Codebook
Emergency Rental Assistance Program Policy Database
Version 1.0
Current as of 18 October 2024

This dataset documents variation in state Emergency Rental Assist (ERA) programs in response to the heightened threat of housing instability and eviction during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was created based on content analysis of policy documentation and conversations with relevant officials. Note that it does not currently contain information about local (e.g., county or municipal) or tribal ERA programs.

The research team welcomes corrections, clarification, and new information to update and amend the database as appropriate. Please direct comments and questions to Vincent Fusaro, fusarov@bc.edu.

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I. General program information

Variable Name	*Variable Description*	*Codes*
state	State name	State name (text)
statefips	State FIPS code	FIPS
progname	Program name	Program name (text)
newera	Program type	1: New program (as of ERA) 2: CARES Act or other COVID-era program 3: Existing non-CARES/COVID-era program
temp	Temporary or permanent program (note: 100% of programs were temporary; variable retained in dataset as documentation of this finding)	0: Permanent 1: Temporary
control	Administering government agency	Agency name (text)
overallstart	Start date of program	MM/DD/YYYY BLANK: Missing/unclear
overallend	End date of program based on receipt of new applications	MM/DD/YYYY 12/31/9999: ongoing BLANK: Missing/unclear
overallendch	Utility variable; date last inquired about status of allowing new applications	MM/DD/YYYY If overallend≠12/31/9999 or BLANK, then overallend=overallendch If overallend=12/31/9999 or BLANK, monthdayyear of last check on program status
overallendfin	End of program based on payments (if overallendfin>overallend, payments to existing beneficiaries continued even if new applications were no longer accepted)	MM/DD/YYYY 12/31/9999: ongoing BLANK: Missing/unclear
overallendfinch	Utility variable; date last inquired about status of continuing payments	MM/DD/YYYY If overallendfin≠12/31/9999 or BLANK, then overallendfin=overallendfinch

		If overallendfin=12/31/9999 or BLANK, monthdayyear of last check on program status

II. Program benefits

Variable Name	*Variable Description*	*Codes*
maxpay	Did the ERA program ever have a maximum payment amount?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
maxpayamt1	What was the initial amount of maximum payment? Use in conjunction with maxpayunit1.	Numeric value BLANK: No maximum payment
maxpayunit1	What was the unit of the initial maximum payment (maxpayamt1)?	1: Dollar/month 2: Total dollars 3: Percent fair market rent BLANK: No maximum payment
maxpayamt1total	What was the total maximum payment amount in dollars, if state had both monthly and total limits?	Numeric value BLANK: No total maximum payment amount
maxpayamt2	If changes were made to maximum payment amount, what was the updated maximum payment amount? Use in conjunction with maxpayunit2.	Numeric value BLANK: Maximum payment did not change or no maximum payment amount
maxpayunit2	What was the unit of updated maximum payment (maxpayamt2)?	1: Dollar/month 2: Total dollars 3: Percent fair market rent BLANK: Maximum payment did not change or no maximum payment amount
maxpaynotes	Notes about maxpay amounts, if applicable. Read before interpreting maxpay variables.	Text
totalmonths1	Total months (arrears plus prospective) initially covered	Value
totalmonths2	If changes were made to total months of coverage, the updated total months covered (arrears plus prospective) [If there were multiple changes,	Value 99: Missing/unclear BLANK: Total months covered did not change

