

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 11, 2021

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

Dear Governor Ducey:

We write to urge you to do everything in your power to expedite the distribution of Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) new temporary moratorium stops evictions in communities with rising COVID-19, it is unacceptable that so little ERA has gotten into the hands of those who need it most.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, over 250,000 adults in Arizona are behind on their rent. Further, tens of thousands of evictions – over 30,000 in Maricopa County alone – have already been filed throughout the pandemic. It is unclear how many of these evictions were carried out despite the moratorium, but it is clear we face a looming homelessness crisis if ERA funds continue to be distributed at such a slow pace.

We saw a glimpse of this crisis in the short period the moratorium lapsed. Reports on the ground from Constables and others indicated a significant increase in evictions filings, and there is a growing sense of fear and uncertainty among renters, even those who have already applied for ERA.

Arizona has received hundreds of millions of dollars for rental assistance from COVID-19 relief legislation. Yet, as of August 5, 2021, Arizona distributed less than \$12 million to renters and landlords. In addition, the State has specifically failed to provide sufficient technical assistance to rural families who struggle to apply through the online-only portal. These unacceptable failures must be addressed, starting from the Governor's Office.

In the spirit of remedying these shortcomings and taking advantage of the temporary reprieve the new CDC moratorium has provided, we urge you to take steps to accelerate the dispersal of ERA funds, including but not limited to:

- Redoubling outreach and public communication about the availability of rental assistance;
- Simplifying the application process, including allowing for self-attestation of eligibility and providing sufficient technical assistance, especially to rural communities;
- Hiring additional temporary staff at the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) to process applications;
- Working with landlords and property owners to ensure they are made whole with rental assistance dollars;

- Urging our state and local courts to pause eviction proceedings until tenants and landlords can seek and access emergency rental assistance; and
- Releasing additional funds to cities and counties for distribution to localities and entities in the City of Tucson, the City of Phoenix, Pima County, and rural communities which have been considerably efficient at distributing funds.

Thanks to the new moratorium, we have been given a second chance at preventing a wave of homelessness – a serious public health crisis in a pandemic. We cannot let it go to waste.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests.

Sincerely,



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

CC: Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES)