

ERA Compliance Report - Pima County, Arizona - ERA 2 Quarter 2 2023

Report Period : Quarter 2 2023 (April-June)

Recipient Profile

Recipient Information

Recipient DUNS	074477969
Recipient DUNS (+4)	0000
Recipient TIN	866000543
Recipient Legal Entity Name	Pima County
Recipient Type	Local Government
Recipient Address	130 W Congress Street Fl6
Recipient Address 2	
Recipient Address 3	
Recipient City	Tucson
Recipient State/Territory	AZ
Recipient Zip5	85701
Recipient Zip+4	
Country Name	

Recipient Information

Discrepancies Explanation	
Is the Recipient Registered in SAM.Gov?	Yes

Projects

Project Overview

Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)	ERAE0011
CFDA #	21.023
Award Date	5/7/2021
Grant Funds Received	\$45,551,519.10
Recipient Project ID	ERA2-0225
Name of the ERA Project	Pima County ERA2 Project
ERA Project Website URL	https://tucsonpimaep.com/
Geographic Service Area	County-Wide
System for Prioritizing Assistance Narrative	<p>System for Prioritizing Assistance Criteria</p> <p>Emergency Rental Assistance Program applications are prioritized based on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Household Income (as % of AMI) • Time Unemployed • Months of Back Rent Owed • Risk of Homelessness / Unsafe Living Conditions • Date of Waitlist Application <p>Scoring</p> <p>An initial risk score is assigned on a scale from zero to nine, based on the following scoring for each factor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Media Income (AMI): one point for income below 50% AMI and two points for income below 30% AMI • Unemployment Status: one point for unemployed; two points for unemployed more than 90 days; • Months of Arrears: one point if length of arrears is four months or less; two points if length of arrears is greater than four months; • Risk of Eviction: one point for five-day notice; two points if a hearing date has been assigned; three points if a hearing date has been assigned and a judgement has been received. <p>These factors, which together can yield a maximum of 9 points, render an initial risk score. In addition, constable cases are automatically given the highest score (an initial risk score of 9).</p> <p>Time scoring</p> <p>For every week that goes by after the eligibility form is received (and thus, initial risk score is awarded), one point is added. For example, a case that initially scores a five would move up to a six after seven days have gone by. Prioritization criteria and other ERA system information is publicly available at https://tucsonpimaep.com/frequently-asked-questions-faq/.</p>
	<p>Performance Goals</p> <p>Pima County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) provides emergency financial assistance to COVID-19-impacted households, landlords, and utility and home energy providers in Pima County. At least 10 households will receive assistance through this program. A data dashboard showing total funds obligated and paid to households approved and paid is reviewed by Pima County leadership weekly.</p>

