

State awards over \$194 million in rental, utility assistance to New Mexicans

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Over 54,700 households protected from eviction, disconnected utilities

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced on Oct. 13 that the state has provided over \$194 million in rental and utility assistance through the first round of funding for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, helping over 54,700 New Mexico households to avoid eviction and disconnection of utilities.

“Tens of thousands of New Mexicans are feeling the benefits of our Emergency Rental Assistance Program,” Lujan Grisham said. “We are directly helping families find and keep high-quality housing and empowering them to spend their hard-earned money on other necessities.”

Since April 2021, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program has awarded:

\$168 million in Emergency Rental Assistance

\$24 million in utility payments

\$594,000 in Relocation Assistance

Participants received an average of \$4,000 for rent and \$750 for utilities, with 6,700 landlords participating.

“The partnership between the city and the state to use both of our resources meant that more Albuquerque families got help paying their bills and staying in their homes,” Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller said. “The city will keep working with our partners in Santa Fe to make sure this critical assistance gets to the families who need it the most and we’ll continue to look for ways to reduce housing insecurity in our community.”

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One New Mexico resident expressed how thankful she was.

“I honestly can’t say it enough. I’m so grateful to have programs that want to help us New Mexicans by saying, ‘this is the real deal, let me help you,’” Angelica Aguilar, who lives in Albuquerque’s South Valley and was a recipient of Emergency Rental Assistance Program funds, said.

The program will continue under the next round of funding, which offers broader eligibility and housing stability funding for community-based organizations focused on helping at-risk communities navigate current housing obstacles in New Mexico. In partnership with New Mexico Community Trust, the state will work to provide housing assistance for domestic violence shelters, seniors groups, disabled individuals, and other vulnerable populations.

The overall program is part of a federal aid package to curb mass evictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Aid for renters was first made available in April 2021 through a collaboration between the Department of Finance and Administration and the City of Albuquerque. Since that time, over \$194 million in rent, utility, and relocation aid has been provided to New Mexico renters throughout the state. Innovative eviction prevention efforts have also been funded by the New Mexico Home Fund.

“I’m proud this bold investment that our delegation worked hard to secure is making a real difference in our communities by helping New Mexicans avoid eviction and keep their utilities connected,” Senator Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., said. “These critical investments in housing are a vital resource that helps ease families’ financial strain while helping reduce housing insecurity in our communities.”

Senator Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., also showed his support.

“Over 50,000 New Mexico households avoided eviction and utility disconnections as a result of the federal investments that Congressional Democrats secured in relief packages like the American Rescue Plan,” Heinrich said. “I will continue to support this type of critical assistance that has helped so many New Mexico families keep a roof over their heads and food on the

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table and long-term investments in affordable housing for all New Mexicans.”

Representative Teresa Leger Fernández, D-N.M., said she would continue to support this type of state funding.

“Good housing is a basic human right, and we are standing up to help our renters and working families here in New Mexico,” Leger Fernández said. “No one in our comunidad should have to worry about where they’ll rest their head at night, or whether they can keep the lights on. I’m working in Congress to make sure this funding keeps reaching our state.”

Representative Melanie Stansbury, D-N.M., spoke about how housing is a human right.

“Housing is a human right and the foundation of community well-being,” Stansbury said. “I am proud that the funding that our delegation worked so hard to secure has made a real difference for New Mexican families to keep them in their homes and keep the lights on during such a difficult time. I am grateful for Governor Lujan Grisham and DFA’s innovative strategies to get these funds out the door, and I will continue working hard in Congress to make housing more affordable for every New Mexican.”

The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness recently awarded DFA with the “Most Innovative Idea of the Year” award for their implementation of rental assistance and creation of the New Mexico Home Fund.

Access to all programs is available at nmhomefund.org .

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