

# NLHA Bulletin

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## Advocacy

### NLHA Urges Swift and Efficient Implementation of Rental Assistance

LESS THAN 24 HOURS after the President signed the COVID relief measure that provides \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance, NLHA worked with its industry partners (NMHC, NAR, CARH, NAHMA, IREM etc.) to develop a short list of recommendations to encourage swift and efficient distribution of funds to eligible applicants.

The following message and list of recommendations was sent to Treasury and HUD officials as well as Biden transition staff:

The inclusion of much needed rental assistance in the COVID relief bill is critical to protecting renters from losing their homes and ensuring the owners' ability to maintain the viability of the rental housing stock. I surmise that there will be a number of folks working on this across departmental lines so I have included folks from Treasury, HUD and WH. Please let us know if there are others that we should share this email and information with. We want to be helpful as you work to start the implementation of this program and I was not quite sure who all will be working on this at each agency, etc.

To date, housing providers have shouldered a significant financial burden throughout the pandemic. Owners and operators have ensured access to much-needed housing, despite not receiving rental income necessary to meet their obligations (i.e., mortgage payments, insurance, taxes, maintenance and utilities).

We urge the Treasury to allocate the funding as quickly as possible and to provide a framework for implementation that will maximize states and localities ability to get the much-needed assistance into the hands of the eligible recipients.

Important considerations include:

- (1) **Provide flexibility with regard to demonstration of eligibility for those who participate in the program; a certification or affidavit of need should be sufficient.** In addition, with regard to landlord applications on behalf of tenants, proof of consent should be easily demonstrable.
- (2) **Allow for safe harbors by which states, localities, and program participants may operate in good faith and within the intent of the legislation.** The overarching goal should be to assemble reasonable supporting documentation to enable the assistance to flow quickly and efficiently. Treasury may want to consider providing sample documents for use by residents and landlords seeking assistance.

(3) **Ensure broad distribution of funds across rural, suburban and urban markets, and to all property types** - small, medium and large – including residents in manufactured housing communities.

(4) **Widely communicate availability of assistance and the process by which renters or their housing providers may apply.** There is evidence as to the imperative and value of aggressive communication with all participants in rental assistance programs. This ensures wide distribution of resources and closes any gaps in service to those in need.

(5) **Enable funds to be utilized without extraneous requirements that undermine Congressional intent.** The legislation is clear that these funds can be used for past and current rent, utilities and *“other expenses related to housing incurred directly or indirectly, to the novel coronavirus disease.”* States should be prohibited from imposing additional prerequisites on housing providers or renters. Examples include obligations for owners to accept discounted rents or additional months of the lease term without rent payment.