

Fund Rental Assistance Relief

Fair Budget Coalition in Collaboration with Platform of Hope

Recommendation

\$117 million to fund the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

In addition, ERAP should allow applicants to request 3 months of future rent in order to a) prevent economically vulnerable households from going into debt while waiting for rental assistance, b) decrease the number of applicants denied solely because they cannot pay their rent moving forward, and c) reduce the strain on eviction courts where the overwhelming majority of cases are brought for the simple reason that incomes do not match rents in this city.

What Is It?

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program helps DC residents with incomes at or below 40% of the area median income to help pay security deposits, the first month's rent, or if they are facing eviction, costs for overdue rent. ERAP works to resolve the root cause of evictions and helps prevent homelessness by ensuring that families and individuals have the funds they need to pay rent. It is a critical program for DC renters and should be fully funded.

What's At Stake?

The DC eviction moratorium ended in September 2021 but low-income DC renters are still facing the impact of the COVID-related rent crisis and continue to face deep economic disparities in the current socio-economic climate.

In DC, over 48% of renters are cost-burdened, meaning their housing costs exceed 30% of their monthly income. Even further, some racial demographics are more cost-burdened than others. 54.8% of Black DC renters and 52.8% of Asian DC renters are spending more than 30% of their monthly income on rent which is 6.8% and 4.8%, respectively, higher than the overall percentage of cost-burdened renters.

Following the end of the eviction moratorium, there were 5,543 evictions filed and 676 evictions in DC coupled with rent hikes. While the median household income in DC is roughly \$90,000, there are inequities based on race. The median White household in DC makes \$146,265 in yearly income while Black (\$52,812) and Latinx (\$89,612) households make just a fraction of that amount.

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That is why it is critical to fully fund emergency programs like ERAP that stand in the gap between incomes and climbing rent prices. Mayor Bowser defunding this critical homelessness prevention program in her proposed budget coupled with her sweeps of homeless encampments sends a clear message that DC's vulnerable populations are not priorities. We must continue to maintain the safety net for DC residents as they transition to financial and housing stability.



Citations

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