

# Providing Emergency Assistance Under COVID-19

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# Santa Ana Rental Assistance Programs

The City of Santa Ana will have a total of three different rental assistance programs that have launched in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic as of February 1, 2021.

## **CARES for Tenants**

- CDBG-CV Funds and State CARES Act Funds - Still Accepting Applications

## **CARES for Landlords**

- State CARES Act Funds - Closed on December 31, 2020

## **SAVES Program**

- Launching February 1<sup>st</sup> with ESG-CV Funds



# Coronavirus Emergency Rental Relief Fund

## CARES for Tenants was originally called The Coronavirus Emergency Rental Relief Fund

### Program Launch:

- May 18, 2020
- \$500,000 CDBG-CV funds
- Neighborly Application Online and available through the City website
- \$1,500 rental assistance per household / funding available for 300 households
- 1,777 applications submitted during the five-day application window

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Santa Ana resident with a lease or sub-lease
- Experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19
- Letter to Landlord documenting inability to pay rent due to COVID-19
- Low-Income Household (80% AMI or less)



# Coronavirus Rental Relief Fund Program Details

## Program Details

### Application Processing:

- Three subrecipients – each assigned 100 applications to process, approve, contact and pay landlords
- Applications were accepted online through the Neighborly system. Residents could also call one of the nonprofit subrecipients to help them complete the application if they did not have access to a computer.
- Each subrecipient had approximately 2 full-time staff processing applications
- Only submitted applications were assigned to subrecipients (100 to each subrecipient). Incomplete applications were not reviewed or entered in to the lottery. The total number of applications started was over 3,000 during the one-week application window.



# Coronavirus Rental Relief Fund Lottery Process

## Lottery Process

- We received valuable feedback from Neighborly about another jurisdiction's launch of a first-come, first-served application and the difficulties they experienced
- Created Lottery Process and Procedure document
- Santa Ana launched the application on May 18<sup>th</sup> at 8am and closed the application on Friday May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5pm.
- Application Forgiveness Window: Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> to Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>
  - Applicants with a disability or senior citizens unable to submit an application successfully. Applicants must contact one of the three nonprofits organizations regarding their inability to submit an application prior to the 5pm deadline.
- Randomized lottery process done in Excel after duplicate applications were removed
- Top 300 applications changed status to “lottery winner” Assigned 100 to each of 3 subrecipients to process applications.
- Used master lottery list to replace any applications that were withdrawn or denied



# CARES for Tenants Program

## Additional CDBG-CV Funding

- Added 1.6 million of CDBG-CV funds and re-opened application in August – accepting applications indefinitely – until funds are exhausted
- Bi-weekly lottery process
- Only two subrecipients – they added additional staff

## Additional State CARES Funding

- Added 1.8 million of State CARES Act funds
- Increased rental assistance to \$3,000 from \$1,500
- Providing \$1,500 additional to those who re-certify and \$3,000 to new applicants

## Results

- Over 1,000 households have received \$1,500 or \$3,000 in rental assistance and we are still accepting applications



# CARES for Landlords Program

## State CARES Funding

- Applications accepted from August 17, 2020 until the funds were exhausted
- Landlords apply on behalf of their tenants who have been impacted by the Coronavirus and have accumulated rent debt owed since April 1, 2020
- Landlords must agree to participate in the program and 1) forgive 20% of the rent owed for each household for the months covered under the program 2) agree to not increase the rent for the unit for a specified period of time and 3) agree not to assess late fees for the past due rent paid by the program
- No income verification requirement for tenants

## Results

- \$1,140,957 State CARES funds expended by December 31, 2020
- Landlords amount of total forgiveness was \$285,240
- 45 applications were funded to assist 323 families for a total rental arrears of \$1,426,196. An average of \$4,415 in rental arrears per household



# CARES for Landlords Program





# Santa Ana Vital Eviction Solution (SAVES) Program

## ESG-CV Funding

- Total funding for the program \$5,764,747 through June 30, 2022
- One subrecipient selected through an RFP process to administer the Homelessness Prevention Program
- Anticipated launch date – February 1, 2021
- Includes a partnership with a local nonprofit legal services provider
- 2-1-1 will provide a “virtual front door” to the program via a link on the City website and will enter case information into HMIS prior to forwarding to the subrecipient
- Minimum eligibility includes: Santa Ana resident, experiencing a financial hardship due to COVID-19, low-income household (at or below 50% AMI), notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing will be terminated, qualify as “at risk of homelessness” per HUD regulations
- Anticipate serving 750 families with an average of \$4,880 in assistance per household



# Taking a Look Around the Corner And Up Ahead

## Emergency Rental Assistance Program Funds

- The City of Santa Ana received over \$9,800,000 from the Treasury Department and is reviewing the program guidelines to make adjustments to the CARES for Tenants and CARES for Landlords Programs to continue to provide emergency assistance to our residents through these programs.

