



NEWS RELEASE

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Ventura County Rental Assistance Program Helps Thousands of Local Renters *Three months of rent funded to provide relief from COVID-19 impacts*

Ventura, CA - The Ventura County Pandemic Rental Assistance program advanced the Ventura County Board of Supervisors' goal to help low-income residents retain their homes at a critical time, using some \$11.4 million dollars in federal Coronavirus Relief funding to provide rental payments to more than 1,000 landlords on behalf of 5,413 renters in 1,690 households struggling to pay rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded households span all 10 cities as well as unincorporated areas of county and reflect the county's demographic makeup.

This program also offered referrals for other assistance, including CalFresh, CalWORKs, General Relief and Medi-Cal through mybenefitscalwin.org or 888-472-4463, and free and low-cost community-based resources at vchsa.org/community-resources.

"Many community members are struggling to make ends meet. Our goal has been to come alongside and provide support for those in need. We hope the three months of rent combined with other County supportive efforts will help to keep people in their homes," said Mike Powers, County Executive Officer.

The Rental Assistance Program was launched in June at the direction of the Board of Supervisors. The goal of the program was to provide temporary rental assistance for Ventura County residents who owed past-due rent because of a hardship due to COVID-19. Priority was given to eligible applicants with an annual household income of less than 50% area median income, followed by 80% AMI.

"We anticipated a great need for this program countywide," said Melissa Livingston, Director for the Human Services Agency. "Many renters have not been able to return to work, and they're struggling to pay for child care, food, and other basic needs – all as they're watching their back-rent debt grow. This rental program was designed to relieve some of that financial stress."

The rental program is federally funded by the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) established by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and prioritizes rental assistance for those with very low incomes who have been unable to pay rent due to the impacts of COVID-19.

"We understand there is still a need for assistance for many. We will continue to work to provide further opportunities for support for community members struggling to make ends meet," added Powers.



**COUNTY OF VENTURA
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The Board of Supervisors recently approved the design and implementation of a Farmworker Household Assistance Program in partnership with local agriculture, business and community-based donors to support farmworkers in need of rental, household and basic need assistance. The program will return to the Board of Supervisors in early September for final program and funding approval, providing for up to \$250,000 match of county general fund dollars to donor dollars. Program outreach has begun, and the initial application window will open in early September, followed by an approval process and distribution of funding.

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