

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 16, 2020

The Honorable Doug Ducey
Governor of Arizona
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey,

We are writing with urgent concern on behalf of our constituents facing eviction, foreclosure, and homelessness throughout the state of Arizona. As the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) eviction moratorium expiration date approaches, Arizonans call our offices daily with dire concerns about their housing situation.

According to reports by Arizona 211, more than one-third of calls received are urgent requests related to housing, and 66% of housing calls specifically address needing rental assistance. According to the Arizona Department of Housing's COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program data, as of December 4, there are 6,235 applications still awaiting review by a Community Action Agency (CAA). Applicants are given minimal information on their application status or whether there is enough funding available to assist them.

As you know, the CARES Act (PL.116–136) included a \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) for state, local, and tribal governments to help broadly cover expenses incurred due to the public health emergency created by COVID-19. States were given broad discretion for the use of this funding, with Arizona receiving nearly \$1.9 billion to provide assistance to keep our constituents safe. We are concerned that despite the evident need for additional housing and rental assistance to stave off economic disaster and unthinkable hardship for families, funding is being diverted to state agencies outside the scope of congressional intent while Arizonans struggle to maintain their homes

According to the Arizona Department of Housing, nearly 31,000 households in Arizona applied for rental assistance as of December 4. Yet, only 2,300 have been approved, with an additional 3,800 receiving non-state assistance. We seek information on what additional plans the state has to help families facing eviction, landlords unable to pay mortgages, and those desperately seeking some form of relief to stay safe in their homes. Please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Are there plans to further replenish the Rental Property Owner Preservation Fund (RPOPF), with a particular focus on small business landlords, who have the most difficulty recovering from lost rental income?
2. Are there plans to provide additional funds for the Rental Eviction Assistance Program, create a separate state program, or provide additional funds to localities for housing

assistance? Do plans include a way to better target emergency rental assistance to lowest-income and most marginalized individuals facing an imminent risk of homelessness?

3. Is the state collecting data to ensure underserved groups and marginalized populations, including people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, and people with criminal records, have equitable access to the benefits? Are evaluations of the usability and accessibility of online programs being conducted?
4. On January 1, 2021, court systems will be overwhelmed with enforcement filings. Arizonans will be without protection from eviction just as COVID-19 infections reach new heights. Are there plans to issue a renewal of a statewide eviction moratorium?

We understand the dire need for additional federal assistance for housing issues. However, we must ensure that the funding allocated to Arizona is being used urgently, fairly, and effectively, as Congress intended. As you know, our state is experiencing a striking and deadly second wave of COVID-19 cases. It is critical to provide the necessary resources to Arizonans facing housing insecurity during this unprecedented public health crisis. To ensure our communities' safety, families must remain housed throughout the remainder of this pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress