COVID-19 RELIEF OPTIONS APPROVED BY HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

Posted on Apr 21, 2020 in Hawaiian Homes Commission, Media Releases

DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR, STATE OF HAWAI'I

WILLIAM J. AILĀ, JR
CHAIRMAN, HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2020

COVID-19 Relief Options Approved by Hawaiian Homes Commission

(Kapolei, Oʻahu) – The Hawaiian Homes Commission (HHC) on Tuesday, April 21 approved two actions that will provide Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) Applicant Waiting List beneficiaries, as well as lessees, licensees, and permittees on land managed by the Department, relief amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

HHC approved the establishment of the DHHL COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The program will provide eligible native Hawaiian beneficiaries who are on the Department's Applicant Waiting List, as of Dec. 31, 2018, with rental assistance using Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant funds. These funds were made available in accordance with the Native Hawaiian Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act and other federal laws, including Public Law 115-141 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018. The Consolidated Appropriations Act allows NHHBG funds to be used to provide rental assistance to eligible Native Hawaiian families both on and off Hawaiian Home Lands.

Under the established program, eligible beneficiaries who have experienced a loss of income or job as a result of COVID-19 may qualify for assistance for the payment of their security deposit and/or rent on a month-to-month basis for up to six months.

DHHL will now finalize the details of the program's implementation. A formal announcement will follow, with an anticipated launch in May 2020.

"I am pleased that the Commission approved the opportunity for rental relief to DHHL applicants on the Waiting List as the Department continues to prepare 1,300 lots statewide that are still on schedule to be produced over the next five years," said HHC Chairman William J. Ailā, Jr. "I want all of our beneficiaries to know that they are on our minds daily, and collectively, we are working diligently to provide support."

HHC also approved an action to accept rental relief requests from qualified tenants on land managed by the Department. The approval includes the delegatory authorization of the Chairman to review, approve, and authorize the requests on a case-by-case basis.

Rental relief will act as a deferral of payments to qualified requestors and will cover a period of six months from April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020. An amortized interest rate of no less than four percent will be applied against the rent relief period balance.

"As economic challenges continue to face our community, the Department hears the need for support, including those who pay rent for general leases, licenses, and permits on land management by DHHL. The revenues developed on the homelands directly affect our ability to

build more homesteads," said Ailā. "The option for rental relief through this Commission action will allow the Department a broader approach to guiding our future planning through these uncertain times."

Those interested in learning more about rental relief for general lessees, licensees, and permittees, including qualifications, should visit dhhl.hawaii.gov/covid-19/lmd or call (808) 620-9500.

For the latest information about COVID-19 impacts on DHHL activities, please visit dhhl.hawaii.gov/covid-19. For information from the Hawai'i Department of Health, go to hawaiicovid19.com (http://hawaiicovid19.com) .

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About the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands carries out Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole's vision of rehabilitating native Hawaiians by returning them to the land. Established by U.S. Congress in 1921, with the passage of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, the Hawaiian homesteading program run by DHHL includes management of over 200,000 acres of land statewide with the specific purpose of developing and delivering homesteading.

Media Contact:

Cedric Duarte
Information and Community Relations Officer
Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
(808) 620-9591
dhhl.icro@hawaii.gov