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## State Community Development Council to deliver $13.3M in housing aid for low-income New Mexicans

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SANTA FE – The New Mexico Community Development Council, composed of Lujan Grisham administration officials and appointees from across the state, will invest more than $13.3 million of Community Development Block Grant CARES Act funds in emergency housing assistance for low- and moderate-income New Mexicans, the Office of the Governor announced Thursday.

The state Department of Finance and Administration is slated to receive two installments of Community Development Block Grant Cares Act funding. Those funds are required to be used to benefit low- and moderate-income persons and to respond to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

As housing and rental assistance has generally been overlooked in the federal funding response to the COVID-19 crisis, the state **Community Development Council**, a panel of Gov. Lujan Grisham appointees statutorily empowered and responsible for allocating CDBG grants, chose to deliver the emergency assistance funds specifically to New Mexicans who have struggled to maintain sufficient housing over the course of the public health and economic emergency.

The emergency assistance will consist of up to three months of rent, mortgage or past-due utility payments for qualified applicants.

The Department of Finance and Administration will partner with the state Mortgage Finance Authority to administer the emergency housing assistance program.

Applicants must meet Community Development Block Grant program definitions of low- and moderate-income persons (80 percent of Average Median Income or below); must demonstrate a reduction in income due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and must not be receiving rental, mortgage or utility assistance from another source.

The Mortgage Finance Authority and its selected service providers will determine household eligibility for the assistance program and, upon the program's launch, review applications for assistance and subsequently process payments to landlords, mortgage lenders and utility providers.

The Mortgage Finance Authority is determining application requirements. **Information about how to apply will be disseminated upon the formal launch of the assistance program.**

"The pandemic has battered our economy, and workers and families across the state have felt the effects," said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. "My administration has delivered and administered millions in grants and loans for businesses and continues to service tens of thousands with essential unemployment benefits, and now we are helping to deliver rental and housing assistance. If we look out for one another, we will see ourselves through to the other side of this crisis, and we rebuild our communities and our economy better than ever before."

"An increasing number of New Mexicans are struggling to make their rent and mortgage payments," said Isidoro Hernandez, the Mortgage Finance Authority executive director. "This new funding stream will allow MFA to assist more families across the state who are worried about having a roof over their heads. Keeping families securely housed means better outcomes for children and healthier neighborhoods and communities. We look forward to working with Gov. Lujan Grisham and doing our part to help New Mexicans weather this current situation and emerge strong and intact."

"As Gov. Lujan Grisham says, there is no wrong door in a crisis, and this administration will continue to explore and identify every single possible mechanism to help New Mexicans in need," said Victor Reyes, Governor's Office legislative director and the chair of the development council. "If we can make a difference for even one New Mexico family, if we can help keep a roof over their

heads, we will have done good work here, and I know this program will help many more families than that."

New Mexicans can always visit the "I Need Assistance" tab at **newmexico.gov** for help with food and nutrition, unemployment, child care and much more.

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# CONTACT

The Office of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham is located on the fourth floor of the New Mexico State Capitol in Room 400.

Address:
490 Old Santa Fe Trail Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Phone: (505) 476-2200
Toll free: (833) 520-0020

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