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NEWS RELEASE

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California reaches major milestone in spending federal rent relief dollars before eviction protections change on October 1

State program has paid or is preparing to pay \$1.5 billion in rental assistance to low-income tenants

Additional \$1.5 billion available to the California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program

Renters impacted by COVID-19 urged to apply for relief as soon as possible

SACRAMENTO – The [California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program](#) marks another significant milestone today with \$650 million paid out to 55,000 households as the state prepares to transition to new eviction protections that take effect from October 1, 2020 to March 31, 2022.

“The COVID-19 pandemic left many families without the income needed to cover their rent and stay in their homes,” said Lourdes Castro Ramírez, Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency. “And too many tenants have lived with the fear of eviction. We have moved quickly to disburse help to renters and landlords, assisting nearly 55,000 households.”

Coupled with statewide eviction protections, the California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program has addressed months of accumulated rental debt and provided assistance for current and future rent, keeping tens of thousands of Californians housed who might otherwise have been forced to leave their homes because of the economic impact of the pandemic.

Beginning October 1, new state eviction protections will be in place but, as with the existing protections, tenants must take steps to remain protected.

“The first and most important step is to apply for rent relief,” said Secretary Castro Ramírez. “There is still plenty of money in the California COVID-19 Rent Relief program and local programs, resources that will provide full assistance for back and future rent.”

California’s existing eviction protections under AB 832, which protected many tenants statewide from eviction for nonpayment of rent, end September 30. On October 1, the state will transition to an

extended eviction protection period that will primarily serve tenants that are at or below 80% area median income and who have timely completed an application for rent relief.

But it is not necessary to wait for an eviction notice to apply and be protected.

“Tenants who owe back rent or who will have trouble paying rent on the first of the month should not wait to apply for rent relief,” said Department of Housing and Community Development Department Director Gustavo Velasquez. “The sooner they apply for rent relief, the sooner they will be protected from eviction for non-payment of rent.”

California still has ample funds to provide relief, and the California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program continues to increase the amount paid on behalf of tenants. As of today, more than \$650 million has been paid to assist more than 55,000 tenants. In addition, all \$1.5 billion dollars of Round 1 federal funding for the state program has been paid or approved for payment and the state is now beginning to spend Round 2 dollars.

The California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program has recently increased its advertising and awareness efforts as more local jurisdictions have joined the state program, with statewide radio, television, billboards and other targeted advertising, as well as social media outreach.

In addition to a statewide advertising and education campaign, the state has been working with Local Initiatives Support Corporation, or LISC, which has brought aboard 140 community-based organizations throughout California to help get the word out about the availability of rent relief and to provide culturally competent on-the-ground assistance in completing applications for those who need it.

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until funds are exhausted. Applicant information is private and will not be shared between landlord and tenant, and applicants will not be asked about immigration status or asked to provide proof of citizenship.

For more information and to apply for the program, visit HousingIsKey.com or call the California COVID-19 Rent Relief Call Center at 833-430-2122 (toll free) daily between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

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