

County of Orange Launches Emergency Rental Assistance Program

(Santa Ana, CA) — The County of Orange will launch an Emergency Rental Assistance program on February 1, 2021 and will accept applications for a period of one month from eligible renter households with unpaid rent or utilities bills due to the impact of COVID-19.

“Orange County renters have had to bear an incredible burden throughout this pandemic. Our rental assistance will help keep our most vulnerable community members from losing their home and a sense of security in the midst of this ongoing crisis,” said Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors Andrew Do, who represents the First District.

It is important to note that the cities of Anaheim, Santa Ana, and Irvine received direct allocations from the U.S. Department of the Treasury as they have populations that exceed 200,000 residents. Residents of each of those three cities will be served by local city programs.

“The County has been allocated approximately \$65.5 million from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and — working through a group of regional providers — will deliver timely financial assistance to rental households at greatest risk of becoming homeless due to COVID-19-related financial hardships,” said Vice Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District.

Eligibility criteria includes, but is not limited to:

- Rental households who can demonstrate that their housing stability is at risk due to unpaid rent or utility bills due to COVID-19
- Rental households’ combined income must be at or below 80% area median income (AMI). Please visit <http://era.211oc.org> starting February 1, 2021 to find the 80% AMI level for your household size

Please know the ERA program does not apply to homeowners and past due mortgage payments, utilities, or energy costs and is solely to be used for renter households.

“Anything we can do to keep people in their rental homes — out of shelters and off the streets — ought to be done with urgency. This financial relief will be supplemented with services offered by our regional providers, which will include stabilization and supportive resources,” said Supervisor Donald P. Wagner, Third District.

Documentation requirements include:

- Photo ID
- Copy of a lease agreement
- Proof of income affected by COVID-19, such as an unemployment letter or letter from an employer that details your reduced hours or pay
- Proof of unpaid rent or utilities such as documentation from a landlord or utility company stating the amount owed and that it is overdue

“The County’s ERA program will provide much needed financial assistance to those struggling to make rent payments as a result of COVID-19. The program, which provides a maximum financial benefit of \$10,000 per eligible rental household, is set to expire on December 31, 2021. Anyone interested in applying for financial assistance should gather the necessary supporting documentation now, so they are ready to apply when the application period opens in February,” said Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District.

Orange County landlords are able to apply on behalf of their tenants, as long as the tenant co-signs the application. To find more information or to get ready to apply, our residents may call 2-1-1 starting February 1, 2021 to receive assistance in multiple languages, visit <https://era.211oc.org/> or text ERA to 898211.