<p>Project Description</p>	<p>Major Timelines Pima County began accepting applications for ERAP-2 in November 2021. Pima County has met all expenditure obligation thresholds and received two voluntary reallocations from the State of Arizona of ERA 2 funds. Based on current rate of service delivery, we expect to have exhausted the funds by September 30, 2023.</p> <p>Key Partner Organizations Pima County accepted applications from both tenants and landlords for ERA 2 funded assistance through an online portal established by ERA 1 partner Community Investment Corporation and subawarded with community based organizations to provide case navigation and support. Current subrecipient partners are Compass Affordable Housing and Family Housing Resources for both ERA 1 and 2, and Sunnyside Foundation for ERA 2 only. These agencies provide housing stability services, assisting households to access ERA, contacting applicants and assisting them to understand and submit the documentation required to establish eligibility and priority for services, assisting them with eviction proceedings or at imminent risk of eviction to access short term legal services, full legal representation at emergency shelter, or rapid rehousing as appropriate. The subrecipient partner agencies access Pima County's Emergency Services Network portal to access applicant records, upload documents, route completed applications for review, approval and payment by Pima County. Other partners include legal assistance organizations, several Pima County Constables, and Pima County Justice Court.</p> <p>Pima County has operated the Community Action Agency (now known as Community Assistance Division) for decades providing emergency rent and utility assistance for decades. Therefore the program has a high level of visibility to the non-profit community and the general public as the resource for households in financial crisis. The CAA contracted with community-based organizations to form an Emergency Services Network with multiple access points. The program is managed alongside of Pima's countywide workforce program that provides the first line of response to layoffs. Strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant portal and websites of the City, County and non-profit second-tier subrecipient partners • Outreach and presentations to social services and legal aid agencies to encourage appropriate referrals • Earned media from press releases • Paid social media boosts and other advertising • Direct outreach to landlords and presentations to real estate, property management and multi-housing industry associations <p>Housing Stability Services Provided Housing stability services consist of the eligibility determination, needs assessment using a standardized assessment to ensure identification of issues that threaten the household's stability, verification of landlord and/or utility information, amounts owed, and eligible period of assistance, final determination of approved assistance amount, referral and navigation to access other needed services.</p> <p>Other Affordable Rental Housing Services and Eviction Prevention Services Provided Pima County launched Emergency Eviction Legal Services (with non-ERA funding) to provide legal advice and representation in eviction cases for low-income renters. Pima County offers https://www.pimacountyhousingse.org/ a listing of rental units and other affordable housing opportunities. Finally, Pima County provides emergency shelter services, housing, employment and supportive services to families, youth, veterans, and individuals experiencing homelessness in Pima County.</p>
<p>Use of Fact Based Proxies for Determining Eligibility</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>Fact based proxy Pima County uses the Tucson Region Neighborhood Vulnerability Index as the fact-based proxy for determining eligibility. In 2020 City of Tucson, Pima County, and the Economic and Business Research Center at the University of Arizona collaborated to study housing and neighborhood vulnerability within the City of Tucson and Pima County. A goal of the first phase of this study was to identify "vulnerable", or stressed, neighborhoods within our region by compiling a Neighborhood Vulnerability Index.</p> <p>Vulnerability in this context refers to the differing ability of members of particular socio-demographic groups to withstand threats to their livelihoods, security, and social, economic, and political networks. Measures of social vulnerability attempt to integrate a set of characteristics of people and places that make them especially likely to be harmed by shocks such as natural disasters or development and rising housing prices. The Vulnerability Index was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic to be used for geographically - targeted strategies to direct resource</p>

<p>Explanation for Use of Fact Based Proxies for Determining Eligibility</p>	<p>policies, and programs to best meet the needs of Tucson and Pima County’s unique neighborhoods.</p> <p>The Neighborhood Vulnerability Index was developed by calculating a composite score of these five factors that measure vulnerability in a community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of residents that identify as anything other than “non-Hispanic white alone” Percent of households who rent, rather than own, their homes Percent of residents aged 25 and over who lack a four-year bachelor’s degree or higher Percent of households with incomes below 80% of Area Median Income (as determined by HUD) Share of children that live in households below the official poverty line <p>There are 241 total census tracts in Pima County, with 157 of those tracts within or adjacent to the City of Tucson boundary. This study found 103 vulnerable census tracts in Pima County, or 42.7%. Of the total vulnerable tracts were within the City of Tucson - this means that 55.4% of census tracts in Tucson were found to be vulnerable in some way.</p> <p>The study is available on line at the following link: https://mapazdashboard.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/images/cot_pima_vulnerability_study_5_20_20.pdf</p> <p>Households located in a census tract that is anywhere in the spectrum from “Vulnerable” to “Most Vulnerable” are exempt from the current income verification process. Instead, households living in a vulnerable neighborhood simply provide a self-attestation to being at or under 80% AMI in order to meet income eligibility. Households in “Most Vulnerable” tracts are still eligible for assistance, but have to provide documentation to verify income at or below 80% of AMI.</p> <p>An interactive mapping tool is available at this link: https://www.ebrc-charts.com/MAP-charts/City%20of%20Tucson%20Housing%20Study/vulnerability_2018_file . Case Workers use this map to locate the residence in question and determine if income verification is necessary. If not, they will screenshot the residence in question and submit it as part of their final application package. The tenant is then asked to self-report and attest to their income level, which is also verified by the Case Worker as 80% or below AMI.</p> <p>For residences that are NOT located in a qualifying zone, the Case Worker uses the full income verification process.</p>
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Demographics