	what was the *first* updated total?]	
totalmonths3	If changes were made to total months of coverage, the updated total months covered (arrears plus prospective) [If there were multiple changes, what was the *second* updated total?]	Value BLANK: Total months covered did not change
totalmonthsnotes	Notes on total months, if applicable. Read before interpreting totalmonths variables.	Text
prospmonths1	Prospective (i.e., future) months initially covered at any one time (note: functionally, this represents a recertification period to receive ongoing benefits)	Value
prospmonths2	If changes were made to prospective months of coverage, what was the updated number of prospective months covered?	Value BLANK: Prospective months covered did not change
prospmonthsnotes	Notes on prospective months coverage, if applicable. Read before interpreting prospmonths variables.	Text
util1	Were utilities (basic or internet) covered at some point during the ERA program?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
utilbasic1	Were basic utilities (heat/electric/gas/water) initially covered?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
utilbasic2	If coverage of basic utilities changed, were basic utilities covered after changes were made?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear BLANK: Coverage did not change or utilities not covered
utilinter1	Were internet costs initially covered?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
utilinter2	If coverage of internet costs changed, was internet cost	0: No 1: Yes

	covered after changes were made?	99: Missing/unclear BLANK: Coverage did not change or utilities not covered
utillim1	What was the initial limit of utility coverage? Use in conjunction with utillimunit1.	Value 77: No limit or limit tracks total rental month coverage (e.g., 15 months) 99: Missing/unclear BLANK: Utilities not covered
utillimunit1	What was the initial utility coverage limit unit?	1: Dollars 2: Dollars/month 3: Months BLANK: No limit, limit tracks total rental month coverage, or utilities not covered
utillim2	If the utilities coverage limit changed during the ERA program, what was the updated limit? Use in conjunction with utillimunit2.	Value 99: Missing BLANK: Coverage did not change or utilities not covered
utillimunit2	What was the updated utility coverage limit unit?	1: Dollars 2: Dollars/month 3: Months BLANK: No limit, limit tracks total rental month coverage, or utilities not covered
tenantpay	Did the program allow, at some point during its administration, direct payments to tenants?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
relocate1	Was housing search/relocation assistance initially covered?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing
relocate2	If coverage of search/relocation assistance changed, was search/relocation covered after changes were made?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing BLANK: Coverage did not change

III. Documentation requirements

Variable Name	*Variable Description*	*Codes*
selfinc1	Could the applicant self-attest to income in the program's initial stages?	0: No 1: Yes, for all types of income 2: Yes, but only in limited circumstances (e.g., if zero income or self-employed) 99 Missing/unclear
selfinc2	If changes were made to self-attestation of income, was self-attestation of income allowed after changes were made?	0: No 1: Yes, for all types of income 2: Yes, but only in limited circumstances (e.g., if zero income or self-employed) 99: Missing/unclear BLANK: self-attestation of income did not change
selfcovid1	Could applicant self-attest to COVID-related hardship in the program's initial stages?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
selfcovid2	If changes were made to self-attestation of COVID hardship, was self-attestation of COVID hardship allowed after changes were made?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear BLANK: self-attestation of COVID hardship did not change
selfrent	Could applicant self-attest to rental obligation?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
selfhousing1	Could applicant self-attest to housing instability in the program's initial stages?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
selfhousing2	If changes were made to self-attestation of housing instability, was self-attestation of housing instability allowed after changes were made?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear BLANK: self-attestation of housing instability did not change
selfdv	Could applicant self-attest to domestic violence?	0 No 1 Yes 99 Missing/unclear
incproxy	Were income proxies allowed (e.g., receipt of welfare	0: No 1: Yes

	assistance or child support, or proxies based on geography)?	99: Missing/unclear
incwelf	Was economic/nutritional assistance program participation (e.g., TANF, SNAP, WIC) an allowable income proxy?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
inccs	Was a child support statement an allowable income proxy?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
incgeo	Was a geographic income proxy (e.g., applicant lived in ZIP or Census tract with low incomes) allowed?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear

