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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday February 8, 2021
Media Contact:
Kristina Tirloni
kristina.tirloni@tdhca.state.tx.us
(512) 475-4743

Russ Rhea
russ@hahnpublic.com
512-970-1254

- *Funding totals more than $1billion for rent and utility payment assistance*
- *Applications open Feb. 15*
- *Landlords and tenants can apply*

Broadcast, Print Editors: Video/Audio soundbites, images and related content found here (Dropbox.com)

TDHCA Launches First Statewide COVID-19 Rental Relief Program

More than $1billion allocated to assist low-income households with rent and utility expenses

As COVID-19 continues to affect low-income Texans, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) is preparing to launch the state's first statewide Texas Rent Relief Program. The program will assist landlords and tenant with rent and utility payment assistance. The state will start accepting applications on Monday, Feb. 15. Out of $25 billion dedicated nationally through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, TDHCA was awarded $1.3 billion in emergency relief funds, which will go toward rent and utility expenses. Local governments with populations over 200,000 also received additional direct allocations totaling over $640 million.

"For almost a year now, many Texans have been facing a very difficult and uncertain financial future – especially populations with low incomes," said Bobby Wilkinson, TDHCA executive director. "We are committed to distributing these funds as quickly and efficiently as possible to provide much-needed relief."

To qualify, households must be at or below 80% of the area median income as well as meet several other criteria. Per federal guidelines, TDHCA will prioritize applications for households at or below 50% of the area median income level and households where one or more members are currently unemployed and have been for at least 90 days. To be in the priority group, applications must be received by Sunday, Feb. 28, after which time all qualifying applications will be processed based on the order in which they were received until all funding has been committed. Landlords are encouraged to apply on behalf of tenants, who must co-sign the application.

Eligibility information is currently available at TexasRentRelief.com or by calling 1-833-9TX-RENT (1-833-989-7368) to speak with someone directly. The call center is open Mon.-Sat., 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Applicants can complete an application by phone or submitting an online application at TexasRentRelief.com starting 8 a.m. Central time on Mon., Feb. 15. Assistance will be available in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Korean.

“We want to be sure as many people across the state as possible are aware of the program and can apply for assistance,” said Wilkinson. “To get the word out, TDHCA is working with partner agencies and rental/housing associations as well as reaching people through digital, radio and print ads and direct mail.”

About the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is committed to expanding fair housing choice and opportunities for Texans through the administration and funding of affordable housing and homeownership opportunities, weatherization, and community-based services with the help of for-profits, nonprofits, and local governments. For more information about fair housing, funding opportunities, or services in your area, please visit www.tdhca.state.tx.us or the Learn about Fair Housing in Texas page.

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