



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

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Governor Abbott Announces Over \$171 Million In CARES Act Funding For Rental Assistance, Texas Eviction Diversion Program

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott today announced the allocation of over \$171 million in funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act which will primarily be used for targeted rental assistance for Texans at risk of becoming homeless due to eviction. The funding will also allow the Supreme Court of Texas, the Office of Court Administration, and the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to work in partnership with local governments and non-profits and the newly created Texas Eviction Diversion Program to help renters stay in their homes, catch up on missed rental payments, and avoid an eviction on their records.

Out of these funds, \$167 million will go to targeted rental assistance and \$4.2 million will be allocated through the Texas Supreme Court to help the state's legal aid providers and pro bono lawyers provide basic legal services to eligible Texans through this pandemic.

"The Texas Eviction Diversion Program is crucial to our state's response to COVID-19, and it will help many families recover from the impact of the pandemic without the looming threat of eviction," said Governor Abbott. "This innovative partnership, coupled with the renters assistance provided through CARES Act funding, will strengthen our economic recovery efforts and provide a lifeline to renters and property owners alike."

"Judges across Texas have a duty to ensure that justice is delivered in a timely, fair, and impartial way. In times like these, sometimes that means that we search for creative ways to meet the needs of landlords and tenants," said Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht. "The Texas Judiciary is happy to work with Governor Abbott and the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to provide a way for tenants to stay in their homes and ensure that landlords are made whole."

"The rental assistance and Texas Eviction Diversion Program will help courts deal with the anticipated deluge of eviction filings by reducing filings and diverting cases to an agreeable solution. Courts have worked hard to maintain access to justice during the pandemic, but we anticipate difficulty with timely handling the large number of eviction cases likely to be filed soon," said David Slayton, Administrative Director of the Texas Office of Court Administration. "The program announced today by the Governor, TDHCA, the Supreme Court, and OCA will permit courts to focus on those cases that need the most attention and ensure that landlords and tenants are able to resolve their issues timely."

"The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been devastating for many Texans, especially for some of our most vulnerable households," said Bobby Wilkinson, TDHCA executive director. "TDHCA, along with state leaders and program partners have worked expeditiously to get the CARES Act funds out to those in need, and I believe our efforts can make a difference not only in these particular communities, but throughout the state as we work toward more long-term recovery solutions."

"This CARES Act funding to help Texans who need help with their rent as we continue to fight COVID19 is critically important. These federal funds will help ensure that Texas

families can remain in their homes as our economy recovers and we get on track to come back stronger than ever," said Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick.

"Over the course of the pandemic, the State of Texas has made providing support for renters and property owners experiencing financial hardship a top priority, and this funding for rental assistance, combined with the Texas Eviction Diversion Program, reinforces that very commitment. This partnership will go great lengths to help stimulate our economy, equip our courts with the tools needed to ensure justice in eviction cases, and relieve many of the financial burdens that landlords and tenants are facing as a result of COVID-19," said Speaker Dennis Bonnen.

"These funds are targeted to help renters at risk of becoming homeless and will give them time to catch up on payments amid these difficult economic times," said Senator Jane Nelson.

"I strongly support this effort as it will assist families to stay in their homes at a time of financial stress for so many Texans. This funding will help keep families together and provide them with the rental assistance and legal support needed to prevent homelessness," said Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa.

"I'm pleased to have worked with my colleagues, stakeholders and others on a program which will assist many Texans during these difficult times," said Representative Giovanni Capriglione.

"COVID-19 is having a devastating economic impact on many families. Some are facing the reality of eviction when they're at their most vulnerable," said Representative Oscar Longoria. "This new program will provide crucial help to them and ensure their lives aren't upended."

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