 2021. The federal guidelines allow for ERAP assistance payments up to 12 months for rent and/or utility arrears, and up to three months prospective rent if needed to ensure rental stability and if funding is available after arrears are paid.

ABOUT ERAP / QUALIFYING FOR THE PROGRAM

Through the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, California received \$2.65 billion in ERAP funds, with \$1.4 billion given directly to the state and the remaining balance to local jurisdictions with populations above 200,000. To qualify, applicants must have household income of less than 80 percent of the area median income (\$77,600 for a family of 4), been impacted by the COVID pandemic, and experiencing housing instability, including past due utilities, or rent. Priority must be given to households with income of less than 50 percent of area median (\$48,550 for a family of 4) and households where a member has been unemployed for at least 90 days prior to applying for assistance.

CASH-ASSISTANCE FOR OVERDUE RENT / UTILITIES

The total cash-assistance amount applicants will be eligible for varies depending on the need and may be as much as 12 months of back rent and overdue utilities. The federal guidelines allow programs to pay both arrearages and future rent and utilities. The County's program, as authorized by the Board of Supervisors, focuses on rental arrearages for up to 12 months to provide housing stability and address eviction concerns. An additional 3 months of prospective rent may be provided only if necessary, to ensure housing stability and is subject to the availability of funds. Because there are still several pending ERAP applications with rental arrearages, the program is not yet able to fund prospective rent.

PUBLIC INFORMATION / COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS

The County's contractor, Catholic Charities of Yolo-Solano Inc., was retained through an RFP in April 2021 to administer the program on behalf of Solano County. County staff, volunteers and Family Resource Centers (FRCs) did initial outreach in English and Spanish, including:

- Hosted live events in Fairfield, Vallejo, Vacaville and Suisun to assist with applications
- A series of press releases to local news and media outlets
- Housing Authorities within Solano County
- Solano County website, <https://SolanoCounty.com/HousingPrograms>
- Catholic Charities of Yolo-Solano (@CCYOSO) Facebook page
- Solano County (@CountyOfSolano) Facebook page
- County's Veterans Services Office
- Solano County Library public counter distribution
- Senior centers and/or recreation centers in the each of the seven cities

Given the number of applications received and the minimum documents that are needed, Public Information staff is currently working on developing a mailer to all Solano County residents, notifying potential applicants that the County's local program is not accepting additional applications as of July 31, 2021. However, per an MOU with the State, renters and landlords can apply as of August 1, 2021 to the state program, which has an additional state allocation of \$14.3 million available. The mailer, which will be printed in English and Spanish, will include information on how to apply to the State's program.

PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

Applications were bifurcated to speed up getting payments to landlords and addressing potential eviction issues. Catholic Charities is processing applications they accepted in their own software system prior to May 27, 2021; County extra help staff is processing applications received as of May 27, 2021. Staff is in discussions to contract with the Children's Network / Family Resource Centers to assist with ensuring all necessary documents are attached to each application and sufficient to determine eligibility to speed up the review process.

ERAP PROCESSING AND PAYMENT DETAILS

As of August 23, 2021, nearly 3,000 applications have been received by Catholic Charities of Yolo-Solano and the County. The following is details about payments made and payments in process.

Payments as of August 18, 2021:

- Catholic Charities, \$1,406, 703
- Solano County Staff, \$444,802
- TOTAL: \$1,851,505

Payments in process (should go out this week):

- Catholic Charities, \$549,960
- Solano County Staff, \$136,064
- TOTAL: \$686,025

Administrative funds paid to date (includes software):

- \$531,287

Grand total payments authorized and / or made to date:

- \$3,038,816* (number of applicants assisted, 295)

PENDING APPLICATION UPDATE

- \$8,650,850 – amount required to be obligated by Catholic Charities of Yolo-Solano and the County of Solano by September 30, 2021
- 590 – the number of applications still pending with Catholic Charities of Yolo-Solano
- 1,441 – the number of applications still pending with the County and local FRCs

LOCAL ERAP APPLICANTS WHO APPLIED PRIOR TO JULY 31

Anyone who applied to the local County ERAP prior to the July 31 deadline is encouraged to make sure they have completed the following steps in order to help expedite the processing of their application:

- Make sure you answer all the questions on the application
- Make sure you have attached all necessary documents to the application
- Make sure you have officially submitted the documents, do not leave them incomplete
- Make sure you only submit one application, as duplicates can slow down the approval process

QUESTIONS ABOUT AN EXISTING APPLICATION MADE PRIOR TO JULY 31

Call (707) 784-6101 with questions.

APPLY FOR ERAP FUNDING WITH THE STATE

If you want to apply for rental assistance funding but missed the County's July 31 program deadline, you can still apply for ERAP funding through the State's "Housing is Key" program. Qualifying renters and landlords are now eligible for 100 percent of rent and utilities owed. Visit the Housing is Key website at <https://Housing.Ca.Gov> or call (833) 430-2122.

Contact: Anne Putney, Principle Management Analyst, County Administrator's Office
(707) 784-6933 and AMPutney@SolanoCounty.com