



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 19, 2022**

## **FAYETTE COUNTY 'ERAP' PROGRAM ENDING THIS MONTH**

**Uniontown, PA** – Fayette County Community Action Agency will end its state-funded Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) Aug. 31.

According to the state Department of Human Services, an “overwhelming demand” and current “lack of funding” led to the decision. Community Action officials are currently working to process approximately 1,200 outstanding applications and will continue accepting new applications until the deadline.

“If you have applied, someone will contact you for information. If new funding becomes available, we will reopen to accept new applications,” state officials said.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf introduced ERAP in March 2021, using federal funds allocated through the U.S. Consolidated Appropriations Act for distribution to families facing risk of eviction or loss of utility services as a result of hardships during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Action Director of Customer Service Rita Masi said the agency doled out \$775,000 in July alone for ERAP rental and utility assistance. With approximately \$3.5 million remaining, Masi said officials “would like to stretch (the funding) as far as we can.”

“Our staff has been very busy trying to make sure we’re serving the residents of Fayette County as quickly and efficiently as we can,” Masi said. “We had 100 new applications just last week, and we’re at 30 for this week - and it’s only Tuesday.”

Thus far, Fayette’s ERAP program has received 4,710 applications, resulting in 1,948 approvals for a total of approximately \$8.6 million in funding.

“We’ve had lots of families be able to stay in their homes and keep their utilities on since we started this, so I feel the program went very well,” Masi said. “We were a benefit to both tenants and landlords, helping households avoid eviction.”

Some key things to remember when applying for ERAP before the Aug. 31 deadline are:

- Funding can be used for both outstanding rent and utility bills. Households may be eligible for up to 12 months of assistance to cover past-due or future rental and/or utility payments.
- The program is only available for renters at this time.
- Residents can begin the application process on the state’s website, [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).
- Landlords can contact Community Action on behalf of their tenants, but those tenants must be willing to participate and currently occupy the rental unit.
- Community Action staff members are striving to contact all those who submit applications within one business day to advance the process quickly.
- Applicants should provide an accurate email and phone number at the time of submission.

- Landlords do not have to agree to participate in the program for tenants to receive assistance.

For more information about ERAP, including a full list of requirements, visit [www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov) or contact the Fayette County Community Action Agency at 724-437-6050.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.fayettcountypa.org](http://www.fayettcountypa.org).

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