

MOTION


On February 1, 2024, compounding housing crises will come to a head and thousands of vulnerable tenants across the City will be at risk of losing their homes as arrears for rent owed between October 1, 2021 - January 31, 2023 are due and rent increases of up to 6% in rent stabilized units are allowed. City Council has taken important action since the onset of the pandemic in March of 2020 to protect tenants and ensure that people remain housed to both curb the effects of the ongoing health crisis, while also maintaining economic stability for Angelenos.

This includes, amongst other interventions, the United to House LA (ULA) Emergency Renters Assistance Program (ERAP). In October 2023, the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) launched application processes for both tenants and small landlords, that allow renters and property owners to apply for up to 6 months of unpaid rent for those who qualify and are selected. In December 2023, the LA Housing Department (LAHD) released a publicly accessible dashboard showcasing ULA ERAP application data. According to the dashboard, there were over \$472 million in claims from 31,362 applications - nearly \$454 million more than the \$30.4 million dedicated for short-term rental assistance. Even so, since the application period closed in late October, as of this week only \$7.9 million of these funds have been paid out or are in progress to be paid to ~3,000 tenant applicants and 226 landlord applicants. The amount of funds that have actually reached tenants to date represents only 25% of the funds allocated for emergency assistance and less than 2% of funds requested by those in need.

ULA ERAP applicants whose applications have not yet been finalized are in a precarious situation and represent over tens of thousands of vulnerable tenants. In the Housing and Homelessness Committee on January 17, 2024, LAHD made clear that it will take weeks if not months for all ERAP funding to be distributed to applicants. This means that many of these tenants might be served eviction notices even as their rental assistance is in route to their landlord.

Of these applicants, 84% were from renters who are within or under the 30% AMI threshold - meaning the residents across Los Angeles who are in the most need are at greatest risk of being evicted. Further, of those who applied for rental assistance, approximately 37% are Black Angelenos, while this group only makes up ~ 9% of the population. Moving quickly to keep these Angelenos housed is a matter of racial and economic justice and will have lasting impacts for years to come.

Additionally, one of the impactful protections that have been put in place since February 2023 includes disallowing eviction if a tenant owes less than one month of fair market rent. With thousands of pending ERAP applications, it is unclear how many of the tenants will become current in owed rent or owe less than one month of fair market rent, protecting them from eviction on February 1.

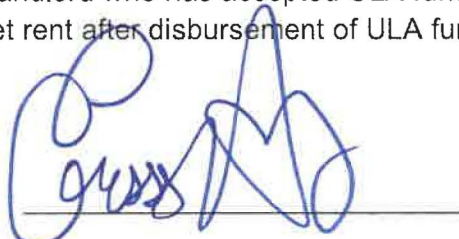

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The City must not allow for the eviction of tenants whose applications are still being processed or allow for the disbursement of rental assistance to landlords who evict their tenants. The original intention of ERAP was to keep people who have rental arrears housed. If the City were to allow for the eviction of people who have pending applications, it will not only exacerbate the current homelessness crisis and put the City at risk of litigation, it also renders this program ineffective at achieving its primary goal after a hard fought win from the majority of voters who supported ULA and a major allocation of resources that has been deployed by LAHD to move this forward.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Attorney, with support from LAHD, be requested to prepare and present an amendment to Ordinance 187736 to ensure that in the event that landlords and tenants have open ULA applications, landlords be prohibited from evicting those tenants until a determination of ULA application status has been made and funds have been distributed to the landlord, if approved.

I FURTHER MOVE to instruct LAHD to report back in 10 days on mechanisms needed to ensure that a landlord who has accepted ULA funds is not evicting its tenants who owe less than fair market rent after disbursement of ULA funds.

Presented by:

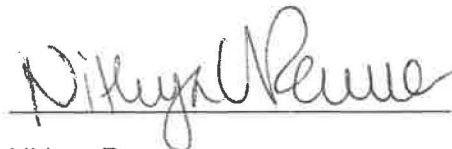


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