

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

May 11, 2021

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SUBJECT: STATUS OF EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

On February 23, 2021, the City Council approved M&C 21-0106 and M&C 21-0111 to administer a rental assistance program to assist low-to-moderate income households financially impacted by COVID-19. The rental assistance program is funded through Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) Texas Emergency Rental Assistance Program (TERAP) and the United States Department of Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). The program funds total \$1,840,489.78 and \$27,484,117, respectively. As part of the implementation process, the City launched an online application portal utilizing Neighborly Software on March 8, 2021. The portal allows either the landlord or tenant to initiate the application process. In addition to the online application process, the City has partnered with six organizations, including five nonprofit agencies (Center for Transforming Lives, Samaritan House, Salvation Army, Housing Channel, and Cornerstone Assistance Network) along with Fort Worth Housing Solutions (FWHS), to provide case management services and assist in the overall administration of the program.

As of May 5, 2021, a total of 3,095 applications have been entered into the online portal, but only 23% have been completed. A chart summarizing the status of applications received to date is below:

Status	Cases	Notes
Applications In Progress	2,319	Applicant hasn't fully submitted their application
Application Under Review	190	Under review by caseworkers
Pending Applicant Information	251	Additional information has been requested from the tenant
Withdrawn/Duplicate	56	Duplicate accounts have been erased
Pending Vendor Response	41	Awaiting information from landlord
Denied	106	Applicant does not qualify
Approved	132	\$691,611 approved for payment
Total	3,095	

The approval process takes approximately 7-10 days provided all documentation has been submitted in a timely manner. In an effort to address the number of incomplete applications and expedite final approval, our partner agencies are notifying the impacted tenants or landlords to encourage them to complete the application process.

On May 5, 2021, Neighborhood Services staff, along with partnering agencies, began visiting apartment complexes and other rental housing locations throughout the city to conduct on-site intake of applications. In addition, an extensive affirmative marketing and outreach strategy (Social media, print media, Nextdoor, radio, bus stop benches, advertisements on mass transit, robocalls, etc.) specifically targeting underserved populations is being deployed to further inform all residents regarding the availability of assistance. As part of the ongoing outreach efforts, during the first week of May 2021, rental assistance information was shared by robocalls to area residents and sent to 302 faith-based organizations throughout the City to share with their memberships. City staff also completed a radio interview with KERA 90.1 FM on April 29, 2021; which aired on Friday, April 30, 2021, and has been in steady rotation since that date.

For additional information about this topic, please contact Victor Turner, Director of the Neighborhood Services Department, at 817-392-8187.

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City Manager