

News Release

County Commissioners

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Eviction Rent Assistance Program Coming Soon to Thurston County *Commissioners approve contract with Community Action Council to manage program*

OLYMPIA – Yesterday, the Thurston County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Community Action Council of Lewis Mason and Thurston Counties (CAC) to manage the Eviction Rent Assistance Program (ERAP) for Thurston County renters. The funding, totaling \$3,183,179.00, for the program is funded by the CARES Act and managed by Washington State Department of Commerce and must be spent by December 31, 2020.

The intent of ERAP is to provide rental assistance for those most likely to become homeless after an eviction, to suffer severe health consequences if evicted, and to promote equity for groups of people disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in Thurston County. Eligible applicants must be at 50% or below the area median income, have at least one month rent unpaid or partially paid since March, and be experiencing at least one risk factor from a list developed by Washington State Department of Commerce. The program may cover up to three months of missed rent payments.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is putting our most vulnerable community members at even greater risk for severe illness and homelessness,” said Thurston County Board of Health Chair Tye Menser. “It’s incredibly important for these funds to reach those who could become homeless if evicted and prevent evictions from occurring.”

Thurston County residents with unpaid rent since March 2020 are encouraged to contact the CAC, or one of its partnering organizations, to see if they qualify and to be connected to possible additional resources. CAC expects to begin accepting application on August 24, 2020. However, with such high demand applicants should expect the process to take some time.

“We have full confidence in the ability of CAC, working with its partners, to implement this important program,” said Tom Webster, Manager of Thurston County Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention. “We expect a rush of interest from residents to apply for these funds and urge applicants to be patient as the program ramps up.”

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A separate program for young adults (ages 18-24) with unpaid or partially paid rent since March 2020 is expected to be managed through Community Youth Services (CYS). CYS submitted its application for \$360,000 to Washington State Department of Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth. While awaiting notice of the award, program development and meetings with partners are taking place. CYS aims to create a complimentary and consistent process for joint outreach. The award follows the same guidelines as ERAP and would serve Thurston County's youth, young adults, and their families.

For more information:

Washington State Department of Commerce: www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness

Community Action Council of Lewis Mason and Thurston Counties
(360) 438-1100
ERAP@caclmt.org

Community Youth Services
(360) 943-0780
communityyouthservices.org

Thurston County Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention
www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/sscp