



State of California

**BUSINESS, CONSUMER SERVICES AND HOUSING AGENCY**

Gavin Newsom, Governor  
Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Secretary

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program Distributes Over \$3 Billion to California Low-Income Renters**

*Over 275,000 Low-Income Renter Households Keep Their Homes Thanks to State Program*

*State Using Money from American Rescue Plan Act to House People Experiencing Homelessness, Assist Struggling Renters and Homeowners and Speed Up Construction of Affordable Housing.*

**COMPTON** – Today, during a meeting with U.S. Treasury Deputy Secretary Wally Adeyemo in Compton, Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramírez announced that the California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program has distributed \$3.1 billion of rent and utility assistance to over 275,000 households throughout the state to keep families housed.

“My administration has worked tirelessly to ensure that Californians impacted by this pandemic receive the support they need to get back on their feet,” said Governor Gavin Newsom. “By providing assistance through the largest rental relief program in the nation, we are helping to protect individuals and families from the devastating economic impacts caused by this pandemic.”

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## California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program Distributes \$3 Billion to California Low-Income Renters

Page 2

Nearly one in every three Emergency Rental Assistance Program dollars reallocated from the U.S. Treasury was sent to California, and no state has paid out more or served as many people. More than 61 percent of the households served are extremely low-income with household incomes under 30 percent of Area Median Income (AMI), and more than 85 percent are low-income with household incomes below 50 percent AMI.

“Thanks to federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars and other federal funding, we have helped hundreds of thousands of California households affected by the pandemic to stay in their homes and avoid eviction,” said Secretary Castro Ramírez. “The state’s rent relief program has been a critical component of California’s COVID-19 response and would not have been possible without the federal funding we have received and the close partnership with local jurisdictions and community-based organizations that make up the program’s Local Partner Network.”

The California rent relief program’s Local Partner Network is a coordinated group of hundreds of community-based organizations working in traditionally underserved communities. These partners assisted over 178,000 applicants either over the phone or in-person with completing their program applications, helping to ensure that language, literacy and technology were not barriers to participating.

“Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have worked hard to stand up the state rental assistance program – the largest in the nation – to help families in need remain housed during the emergency,” said Gustavo Velasquez, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, which administers the state program. “The U.S. Treasury urged states to act with urgency to get the job done, and that’s exactly what we did. Now, 13 months after the program began, we have paid out more than \$3 billion and we will continue to work with a sense of urgency to get people the support they need.”

But while it’s [easy to look at the numbers](#), it’s the stories of impact from the State’s Local Partner Network organizations, renters and landlords that illustrate the significance of the state’s efforts to keep families housed and prevent evictions via the emergency rent relief program.

- **Helping people:** Alisha, a Los Angeles County resident, received funding through the state program that helped her during the pandemic and was assisted by the **Fair Housing Foundation** in the Los Angeles area, one of the rent relief program’s Local Partner Network (LPN) organizations. She was grateful for the program, which “helped keep food in my refrigerator and gas in my car.” Another Los Angeles County resident, Maria, also received funding from the state program, which she said helped her to get back on her feet and pay her rent on time.

## California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program Distributes \$3 Billion to California Low-Income Renters

Page 3

- **Improving relationships: Shores of Hope** in Yolo County, another LPN organization, told us about Pamela, a longtime Yolo County resident who indicated the program did more than just provide financial assistance. Applying for and receiving quick payment for emergency rental relief has helped improve her relationship with her landlord.
- **Supporting landlords: The Daly City Partnership** worked with landlord Eriko, who was concerned about her tenant who was behind on rent. She wanted to ensure the tenant received the help he needed but also couldn't afford to lose the rental income. Together with her tenant, Eriko applied for the program, keeping the tenant housed and Eriko's income stream steady.

The California COVID-19 Rent Relief application portal closed to new applications after March 31, allowing HCD to continue processing the remaining applications. Thanks to [SB 115](#), signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom, the state has allocated temporary funding to provide the state and local programs the ability to continue to deploy assistance to eligible households as additional federal funds are made available.

[AB 2179](#), signed into law on March 31 by Acting Governor Eleni Kounalakis, extends the state's eviction protections for those who submitted a completed application on or before March 31. The state is working diligently to ensure all applications are processed prior to the end of the state's existing eviction protection period on June 30.

"This program has been a vital resource for Californians impacted by COVID-19 and we know there is more work to be done to address the housing instability impacting many Californians," said Secretary Castro Ramírez. "The information we've gleaned from this program will help us to deepen our understanding of the communities we serve as we continue our efforts to keeping Californians housed and move with urgency to build more housing through programs like Homekey and the Housing Accelerator."

The California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program is just one aspect of the state's comprehensive effort to use American Rescue Plan Act funds to keep Californians housed along with long-term housing investments to further our state's recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Homekey:** Using a combination of ARPA and state funds, this California program gives local communities the funds to acquire buildings such as hotels, motels and offices that can be quickly converted into supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness. So far this year, Homekey has allocated almost \$1 billion for projects at 61 sites statewide that will create more than 3,400 homes in the coming months. (More information is available at [homekey.hcd.ca.gov](http://homekey.hcd.ca.gov))

## California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program Distributes \$3 Billion to California Low-Income Renters

Page 4

- **Mortgage Assistance Program:** For homeowners, the state used ARPA monies to create a \$1 billion Mortgage Assistance Program that assists qualified homeowners who have fallen behind on their home payments. To date, approximately \$26 million has been approved to support over 800 households. (More information is available at [camortgagerelief.org](http://camortgagerelief.org))
- **Housing Accelerator Program:** To create more affordable housing faster, the Housing Accelerator Program is utilizing \$1.75 billion in ARPA funds to help shovel-ready housing projects fill funding gaps and start construction. To date, 27 projects have been allocated more than \$900 million to speed the creation of 2,315 affordable housing units. (More information is available at [accelerator.hcd.ca.gov](http://accelerator.hcd.ca.gov))

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