(https://www.facebook.com/GovernorPeteRicketts) (https://twitter.com/GovRicketts) (https://www.instagram.com/govricketts/) (https://www.flickr.com/photos/governorpetericketts/) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcDw3_CGhTVcVtxoGKRkjlQ/feed) (https://ne-test-governor.cdc.nicusa.com/governor-news)

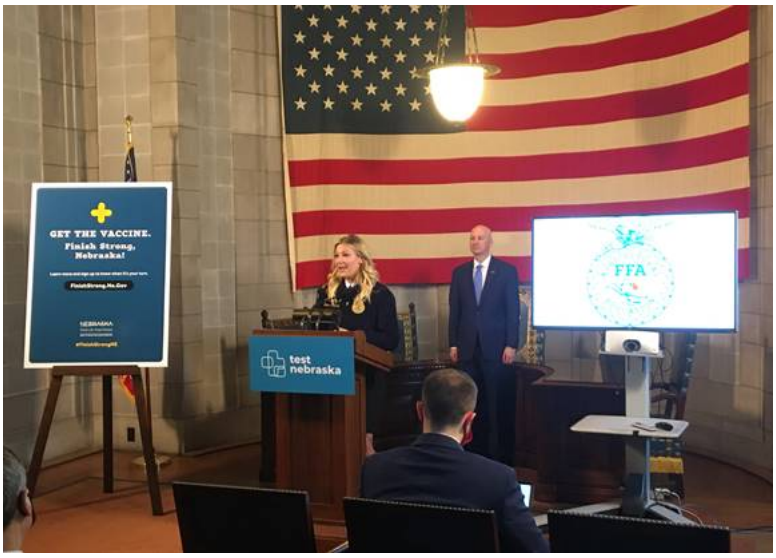
Download on App Store (https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/periscope/id972909677?mt=8) Download on Google Play (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=tv.periscope.android&hl=en)

Taylor Gage, 402-471-1970
Justin Finkenhan, 402-471-1967

Moving Forward the Nebraska Way (https://governor.nebraska.gov/press/moving-forward-nebraska-way)

Media Release:

Gov. Ricketts Announces Launch of Emergency Rental Assistance Program, Proclaims FFA Week



State FFA President Madison Stracke (podium) and

Gov. Ricketts (in back of podium) at today's press conference.

Video from today's briefing is available by clicking here (https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fs%2Ffcni7p0g3fcgedx%2FGov.%2520Press%2520Conf%25202.22.2021.mp4%3Fdl%3D0&data=04%7C01%7Ccio.webmstr%40n

LINCOLN – This morning, Governor Pete Ricketts hosted a press conference at the State Capitol to announce the launch of the State's Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The program, funded through the U.S. Treasury as part of a federal coronavirus relief package, is available to eligible tenants and landlords. The State's program provides assistance for both rent and certain utilities. The program is available for renters and not homeowners according to federal guidance.

Some localities in Nebraska are receiving federal funds directly, and they will operate rental assistance programs separately from the State. These include the City of Lincoln, the City of Omaha, Douglas County, and Lancaster County. Residents in these locations will need to apply through their jurisdiction's program rather than through the State's program.

The Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) is coordinating with the State to administer the rental assistance program. Shannon Harner, NIFA's Executive Director, joined the Governor to discuss who is eligible and how to apply. Starting today, Nebraskans can apply online at coronavirus.nebraska.gov (https://coronavirus.nebraska.gov/).

At this morning's press conference, Gov. Ricketts also proclaimed February 20-27 as "FFA Week" in Nebraska. State FFA President Madison Stracke of Stuart spoke about activities FFA has planned in 2021. Nebraska FFA Foundation board member Lance Atwater—who farms near Ayr, Nebraska—talked about his personal experiences with FFA and its benefits to the state.

Shannon Harner: Emergency Rental Assistance Program

- NIFA is the State of Nebraska's Housing Finance Agency, and, as such, it is appropriate that we work in partnership with the State to ensure the success of this program.
- It is our commitment to quickly communicate the availability and guidelines of this program to those most in need, in order to keep Nebraska renters safely housed, and Nebraska landlords able to pay the mortgages on their rental units.
- The latest round of coronavirus relief funding provided Nebraska with $200 million of Emergency Rental Assistance funding. Of this amount, $158 million will be administered and distributed by the State to persons in all counties other than Douglas and Lancaster, which, along with Omaha and Lincoln, received separate funds.
    - Applicants residing in these areas will have the ability to apply to those respective programs around the beginning of March, with more information to be provided as it becomes available.
    - If the separate area funds are fully exhausted, and need still exists in those areas, the remaining State fund will then become available to persons in those areas.
- The State's program provides assistance for both rent and certain tenant-paid utilities such as electricity, gas, water, sewer, and garbage services.
- Application approval requires:
    - A copy of the current lease with the applicant as a party to that lease.
    - Contact with the landlord for verification of current tenancy, amounts due, or other application information.
    - A demonstrated loss of household income as a result, either directly or indirectly, of COVID-19.
- When an application for assistance is approved, payment will be made directly to the landlord or utility providers on behalf of the tenant.
- Either the landlord or the tenant may apply for this assistance. Both the landlord and the tenant will be required to verify information and provide relevant documentation.
- Only tenants whose household income is verified as less than 80% of the average median income of their county are eligible for assistance.
- During the application process, required documents will be uploaded directly to the portal. The portal is mobile friendly to make the application process as easy as possible even for people without a home computer.
- NIFA's website (www.nifa.org (https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nifa.org%2F&data=04%7C01%7Ccio.webmstr%40nebraska.gov%7Cb383c9d6d33f4c1065ad08d8d770f7fb%7C043207dfe6894bf6902001(
and YouTube channels will have additional training materials and webinars about the program.
- A call center is available to provide assistance from Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm (CT) and, at least the first weekend, on Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM (CT). The call center number is 1-833-500-8810.

Madison Stracke: FFA develops leaders and promotes career success and personal growth. It also connects students to the agriculture industry.

- FFA has nearly 10,000 members in about 200 chapters throughout the state.
- Agricultural education provides classroom instruction, leadership-based activities, and competitions through FFA where students can apply their knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.
- Nebraska FFA is preparing for its virtual state convention, which will take place April 7-9, 2021.

Lance Atwater: FFA

- My roots in FFA go back to being a former FFA member in Blue Hill.
- I attribute where I am today as a person and a leader to my FFA experiences.
- Nebraska Farm Bureau is a proud supporter of FFA. Many of our current members went through FFA.
- The Farm Bureau partners with the Nebraska FFA Foundation to enhance opportunities for students across the state of Nebraska.
- We're excited to work with the next generation to move Nebraska agriculture forward together.

Video from this morning's press conference is available by clicking here (https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fs%2Ffcni7p0g3fcgedx%2FGov.%2520Press%2520Conf%25202.22.2021.mp4%3Fdl%3D0&data=04%7C01%7Ccio.webmstr%40n