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President Toni Preckwinkle Announces \$75M for Additional Round of Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance

ERA 2 will provide assistance with rent, utilities, and other housing expenses for residents in suburban Cook County

CHICAGO — (October 1, 2021)—Today, President Preckwinkle, County Board Commissioners Donna Miller, Brandon Johnson, and Frank J. Aguilar, the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development, and the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) announced another round of Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA 2) to support residents of suburban Cook County who are at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability due to the pandemic.

The program will dedicate an additional \$75M, funded through the American Rescue Plan, to provide emergency rental assistance to both tenants and landlords, with prioritization preference given to suburban Cook County’s most vulnerable residents. The program will begin accepting applications on Monday, October 4, 2021 and will remain open until Friday, October 29, 2021.

“This is a crucial extension of our Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which has provided aid to nearly 8,000 tenants and landlords during this difficult time. It was top priority for the County to continue this program and make critical improvements, such as covering relocation, security deposits, and other housing-related expenses that our residents so desperately need,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle.

Designed to prevent and relieve housing instability for suburban Cook County renters and landlords who have experienced financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ERA 2 can help with up to 18 months of rental assistance. The program will cover past and current utility

expenses, or other related housing expenses including relocation costs, security deposits, processing fees, and temporary housing solutions. In addition, under ERA 2, public housing residents and families with Housing Choice Vouchers are eligible to apply for assistance with their portion of rent.

“Because the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on our most vulnerable residents, ERA 2 allows residents and landlords who have received rental assistance from Cook County’s ERA 1 program to apply for an additional three months of assistance,” states Xochitl Flores, Bureau Chief of Economic Development of Cook County. “This program has been instrumental in providing direct rental assistance, preventing evictions and helping ensure our residents can maintain a stable home, even in the face of unprecedented financial hardships caused by the pandemic.”

To qualify for assistance under ERA 2, applicants must live in suburban Cook County and rent their place of residence. They must have a current or future obligation to pay rent, utilities, and/or other housing-related expenses and have a household annual income at or below established requirements (ranging from \$52,200 for single-person households up to \$98,450 for eight-person households). Additionally, applicants must have proof of financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic such as losing income, working fewer hours, being furloughed, needing to stay home because of risk of infection or to care for a child, or incurring significant costs during COVID-19.

“Stable housing is the cornerstone to health and safety, so keeping our residents in their homes has been paramount during the past 18 months of hardship,” said Richard Monocchio, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Cook County. “Cook County urges landlords to consider their options before filing for an eviction. We want to help landlords and tenants work out solutions to keep families in their homes while they wait on these crucial financial resources, which is why we are also spreading the word about our county-wide initiative to provide free legal assistance and mediation.”

Beyond meeting the eligibility requirements, priority will be given to eligible households that have received an eviction notice, households where at least one member has been unemployed for 90 days prior to applying, households where an individual pays more than 50% of income on rent, and households that are considered overcrowded. Priority applications will be processed before non-priority applications.

“By establishing these prioritizations, we are able to ensure that the ERA 2 funding will reach those suburban Cook Country residents who have been most severely impacted by the pandemic and are most at-risk for losing their homes,” added Preckwinkle.

Landlords and tenants in suburban Cook Country who wish to apply for ERA 2 funding can do so by visiting [Cook County Covid-19 Emergency Rental Assistance](#). All applications are open October 4 and will be accepted until October 29, 2021. For additional information, visit the [Cook County Bureau of Economic Development](#) or call (833) 221-9821. Help is available in multiple languages. Residents and landlords dealing with issues surrounding evictions and debt are also

encouraged to contact Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt (CCLAHD) at www.cookcountylegalaid.org or by calling 855-956-5763 to get free legal aid and mediation services to help resolve issues.



Caption: *Cook County will open a second round of Emergency Rental Assistance for renters and landlords. Applications are being accepted from October 4 – 29, 2021.*

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