

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS

March 1, 2022

AND SHEILA KUEHL

INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN THE STATE EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Pub.L. No. 117-2)(“ARPA”) was signed into law. ARPA established the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA 2), and authorized the direct allocation of funds to states, the District of Columbia, units of local government, territories, and high-need grantees. On June 28, 2021, the State of California adopted AB-832, establishing a state administered rental assistance program to administer ERA 2 funding on behalf of participating jurisdictions. On November 2, 2021, the Board adopted a motion authorizing the County to participate in the State Rental Assistance Program for ERA 2 and notified the Treasury of the Board’s intent to have the State of California administer the ERA 2 program funds on behalf of the County. The emergency rental assistance programs provide relief for low-income tenants with rent and utility arrears between the months of April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2022 to prevent eviction, homelessness, or

MOTION

SOLIS _____

KUEHL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

MITCHELL _____

housing instability. Tenants that apply for rental assistance may be entitled to special eviction protections under state law, and program funds provide landlords 100% of the tenant's rent obligation for approved months of rental assistance. The maximum amount of assistance is 18 months.

As of February 15, 2022, the online "dashboard" for the state administered rental assistance program indicated that 234,869 applications had been received from Los Angeles County. However, data suggests that many eligible tenants and landlords in the County have not yet applied for assistance. For example, the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey suggests that there may be hundreds of thousands of additional households with rent debt that are likely eligible for ERAP but have not applied. Furthermore, few of the County's 1.1 million low-income rental households have applied for prospective rental assistance.

On February 9th, 2022, in response to the strong demand for emergency rental assistance, the State of California adopted SB-115 authorizing forgivable cashflow loans to cover eligible ERAP applications received on or before March 31, 2022.

On February 24, 2022, the state notified participating jurisdictions and the Local Partner Network that the State Rental Assistance Program will stop accepting new applications after March 31, 2022.

Additional outreach efforts during the month of March 2022, such as advertising on social media, radio, newspaper, and buses, as well as direct mailings and banners on County websites, offer the potential to secure additional assistance for County tenants and landlords.

Those who are facing eviction should immediately contact StayHousedLA.org.

StayHousedLA will continue to provide workshops, legal assistance, and other support to keep tenants housed in Los Angeles County.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct LACDA and DCBA to immediately expand and supplement current outreach and awareness efforts to increase participation in the emergency rental assistance programs by March 31, with the goal of notifying all potential eligible applicants in the County about the availability and method of applying for emergency rental assistance. These expanded outreach efforts should reflect the level and scope of outreach conducted by the County when mass public education is required, such as when outbreaks occur, and include a range of media types, such as: radio, print and television ads; social media; utilization of existing County websites, direct mailings and other educational resources; and advertisements at transit stops, on transit vehicles, and County facilities. Outreach should be conducted in a culturally sensitive manner designed to reach underserved renter and landlord populations and those with limited English proficiency, and include any other methods LACDA and/or DCBA feels will increase participation in the emergency rental assistance program by eligible renters and landlords;
2. Direct LACDA and DCBA working with community partners including but not limited to Stayed Housed LA, State Rent Relief community partners network, promotoras, and any resources available to the County, to bolster existing efforts to ensure that tenants have one-on-one assistance with completing emergency

rental assistance applications that are submitted prior to the March 31 deadline;

3. Authorize LACDA and DCBA to supplement current expenditures with whatever funds are necessary to achieve the goals set forth herein. Existing funds allocated for these or similar purposes, such as, but not limited, to any administrative allocation from ERA1 or ERA2, should be spent first if not otherwise committed, but shall not limit LACDA and DCBA's ability to do comprehensive outreach and should not diminish current outreach and assistance efforts.

#

HLS:gdm