



MEMORANDUM

Date: August 6, 2021

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CH Huckelberry", is written over the printed name and title.

Re: **Emergency Rental Assistance Program Update**

This memorandum is provided to update the Board of Supervisors regarding the progress being made to distribute federal funds designed to prevent eviction by providing rent relief.

The County has undertaken a number of steps to minimize evictions related to COVID-19 and to ultimately reduce temporary homelessness. These actions include the following:

- Creation of Specialty Court in the Consolidated Justice Court for Eviction Related Hearings and Actions – In this fiscal year's budget, the Board of Supervisors authorized additional funding to Justice Court for the sole purpose of creating an Eviction Specialty Court where one single judge, in this case a pro tem, who has specific knowledge in the eviction legal process handles all eviction cases in Pima County. The purpose of this Court is to eliminate inconsistent application of rules and laws associated with the eviction process.

This Court has been created, the pro tem judge is in place and the Court is operating.

- Creation of the Office of Emergency Eviction Legal Services – The Board also appropriated funds to create an Office of Emergency Eviction Legal Services. Its purpose is to provide advice, navigation and legal services to those facing eviction as well as to assist landlords and tenants in processing applications for rental assistance and other services.

The Office of Emergency Eviction Legal Services is now operational; operating in the Courts with Court Navigators who can help tenants with housing resources and legal counseling directly to tenants.

- Processing of Federal Emergency Rental Assistance – To streamline the process for providing emergency rental assistance, the City of Tucson and Pima County combined their application processes so that only one uniform application is required. The City and County operate a combined program. Both Pima County and the City of Tucson have received significant federal resources for emergency rental assistance. Over \$56 million of rental assistance is being made available.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) 1 Allocation
\$15.18 million for Pima County
\$16.67 million for City of Tucson

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ERAP 2 Allocation
 \$12 million Pima County
 \$13 million City of Tucson

The County model used for providing rental assistance is a hybrid model using staff, contractors and subcontractors who are nonprofit agencies. The City of Tucson processes their rental assistance applications through contractors and nonprofit agencies. Pima County is significantly ahead of the rest of the state with distribution of funds and it has been easier for those facing eviction to access funds through this joint City/County program.

- Rental Assistance Performance to Date – The joint process has resulted in \$16.5 million in assistance paid directly to landlords and property managers as of this date. More than \$21.5 million or approximately 68 percent of ERAP 1 funds have been allocated to date.

Just last week, \$1,579,057 was paid (the best performance week to date system wide) of our combined City/County system.

In contrast, the State’s Department of Economic Security has only paid out approximately \$11.4 million of more than \$289 million allocated to this agency or approximately 4 percent.

- Performance Recognized – The system now used by the County, including all of the innovations made in forming the Specialty Court, Office of Emergency Eviction Legal Services and performance processing related to rental assistance has gained the program significant recognition. The National Low Income Housing Coalition has named the program as one of the most “innovative, efficient and effective programs providing rental assistance nationwide.” In addition, the Arizona Multi-housing Association has recognized the program as the most “efficient and expedient program in the state.”

This program should be viewed as a continuum of service from the Courts through financial relief. In addition, a homeless prevention program will also be added for those actually evicted and made homeless due to eviction.

CHH/anc

c: The Honorable Jeffrey Bergin, Presiding Judge, Pima County Superior Court
Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Ronald Overholt, Court Administrator, Pima County Superior Court
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
 Health and Community Services
Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department
Dan Sullivan, Director, Community and Workforce Development
Andrew Flagg, Deputy Director, Community and Workforce Development