COVID-19 RENTAL ASSISTANCE: A PLAYBOOK FOR IMMEDIATE DEADLINES AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
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COVID-19 RENTAL ASSISTANCE:

A PLAYBOOK FOR IMMEDIATE DEADLINES AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
OUR EXPERTS

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City/County/Federal Government

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Funded Programs
The Basics
• What is the Emergency Rental Assistance Program?
• Who will receive funds?
• I’m eligible, how much will I receive?
• How do I access the funds?

What Should I Be Doing Now?
• Assessing Community Needs
• Assessing Organization and Operation Capacity
• Identifying program or jurisdictional partners
• Determining if you should ‘opt in’ to be a direct beneficiary

We’re In, What’s Next?
• Building, launching and implementing a successful program
THE BASICS

- What is the Emergency Rental Assistance Program?
- Who will receive funds?
- I’m eligible, how much will I receive?
- How do I access the funds?
Nine months after it passed the trillion-dollar Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Congress has agreed on a second $900 billion COVID-19 relief package, through The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. A key provision of the package is a temporary extension of the CDC eviction moratorium until January 31, 2021, and a new emergency rental assistance program that will provide $25 billion to help families and individuals impacted economically by COVID-19 to pay their rent and utility bills.

The Program provides flexible funding to local jurisdictions to be utilized for:

- RENTAL ASSISTANCE
- UTILITY ASSISTANCE
- OTHER HOUSING NEEDS

Eligibility

- Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19;
- Demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability; and
- Has a household income at or below 80 percent of the area median.
The Department of Treasury will administer the program using the framework used to distribute Coronavirus Relief Funds. One important difference is a much lower population threshold, from 500,000 to 200,000 for local governments to be eligible for direct fund allocation - nearly triple the number of local jurisdictions will be able to participate as primary recipients.

CRF > 171 Eligible Units of Local Government w/ Population Over 500k

CRF RENTAL > 426 Eligible Units of Local Government w/ Population Over 200k
NACO recently published projections of awards to local jurisdictions should they opt in to receive the funds.

Award Methodology:

1) 45% of Total Amount of State Allotment (based on population; min $200M) * Jurisdictions population proportionality of State

Example Estimate:

Cleveland County, OK Population = 284,014 or 0.07177561 of State Population
State of Oklahoma Population = 3,956,971 or 1.21% State Share of Total Population
Estimated Allotment for State of Oklahoma = $263,000,000
45% of $263,000,000 = $118,350,000 * 7.177561% = $8,494,643 {Cleveland County Allocation}
Units of Local Governments **MUST** opt in for funds by January 12, 2021

Eligible grantees must provide payment information and sign the acceptance of award terms [https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/emergency-rental-assistance-program](https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/emergency-rental-assistance-program)


Certification Submission [https://forms.treasury.gov/caresact/EmergencyRentalAssistanceVFForm](https://forms.treasury.gov/caresact/EmergencyRentalAssistanceVFForm)

Payments will be disbursed to States and Units of Local Government 30 days after bill enactment (December 27th)
Projected disbursement date 01/30/21
WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING NOW?

• Assessing Community Needs
• Assessing Organization and Operation Capacity
• Identifying program or jurisdictional partners
• Determining if you should ‘opt in’ to be a direct beneficiary
WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING NOW
ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

The Rental Assistance Program framework identifies the following key prioritization parameters for eligibility and use of funds:

90% of funding must be utilized for rental, utility assistance or other housing needs
Priority should be given to applicants who are have are 1) income is less than 50% of AMI —and- has been unemployed for past 90 days

10% may be used for housing stability services and overall grant administration

Assessment
3 components to understand about your community:
• Renter households + Income and Average Rental Cost (ACS TableID: S2503 [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=S2503])
• Population at 30%, 50% and 80% of Area Median Income (S2503 + HUD LMISD)
• Local Unemployment Data (State Unemployment Reporting)
### WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING NOW

#### ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

**FINANCIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Note: The table shown may have been modified by user selections. Some information may be missing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Rent-occupied housing units</th>
<th>Percent renter-occupied housing units</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
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<td>Owner-occupied housing units</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS IN 2018 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$200,000 to $499,999</td>
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<td>8.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$500,000 and more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median household income (dollars)</td>
<td>37,373</td>
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<tr>
<th>MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS</th>
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<td>Less than $500</td>
<td>637</td>
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<td>$1,500 to $1,999</td>
<td>5,875</td>
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<td>6,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>$30,000 and more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median (dollars)</td>
<td>952</td>
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<tr>
<th>MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 25%</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>25% to 29%</td>
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<td>4.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>30% to 34%</td>
<td>7.20%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
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<td>35% to 39%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>40% to 44%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>45% to 49%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% to 54%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>55% to 59%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
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<td>60% to 64%</td>
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<td>65% to 69%</td>
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<td>70% to 74%</td>
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<td>75% to 79%</td>
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<td>80% to 84%</td>
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<td>85% to 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>90% to 94%</td>
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<td>95% to 99%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING NOW
ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Cleveland County Example:

- 39,329 Rental-Occupied Units
- Avg Rental Cost $500-$1499 (84% of renter population)
- 24,976 population below 80% of Area Median Income
- 13,635 population at 50% of Area Median Income for which rent makes up >30% of Income
- Unemployment ~6,100 reported November 2020

Key Takeaways:
- Avg monthly rent $1200;
- 13,000 high risk housing insecurity;
- Unemployment rate spiked in April/May at 14%/12%; stabilized at ~5% approx. 2x norm
- @ $5k award cap – 4 months of assistance = ~1500 renters assisted
Carefully evaluate your organization’s ability to manage a complex federal grant program. Don’t be deterred by material weaknesses identified in this stage, these are areas to address in your program design/development.

Key components to consider when evaluating your organization’s capacity and capabilities:

- Existing in-house capacity to build a scalable organization around or ability to outsource while providing management oversight
- Finance systems adequate to expeditiously process payments, track and monitor transactions and support reporting/audit requirements
WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING NOW
IDENTIFYING PROGRAM OR JURISDICTIONAL PARTNERS

Utilizing existing County/City agencies or community-based partners may be a good fit for your organization.

Key components to consider when evaluating potential community or external partners capacity and capabilities:

• Existing agency or community-based organization currently managing affordable housing, homelessness or similar programs/initiatives
• Experience in managing grant-funded programs, especially those involving federal funding
• Scalable organization to meet the size of your projected program
• Ability to bridge the gap to groups at highest risk and/or need
• Ability to address language or cultural barriers
WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING NOW
DETERMINING IF YOU SHOULD ‘OPT IN’ TO BE A DIRECT BENEFICIARY

The intent of lowering the threshold for direct local jurisdictional assistance is to provide local flexibility and decision making to the stakeholders who are closest to the challenges faced by their individual community. While launching a local program may seem daunting or risky, you will need to make a decision of what is best for your constituents.

Additional considerations:
- Evaluate regional jurisdictional partnerships, including other CRF recipients
- Discuss potential for administration by state with reserved funds for your community
- Evaluate CRF funded programs to determine if they can be adapted and/or repurposed with more targeted beneficiaries
WE’RE IN, WHAT’S NEXT?

• Building, launching and implementing a successful program
We covered a good amount of information that hopefully gets you the resources to make the best decision regarding the COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program.

Next Friday, January 15th we will be covering program design, communication strategies, process development, system considerations and much much more.
IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS
EXAMPLE: CHOOSING A SYSTEM

One of the first and most critical decisions to be made in running a Rental Assistance program will be selecting the proper system for managing information. While there are a wide range of software solutions to choose from, ideally the system will include many of the following features:

► End-to-end workflow from pre-screening through award determination, including document management and retention that maximizes automation.
► Highly secure, scalable system that protects sensitive data.
► Fraud detection/duplication of benefits avoidance
► Easy integration with external data sources, legacy systems, and 3rd-party applications for ID validation, payments processing & other services.
► Flexibility to accommodate federal requirements, additional local requirements and any changes as the program evolves (extensions, eligibility criteria adjustments, additional funding, etc.)

► Intuitive, adaptable, customer-friendly interface; notifications (email, SMS, chat) for easy communication and expedited processing; progress tracking.
► Data extraction for local use
► Full audit trail and audit capabilities
► Robust KPI tracking, reporting & analytics

WITT O’BRIEN’S
QUESTIONS?

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