

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Treasury Releases Guidance to Speed the Provision of Emergency Rental Assistance Relief and Support Housing Stability for Renters at Risk of Eviction

June 24, 2021

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury released guidance in the form of updated frequently asked questions (FAQs) and fact sheet to continue supporting the rapid deployment of Emergency Rental Assistance by states, territories, localities, and tribal governments. The FAQs build on prior actions to provide state and local governments with the tools they need to deliver relief to renters in need by helping grantees with implementation and best practices.

The fact sheet is below and available [here](#) .

The FAQs are available [here](#) .

Emergency Rental Assistance Fact Sheet: Treasury Announces Further Action to Support Housing Stability for Renters at Risk of Eviction

Today, as part of a broader interagency effort to support renters and prevent evictions, Treasury took new steps to continue supporting the rapid deployment of Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) by states, territories, localities and tribal governments. These steps – including new Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help grantees with implementation, as well as published promising practices – will build on prior actions to provide ERA grantees with the tools they need to deliver relief to renters in need.

By February 10, 2021, the US Treasury Department had paid all of the \$25 billion made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 to states, territories, localities and tribes for the purpose of providing emergency rental assistance to eligible households in their jurisdictions. As directed in the law, Treasury has also made available 40 percent – more than \$8.6 billion – of the additional funding for states, territories and localities for emergency rental assistance provided in the American Rescue Plan. Prior to this year, few governments had robust programs for delivering this type of rental assistance, and none were operating at the scale now made possible by ERA resources. In recent months, grantees have hired staff,

engaged contractors, developed web portals and established policies and procedures, to implement these programs. Now, many programs are ramping up their deployment of funds, building a set of promising practices that all grantees can implement to meet the needs of their renters – and today’s announcement is designed to support that ramp-up.

Summarized below, Treasury’s updated FAQs offer additional clarity for grantees and work in concert with guidance and actions being taken by other federal agencies.

- **Strongly encourage partnerships with courts to actively prevent evictions and develop eviction diversion programs.** Emergency Rental Assistance funds can be used to help families at-risk of eviction remain in their homes, including working with courts to connect such families and their landlords with mediation and emergency rental assistance resources, engaging providers of housing stability services for active support, and entering into agreements with courts to cover the costs of eviction diversion activities. New Treasury FAQs also make clear that funds from the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds can be used to support these activities and a wide range of other eviction prevention and housing stability services.
- **Help families experiencing homelessness gain access to assistance.** For vulnerable families that do not have a current rental obligation—which is a requirement for emergency rental assistance eligibility—Treasury is creating a commitment letter process to help those families gain access to assistance. ERA can help families who have lost, or are at imminent risk of losing, their housing, by paying for relocation assistance, prospective rent, security deposits, and temporary hotel accommodations.
- **Drive towards equal access by removing language and cultural barriers in securing emergency rental assistance.** Treasury is strongly encouraging grantees to provide culturally and linguistically-relevant housing stability services and to conduct outreach in multiple languages so that eligible families do not face unnecessary barriers to access. Grantees who cannot provide such services themselves should be engaging partners with the capacity to do so to ensure equal access to emergency rental assistance for all eligible households.
- **Provide a streamlined payment option for utility providers and large landlords to make accessing emergency rental assistance on behalf of multiple tenants easier and more attractive.** Treasury is clarifying how grantees may achieve economies of scale by obtaining information in bulk from utility providers and landlords with multiple units to

help speed the determination of household eligibility and to bundle, in a single payment, approved amounts for the benefit of multiple eligible tenants.

- **Encourage grantee coordination to reduce the burdens, and delays in providing assistance created by differences in locally-imposed requirements among programs operating in the same regions.** Grantees providing services to overlapping or neighboring areas should collaborate to develop consistent or complementary policies to avoid unnecessary confusion or burdens for families or landlords seeking aid.
- **Lifting up grantees implementing effective practices to ensure that assistance quickly reaches the renters who need it most.** Treasury is highlighting promising practices from the field, including successful examples of partnership with local court systems and legal services to divert evictions and prevent housing insecurity, and programs taking advantage of options to reduce documentation barriers that keep eligible families from benefiting from ERA—including automating application processing and approaches for verifying income to simplify and speed eligibility determinations, such as leveraging fact-specific proxies like area median incomes.

Today's announcement follows on efforts Treasury has taken over recent months – in consultation with grantees, tenant advocates and property owners – to speed the provision of relief. In March 2021, Treasury substantially revised ERA program rules to provide grantees with flexibility and encourage rapid assistance. On May 7, Treasury announced the launch of the second round of Emergency Rental Assistance made available under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and made significant additional updates to program rules to allow grantees to speed assistance to eligible households. Feedback from grantees indicates that Treasury's guidance has accelerated the pace of funds being used to support renters -- for example, numerous state and local grantees have implemented fact-specific proxies as described in Treasury's FAQs to speed up income verification, which is often the most time-consuming part of the eligibility verification process.

The promising practices published today are reflected in the ramp-up of activity in the field, with the number of households receiving rental assistance growing substantially in May compared to prior months. Treasury expects continued acceleration of assistance – particularly before this fall, when Treasury will have statutory authority to reallocate funds from grantees that fail to demonstrate a commitment to acting rapidly to deploy emergency rental assistance.

###

