



Baltimore City Council Hearing  
Economic & Community  
Development Committee

**Avoiding an Eviction Crisis**

Tuesday, July 13, 2021



# A National Crisis

- On June 23, 2021, the *Eviction Crisis Act of 2021* was introduced in the U.S. Senate to address the housing crisis impacting millions of families
- On June 24, the CDC extended its June 30 eviction moratorium to July 31...

*“The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a historic threat to the nation’s public health. Keeping people in their homes...is a key step in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.”*

- Also on June 24, the Department of Justice issued guidance to state courts to leverage eviction diversion strategies to...

*“...encourage landlords and tenants to resolve disputes without formal adjudication and increase the chance that tenants can stay in their homes”*



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# Baltimore's Challenge

- Baltimore has historic housing stability crisis
  - 1 in 10 tenants were behind on rent pre-pandemic
- COVID-19 quickly pushed those numbers higher
  - March 2020: **1 in 10**
  - April 2020: **1 in 5**
  - June 2020: nearly **1 in 3**
- In fall 2020, arrearages accelerated. DHCD estimates:
  - October 2020: 11,000 households in arrears
  - March 2021: **28,000 households** in arrears
- Despite moratorium, evictions have continued



Being an independent woman, begging for help is something that I'm not used to. It's embarrassing. Rejection hurts in all forms, but being rejected from emergency services is a fear that explodes my anxiety.

BEVERLY,  
BALTIMORE RESIDENT



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# Baltimore's Response

- In June 2020, Baltimore launched Temporary Rent Support, a short-term initiative with limited reach
- In November 2020, the city combined homelessness prevention and rental assistance efforts across agencies, launched Eviction Prevention Program
- A multi-agency collaboration...
  - Department of Housing and Community Development
  - Mayor's Office of Homeless Services
  - Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success
- ...administered by Baltimore City Community Action Partnership in MOCFS



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# Eviction Prevention Program: Funding

- Mix of multiple federal, state and local allocations, each with distinct spending timeline and eligibility requirements
- Total funding to date: [\\$37,772,997](#)
- In addition, [\\$16,220,484](#) in state funds have been allocated to the United Way of Central Maryland to administer the landlord bundle portion of the city's eviction prevention program
- The city also anticipates receiving an additional [\\$24,330,727](#) in state funds and [\\$23,127,929](#) in federal funds before the end of the calendar year



# Maximizing Reach: Range of Supports

- **Winter 2020/Spring 2021**

- **Back-rent recovery**—with a low-barrier first round of federal COVID relief funds, early focus was on back-rent recovery for all households negatively impacted by COVID and behind on rent

- **Summer 2021 Onward**

- **Housing stability**—leveraging multiple funding sources to provide relocation, legal, utility, security deposit and case management assistance; outsourcing landlord bundle processing to focus more on supporting housing stability/case management



I have never asked for help before. I'm usually the one who is always helping my family, friends and patients. But when Covid-19 infected my entire family, I had no choice but to ask for help. I was approved for the rental assistance program and they covered 100% of my missing rent. You prevented me and my children from being put out in the cold. Thank you.

CHANNELL, BALTIMORE RESIDENT



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# Maximizing Reach: Partnerships

## Eviction Prevention Collaborator's Council- monthly meeting since Fall 2020

- **United Way of Central Maryland**  
bulk back-rent, relocation, case management
- **South East CDC & CASA de Maryland**  
ongoing feedback for program improvements,  
direct outreach and application submission in Latinx  
community
- **Public Justice Center**  
program feedback, direct legal services to clients
- **City Agencies: DHCD + MOHS + MOCFS + MIMA**  
interagency coordination, program policy  
development, and resource sharing



You immediately went to work on my case and within days I was receiving hopeful correspondence. My fears began to slowly subside and for once in many weeks I was able to get a full night's sleep. Not once did you talk down to me. Not once did you treat me as if you were doing me a favor. Not only have you helped me financially, you brightened my mood from fear to hope.

BEVERLY, BALTIMORE RESIDENT



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# Eviction Prevention Program: Distribution

- As of July 2, 2021, Baltimore City had distributed **\$18,297,987\***
  - \$13,519,564 individual tenants
  - \$4,778,423 landlord bundles
  - **48.4%** of total funds to date

\*last week in FY2021

- **4,000+** households assisted:
  - all 14 City Council districts represented
  - 400 applications from the immigrant community/\$500,000 paid to landlords/tenants



Jacob, Carvel and Mrs. White—  
Your unconditional support towards my recent [need for] rental assistance...you have no idea what this means to me. I moved with joy and I'm ever so thankful for your listening ear and open heart towards my current situation.

LAMAR, BALTIMORE RESIDENT



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# Eviction Prevention Program: Strengths

- Customer service and communication
  - Call center
  - Designated constituent services team
  - Weekly tenant/landlord text/email updates
  - Communication with tenants landlords in native language
- Steps to ensure access within Latinx community
  - Alternative IDs and documents
  - Self-reporting
  - Bilingual communications, including Spanish video tutorial
- Expedited application approval w/eviction notices
- Networks to leverage regional, national best practices



During these times it has been very difficult financially for both tenants and landlords. I was so impressed with Ms. Duckett's high level of professionalism and responsiveness to my inquiries. I really appreciated her attitude and compassion.

ARMENTHA,  
BALTIMORE RESIDENT



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# Eviction Prevention Program: Challenges

- Disproportionate demand pre-COVID
- Immediate surge in demand March 2020
- Applicants need high-touch support
- Multiple funding sources, requirements
- Document collection
- Initial focus on low-barrier eligibility
- Court-ordered evictions despite moratoria

→ All fueling...

- varied application processing times
- growing demand for support



OMG. This is the blessing we were waiting on. This takes a weight off our shoulders. Thank you so much. I appreciate you so much. I'm so relieved I'm crying thank you so much.

ALICIA, BALTIMORE RESIDENT,  
responding to a text update that her  
application was in the approval stage



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# Growing Current Momentum

- Build out housing stability focus of the Eviction Prevention Program
  - Relocation assistance
  - Security deposit + rent forward funding
  - Shelter diversion partnership with Mayor's Office of Homeless Services
- Launch partnership with the District Court and the Sherriff's Office to develop eviction diversion strategies—an early step toward a more targeted response to those at immediate risk of eviction
- Proactive communications so that tenants and landlords can monitor application processing





I would first like to say thank you. I have been through hell and back in the past two years. And I recently underwent a kidney transplant in January. My life has been very hard and this was biggest blessing I could receive. Please let me know I can pay this forward and if I need any further action on my behalf.

ADRIANNA, BALTIMORE RESIDENT

