

State of Louisiana's U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Program

March 5, 2021

Dear Board Members:

As a follow-up to our discussions at our last board meeting, I wanted to go ahead and let you know that later this morning, we will officially launch Louisiana's U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Program. We are including a copy of the press release below, which contains pertinent information regarding the program, application process, and potential benefits.

The Louisiana Housing Corporation, in partnership with the Louisiana Office of Community Development, will administer the state program. In addition, the law allowed local jurisdictions with populations over 200,000 to apply for and receive direct allocations from the U.S. Treasury. In Louisiana, seven jurisdictions—Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans and St. Tammany parishes—did so and will administer their own programs. Programs administered in those seven parishes may vary in terms of eligibility, prioritization, benefits, and application process.

For those of you who are from and/or represent all or portions of the remaining 57 parishes, we have developed a toolkit of resources that you can use to help spread the word about the program to your community, including an overview brochure, a checklist of required application documents, an overview of the program process, FAQs, and social media content. To view the available resources, click here: <https://www.lastaterent.com/resources>.

Thanks again for your support in implementing this incredibly important program. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

LOUISIANA LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM TO ASSIST RENTERS AND LANDLORDS IMPACTED BY COVID-19

PROGRAM CAN COVER PAST-DUE RENT AS WELL AS FUTURE RENT

BATON ROUGE, La. (March 5, 2021) —Today, Governor John Bel Edwards announced the launch of a new program that will provide financial assistance to Louisiana renters and landlords experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is funded through the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 133). This relief package includes \$25 billion for emergency rental assistance, of which \$161 million has been allocated to the state to provide assistance in 57 Louisiana parishes.

The Louisiana Housing Corporation, in partnership with the Louisiana Office of Community Development, will administer the state program. In addition, the law allowed local jurisdictions with populations over 200,000 to apply for and receive direct allocations from the U.S. Treasury. In Louisiana, seven jurisdictions—Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans and St. Tammany parishes—did so and will administer their own programs.

“We know many Louisiana renters are in jeopardy of eviction due to financial circumstances as a result of the current pandemic, and we want to prevent that,” said Gov. John Bel Edwards. “At the same time, we know many rental property owners are also being impacted. This program is designed to help provide much needed relief to both landlords and renters during this challenging time.”

The state-administered program will focus on paying rental arrears, or past-due rent, and up to three months of future rent for eligible applicants. Priority will be given to households where at least one member has been unemployed for more than 90 days due to COVID-19, and to households earning less than 50 percent of the Area Median Income, as required by the law.

Louisiana renters may be eligible for assistance from the state-administered program if they meet all of the following criteria:

- They qualify or previously qualified for unemployment benefits, or experienced an income reduction or other financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- They are not current on rent payments or at risk of eviction.
- Their total household income is at or below 80 percent of the area median income.

Information on AMI income levels by parish can be found at www.LAStateRent.com.

Louisiana landlords may apply on their tenant’s behalf. To participate in the program, landlords must not evict a tenant for at least 60 days after the assistance ends and must forgive late fees, penalties, interest and court costs.

“We are excited to launch this program with our partners throughout the state as this assistance is critical and much needed,” said LHC Executive Director E. Keith Cunningham, Jr. “The goals of this program are to keep people housed during the pandemic by preventing evictions for failure to pay rent, to serve the maximum number of households as quickly as possible while prioritizing those in greatest need, to ensure equitable geographic distribution of assistance and to compensate landlords for unpaid rent during eviction moratoria.”

“This new program provides additional resources for Louisiana in helping renters avoid homelessness and landlords regain some degree of financial stability, as we continue to cope with the economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis,” said OCD Executive Director Pat Forbes. “We know that this federal allocation will not be enough to meet the entire need, but it provides Louisiana with additional resources to help our people be more secure in their housing situations.”

To learn more or to apply for the state program, tenants and landlords can visit www.LAStateRent.com. For questions about the program or assistance with the application process, renters or landlords can call 877-459-6555. Renters in the 57 designated parishes affected by business shutdowns, closures, layoffs and reduced work hours as well as those receiving enhanced unemployment benefits are strongly encouraged to apply.

Programs administered by Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans and St. Tammany parishes, may vary in terms of eligibility, prioritization, benefits and application process. Renters and landlords in those parishes should contact their local representatives or may visit www.LAStateRent.com to learn more.