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12-2020

## Pandemic Related Housing Assistance, December 2020

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### Repository Citation

Lendel, Iryna V.; Schnoke, Molly; and Henrichsen, Erica, "Pandemic Related Housing Assistance, December 2020" (2020). *Urban Publications*. 0 1 2 3 1709.

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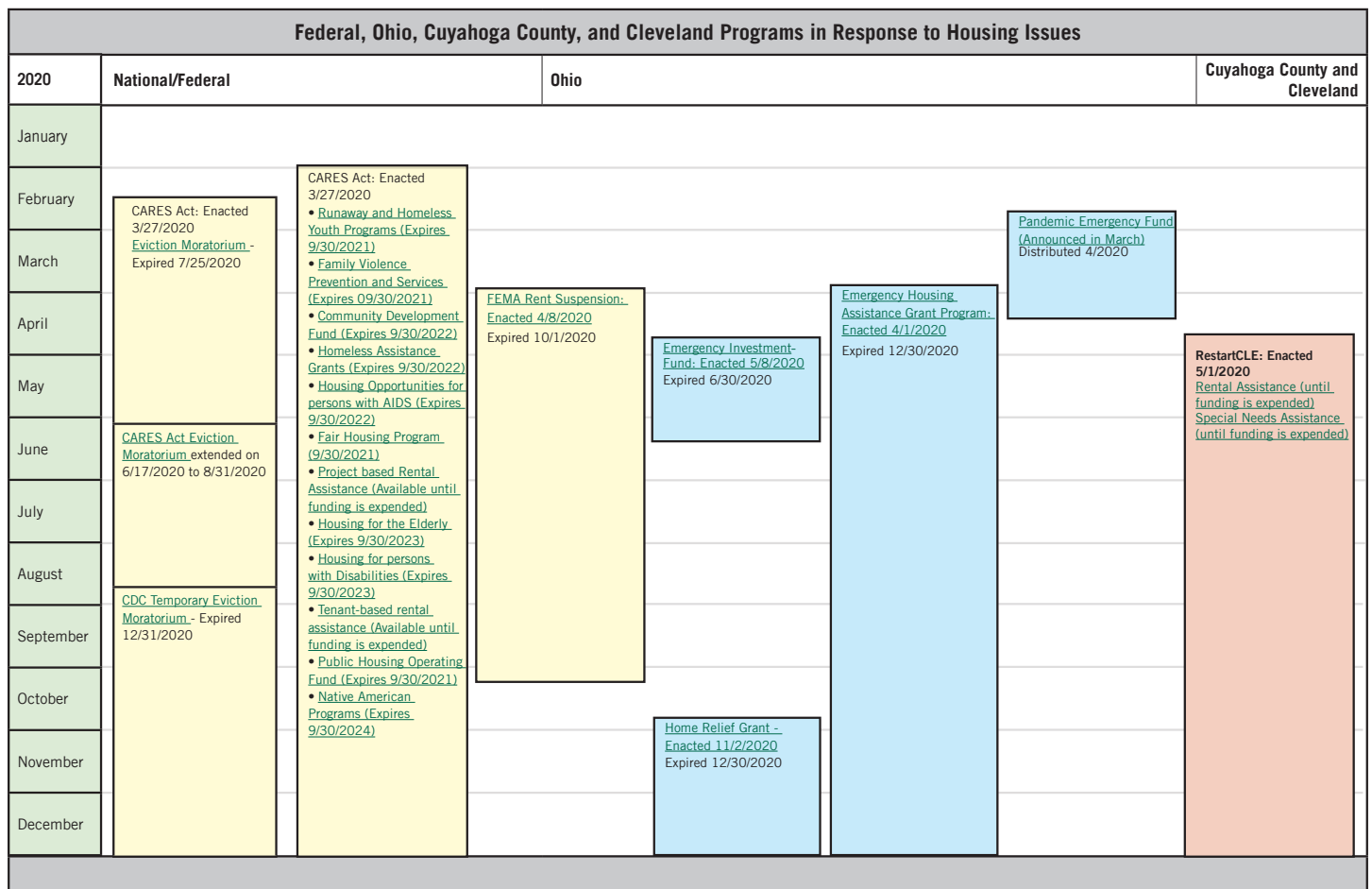
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# PANDEMIC RELATED HOUSING ASSISTANCE, DECEMBER 2020

The COVID-19 disease has resulted in a worldwide pandemic. Over 85 million worldwide confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported in a single year (2020) with more than 1.8 million of those cases resulting in death. The United States reported over 20 million confirmed cases in 2020 with over 300,000 deaths. This is a public health crisis that has resulted in widespread government response including event cancellations/prohibitions, stay-at-homes orders, the closure of nonessential businesses, and more. Governor Mike DeWine of Ohio declared a state of emergency on 3/9/2020 immediately following the first case reported in the state. On 3/13/2020, President Donald Trump declared the viral disease a national emergency. On 3/27/2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law. This is a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus bill that is meant to respond to the social and economic upheaval the disease has caused. This is the largest stimulus package passed in the United States to date.

The pandemic has damaged not only health systems, but social and economic systems as well. One effect of COVID-19 has been mass housing instability, which is predominantly due to evictions. Many people have lost their jobs due to COVID-19. This leaves them with little income to pay their bills, including rent/mortgage and utilities, forcing them to face consequences such as eviction or utility shutoffs. As a result of these housing issues, federal, state, and local governments have all passed legislation to prevent housing instability. The following timeline displays how the Federal Government, the State of Ohio, Cuyahoga County, and the City of Cleveland responded to housing issues during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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## FEDERAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

**Eviction Moratorium:** The CARES Act prevents landlords from initiating eviction proceedings or charging for a tenant's nonpayment of rent. These protections were enacted on 3/27/2020 and were set to expire on 7/25/2020. The moratorium's expiration date was extended to 8/31/2020 on 6/17/2020. On 9/4/2020, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced the issuance of an Order under the Public Health Service Act to temporarily prohibit residential evictions in order to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. This extends the moratorium to 12/31/2020.

**Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs:** The CARES act provided \$25 million in additional assistance to current grantees of the Runaway and Homeless Youth program which provides critical services and housing for runaway and homeless youth. The amounts were to be used to supplement existing funds in order to better respond to COVID-19.

**Family Violence Prevention and Services:** The CARES act provided \$45 million to give additional support to family violence shelters, and \$2 million in additional support for the National Domestic Violence Hotline. The funds are available to provide temporary housing and assistance to victims of family, domestic, and dating violence; as well as, for providing hotline services remotely.

**Community Development Fund:** The CARES act made \$5 billion available in supplemental CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funding to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Grantees are permitted to use the funds for a range of eligible activities such as providing facilities and housing options that allow for the maintenance of social distancing due to medical vulnerabilities.

**Homeless Assistance Grants:** The Homeless Assistance Grants program has \$4 billion available to respond to COVID-19. The funding supports individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance and to support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts created by COVID-19 under the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program.

**Housing Opportunities for persons with AIDS:** Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) has \$65 million available for carrying out its programs, to maintain operations, and for rental assistance, supportive services, and other necessary actions in order to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

**Fair Housing Program:** Fair Housing and Equal Opportunities Activities has \$2.5 million available for contracts, grants, and other assistance to address fair housing issues related to COVID-19.

**Project based Rental Assistance:** Project-Based Rental Assistance has \$1 billion available to respond to COVID-19. This includes maintaining normal operations and taking other actions as deemed necessary while the program is impacted by COVID-19. Funds may be used to provide assistance to owners or sponsors of properties in receipt of project-based assistance.

**Housing for the Elderly:** To the extent tenant incomes and required rental payments decrease, HUD will increase monthly rental subsidy payments to owners, thereby allowing property rent receipts to remain consistent. A portion of CARES rental assistance funding may also be used to address critical funding needs for properties experiencing exceptional operating cost increases and financial hardship as a direct result of COVID-19. \$50 million is available.

**Housing for persons with Disabilities:** HUD will accordingly increase monthly rental subsidy payments to owners, thereby allowing property rent receipts to remain consistent, to the extent that incomes and required rental payments decrease. A portion of CARES rental assistance funding may also be used to address critical funding needs for properties experiencing exceptional operating cost increases and financial hardship as a direct result of COVID-19. \$15 million is available.

**Tenant-based rental assistance:** The CARES act \$850 million for public housing agencies to enhance their systems and HCV operations to ensure they can establish new and alternate lines of communication with program participants to include, but not limited to, minimizing in person visits to the offices. provide \$400 million in additional resources to public housing agencies administering the HCV and Mainstream Programs to respond to higher program costs due to COVID-19, including but not limited to reduced tenant incomes and disruptions in the rental market.

**Public Housing Operating Fund:** The CARES act provided \$685 million in funds will be used to maintain normal operating levels and some capital expenses, as well as prevent, respond to incidents of COVID-19 among public housing staff and public housing resident families

**Native American Programs:** The CARES act provided \$200 million to maintain normal operations and fund eligible affordable housing activities under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 during the period the program is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**FEMA Rent Suspension:** To continue to ease the financial burden created by the pandemic on disaster survivors, FEMA will continue the temporary suspension on rent for survivors in California, Florida and Texas who are living in FEMA temporary housing.



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## STATE HOUSING PROGRAMS

**Emergency Housing Assistance Grant Program:** \$750,000 of funds available to supplement local Homelessness Prevention and Rapid-Rehousing efforts to help slow the transmission of COVID-19 and to prevent evictions and/or housing loss due to nonpayment of rent caused by COVID-19 related decline in income, wage reduction, job loss, health challenges, or similar circumstances. OHFA will distribute these funds to Ohio's HUD-approved Continuum of Care.

**Emergency Investment Fund:** Emergency Investment Funds are available through the Ohio Housing Finance Agency to 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. The maximum amount of funds an organization may receive is \$50,000. The purpose of the funds is to support relief funds or programs designed to address emergency housing issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the state. Funds can be used to pay for emergency rental assistance, homelessness prevention activities, operating assistance for housing providers, emergency shelter provision, etc. \$250,000 is available.

**Pandemic Emergency Fund:** \$500,000 in funds to help local homeless agencies get what they need to provide immediate stopgap assistance to help shelters stop the spread of COVID-19. Local homeless agencies that desperately need funding to reduce their population density and continue operating safely. This was intended to aid shelters until federal funding became available in May.

**Home Relief Grant:** The state of Ohio will allocate \$50 million from the Coronavirus Relief Fund from the CARES Act to 47 Community Action Agencies to help Ohioans that have experienced economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ohioans who are behind on rent, mortgage, and water and/or sewer utility bills may be able to receive assistance. Assistance can be applied to outstanding rent, mortgage, water, and/or sewer bills back to April 1, 2020. Ohioans can receive monthly assistance until the program ends.

## CUYAHOGA COUNTY AND THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HOUSING PROGRAMS

**ReStartCLE: Rental Assistance:** Run by CHN Housing Partners and EDEN, Inc and funded by the City and County, the COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program is designed to help residents of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County who are having difficulty making rental payments due to the economic impact of the pandemic and who meet income eligibility requirements. \$11.3 million of funds are available.

**ReStartCLE: Special Needs Assistance:** This funding targets individuals who are homeless and those with HIV/AIDS. The Cuyahoga County Homeless Service have seen immediate cost increases due to the coronavirus and this funding will support their existing efforts. Activities under this category include, but are not limited to: deconcentrating of shelters through the renting of hotel rooms; increases to sanitation costs and port-o-let rentals; increased staffing costs due to hazard pay; and increased costs to quarantine individuals with compromised immune systems.

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This project is funded by  
**The U.S. Economic Development Administration's  
CARES Act Recovery Assistance**



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Please share your comments with Dr. Iryna V. Lendel at [i.lendel@csuohio.edu](mailto:i.lendel@csuohio.edu)

| December 2020

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