IV. Limits and priority groups

Variable Name	*Variable Description*	*Codes*
inclim1	What was the Area Median Income (AMI) income limit for eligibility? (i.e., max percent AMI)	Percentage 99: Missing/unclear
inclim2	If the income limit changed, what was the updated income limit? (max percent AMI)	Percentage 99: Missing/unclear BLANK: did not change
inclim2start	What was the date of the income limit date change?	MM/DD/YYYY BLANK: did not change
priority50	Did the program prioritize households with incomes ≤ 50% AMI	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
priorityextra	Were there additional AMI-based priority groups?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
priorityunemp	Did the program prioritize households with members who were unemployed?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
priorityimm	Did the program prioritize households at risk of imminent housing loss or utility cutoff?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
priorityfirst	Did the program prioritize applications on a first-come, first served basis?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear

prioritydv	Did the program prioritize applicants who were victims of domestic violence?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear
lottery	Did the program operate on a lottery system?	0: No 1: Yes 99: Missing/unclear

V. Summary variables

Variable Name	*Variable Description*	*Codes*
utilbasic	Basic utilities coverage. If utilbasic1 or utilbasic2=1, then 1	0: Did not cover basic utilities during the program 1: Covered basic utilities at some point during the program 99: Missing/unclear
untilinter	Internet coverage. If utilinter1 or utilinter2=1, then 1	0: Did not cover internet during the program 1: Covered internet at some point during the program 99: Missing/unclear
relocate	Search/relocation coverage. If relocate1 or relocate2=1, then 1	0: Did not cover search/relocation expenses during the program 1: Covered search/relocations expenses at some point during the program 99: Missing/unclear
selfinc	Income self-attestation. If selfinc1 or selfinc2=1, then 1	0: Did not allow for self-attestation of income during the program 1: Permitted self-attestation of income at some point during the program 99: Missing/unclear
selfcovid	COVID hardship self-attestation. If selfcovid1 or selfcovid2=1, then 1	0: Did not allow for self-attestation of COVID hardship during the program 1: Permitted self-attestation of COVID hardship at some point during the program 99: Missing/unclear

selfhousing	Housing instability self-attestation. If selfhousing1 or selfhousing2=1, then 1	0: Did not allow for self-attestation of housing instability during the program 1: Permitted self-attestation of housing instability at some point during the program 99: Missing/unclear
months18	18 months of rental/utility coverage. If totalmonths1 or totalmonths2=18, then 1	0: Less than 18 total months of coverage 1: 18 total months of coverage 99: Missing/unclear
maxpayrev	Reverse coding of maypay	0: Program had a maximum payment 1: Program did not have a maximum payment 99: Missing/unclear
selfattest	Self-attestation allowance. If selfinc, selfcovid, selfhousing, or selfrent=1, then 1.	0: Did not allow for any self-attestation 1: Permitted self-attestation of income, COVID hardship, housing instability, or rent 99: Missing/unclear
prioritization	Application prioritization. If priority50, priorityextra, prorityunemp, or priorityimm=1, then 1.	0: Did not allow for application prioritization 1: Allowed for prioritization of households with incomes ≤50% AMI or other AMI thresholds; with at least one member who has been unemployed; or for whom risk of housing loss is imminent 99: Missing/unclear

VI. Composite variables

Variable Name	*Variable Description*	*Possible Values*
benefitcomp	Benefits composite variable. Summation of months18, maxpayrev, utilbasic, utilinter, and relocate, if all values are non-missing	0-5 99: Missing/unclear
attestcomp	Self-attestation composite variable. Summation of	0-5 99: Missing/unclear

	selfinc, selfcovid, selfrent, selfhousing, and selfdv, if all values are non-missing	
incomecomp	Income proxy composite variable. Summation inccs, incgeo, and incwelf, if all values are non-missing	0-3 99: Missing/unclear
prioritycomp	Prioritization composite variable. Summation of priority50, priorityextra, priorityunemp, priorityimm, and prioritydv, if all values are non-missing	0-5 99: Missing/unclear
accesscomp	Accessibility composite variable. Summation of attestcomp, incomecomp, prioritycomp, and tenantpay if all values are non-missing	0-13 99: Missing/unclear
totalcomp	Total composite variable. Summation of policycomp and accesscomp, if both values are non-missing	0-18 99: Missing/unclear