

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development and Related
Agencies

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and
Urban Development and Related Agencies

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Womack, and Ranking Member Quigley:

As you consider the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) appropriations bill, I urge you to provide at least \$100 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Eviction Protection Grant Program, to help low-income renters access legal assistance when they are at risk of, or subject to, eviction.

At the height of the coronavirus pandemic, 1 in 5 renters were behind on rent with millions at risk of eviction due to job loss and reduced wages as our country grappled with an unprecedented health crisis.¹ To stabilize renters and the economy, and avoid a spike in homelessness, I led the effort to establish a nationwide eviction moratorium through July 24, 2020, including an extension of the moratorium until January 31, 2021 through the "Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021."² I also helped secure a net total of \$46.6 billion in the first-of-its-kind Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA) through pandemic relief legislation. Since then, this funding has helped over 12 million households avoid eviction and remain stably housed, while offsetting an early recession.³ In addition, HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research began the Eviction Protection Grant Program in 2021 to bolster federal eviction diversion and prevention efforts.

Often, eviction filings entail small levels of rental arrears and little to no legal representation for renters. Legal assistance in the eviction process has not only been shown to keep families housed by ensuring renters can successfully navigate the legal process, which can also help reduce homelessness, but it also increases local cost savings by preventing or reducing reliance on other systems such as healthcare and foster care systems.⁴ To date, HUD's Eviction Protection Grant Program has successfully assisted over 25,000 households in accessing legal assistance.⁵ However, today, as ERA funds are dwindling, eviction moratoria are lifting across the country, and our nation faces ongoing inflation, we are again threatened with a wave of evictions.

¹ Statement of Representative Maxine Waters, [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021: Congressional Record Vol. 167, No. 45](#) (Mar. 10, 2021).

² Financial Services Committee, [House Republicans Block Emergency Legislation by Chairwoman Waters to Extend Federal Eviction Moratorium](#) (Jul. 30, 2021).

³ U.S. Department of the Treasury, [Treasury Announces \\$690 Million to be Reallocated to Prevent Eviction](#) (Jan. 24, 2023).

⁴ White House, [FACT SHEET: White House Summit on Building Lasting Eviction Prevention Reform](#) (Aug. 2, 2022).

⁵ HUD, [Eviction Protection Grant Program](#) (Accessed on April 25, 2024).

As of April 1, 2024, over 2.5 million people are reported to be at risk of eviction within the next two months, 60% of whom are Black or Latinx, despite making up just 32.7% of the total U.S. population.⁶ Indeed, eviction filings across the nation are higher today than they were pre-pandemic,⁷ with the average U.S. renter now paying more than 30% of their income on rent—the highest cost-burden level in at least 20 years.⁸ The lack of fair and affordable housing is a key driver of inflation and at the root of housing instability. Until we secure the robust investments needed to increase the affordable housing supply and address rising cost burdens, at least \$100 million for the Eviction Protection Grant Program in FY25 is critical, especially for those disproportionately at risk of eviction. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please contact Alia Fierro with Ranking Member Waters at Alia.Fierro@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Maxine Waters
Ranking Member, Committee on
Financial Services

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, [Phase 4.0 Cycle 03 Household Pulse Survey: March 5 - April 1](#) (Apr. 18, 2024).

⁷ AP News, [Eviction filings are 50% higher than they were pre-pandemic in some cities as rents rise](#) (Jun. 17, 2023).

⁸ Moody's, [Key Takeaways from the 4th Quarter Housing Affordability Update](#) (Jan. 19, 2023).