

Partnership for Housing Affordability and ACTS Regional Emergency Rental Assistance Fund

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a stay on evictions has been in place in Virginia to prevent families and individuals from losing their housing and thus not having a safe location to shelter in place. Over 32,000 households in the Richmond region pay more than 50% of their monthly income on rent. With the gradual re-opening of the economy, Virginia courts are set to start hearing eviction cases in July. It is expected that 13,000 eviction cases will be filed in the City of Richmond, Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico. Thousands of our neighbors are at risk of losing their housing – a crisis that even with steady employment can take years to recover from. Many of these households were stable prior to the COVID-19 crisis, but due to job loss are now at risk of becoming homeless.

To assist these households at risk of eviction, the Partnership for Housing Affordability (PHA) has brought together local governments, nonprofits, and the philanthropic sector to provide an Emergency Rental Assistance Fund. The Fund will use ACTS (Area Congregations Together in Service) as the centralized organization to receive funding and process applications for assistance. ACTS has been providing this service in our community since 2006 and will add additional staff capacity to manage the influx of applications. PHA has worked to secure funding from local governments, including a significant allocation of CARES Act funding from the City of Richmond; ACTS has been designated by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development as the recipient of state rental assistance funds as well.

PHA is well positioned to bring together our community to support this effort. After two years of work, in January PHA launched the Regional Housing Framework--a values informed, regional housing policy blueprint which incorporates data, community input and over 60 solutions to achieve the vision of a Richmond region in which everyone has a stable, healthy, and affordable place to call home. One of the most significant solutions cited in the Framework is the creation of a Housing Resource Line (HRL) which builds off the success of the region's Homeless Crisis Line. While originally envisioned as a centralized referral service, the advent of COVID-19 and the subsequent need for additional rental assistance has led to the creation of this regional pool of funds to help individuals and families pay their rent and utilities and thus stay in stable housing. This intervention is leading to a sustainable Referral Line that will live beyond the current crisis.

The city of Houston allocated \$15 million in CARES Act funding towards rental assistance to 8,000 residents who were impacted by COVID-19.

In just 90 minutes the funds were depleted using an online application portal.

It is expected that 13,000 eviction cases will be filed in the City of Richmond, Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico, in July alone.

REGIONAL

COLLABORATIVE

EFFICIENT

SUSTAINABLE

Total Funding Needed:
\$6,000,000



Secured:
\$5,700,000

*including \$5.1 million from the City of Richmond and support from Henrico & Chesterfield Counties



To contribute to this effort, donations can be made to:

the Community Foundation for a greater Richmond



Or

ACTS (Area Congregations Together in Service)



to support the Regional Emergency Rental Assistance Fund

To Be Raised: An additional \$300,000