ERA Applicants

Number of unique households that completed and submitted an application for ERA assistance:	
Number of Unique Households that Received ERA Assistance (#):	
Number of Unique Households that Received their Initial ERA Assistance in the Current Reporting Period:	

ERA Assistance Provided

Number of unique households that received ERA assistance by type: Rent	
Number of unique households that received ERA assistance by type: Rental Arrears	
Number of unique households that received ERA assistance by type: Utilities/Home Energy Bills	
Number of unique households that received ERA assistance by type: Utilities/Home Energy Arrears	
Number of unique households that received ERA assistance by type: Other expenses related to housing	
Number of unique households that received ERA assistance by type: Housing stability services	

Participant Households at Certain Income Levels

Number of unique households at certain income levels: Less than 30% of Area Median Income	
Number of unique households at certain income levels: Between 30 and 50% of Area Median Income	
Number of unique households at certain income levels: Between 50 and 80% of Area Median Income	
Total number of recipient households whose income eligibility was determined based on their eligibility for other federal benefit programs: Households Eligible- Prior Enrollment	
Total number of recipient households whose income eligibility was determined using a fact-based proxy:	
Total amount of ERA award paid to or for participant households:	
Average Number of Months of Rent or Utility/Home Energy Payments Covered for Each Participant Household:	

Award Activity Amounts Approved (Obligated) and Amounts Paid (Expended) During the Quarter

Total Dollar Amount of ERA Award Funds Approved (Obligated) to or for Participant Households	
Total Dollar Amount of ERA funds Paid (Expended) for Administrative Expenses	
Total Dollar Amount of ERA Award Funds Approved (Obligated) for Administrative Expenses	
Total Dollar Amount of ERA Award Funds Paid (Expended) for Housing Stability Services	
Total Dollar Amount of ERA Award Funds Approved (Obligated) for Housing Stability Services	

Performance & Financial Report

Performance Narrative	<p>Pima County came close to exhausting all ERA 2 funding due to delays in receiving reallocated funds. During this quarter Pima County Community Assistance Division and its subrecipient partners – Compass Affordable Housing and Family Housing Resources – focused on addressing the backlog of applicants for emergency rental assistance in accordance with the prioritization procedures.</p> <p>ERA applicants continued to be referred to the Pima County Emergency Eviction Legal Services program. This program is part of Pima County’s ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) program and works with the Pima County Consolidated Justice Court to offer legal services for tenant households facing eviction. When applicants on the wait list for ERA assistance identified as being at risk of eviction either through EELS or ERA, their rent assistance case is escalated to be reviewed in conjunction with the EELS case so that rent assistance can be provided for landlords who postpone eviction.</p> <p>ARPA SLFRF and Emergency Food and Shelter Program funding was used to continue providing low-barrier, non-congregate bridge housing in local hotels for households that would otherwise face homelessness after eviction. This program also provides on-site case management and supportive services to help transition clients to stable housing. This program has served 250 households, 90% of which have exited to positive destinations.</p> <p>Activities planned for the next calendar quarter Three voluntary reallocations , Pima County will continue to work down applications from households that are on the waiting list for assistance, and may be able to start accepting new applications in the future. Pima County will also work with Sunnyside Foundation to document and reconcile their expenditures for housing stability services and associated administrative costs; process reimbursement payments; and close out its ERA 2 subaward.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the welcome news of reallocation funding that will allow the program to be extended into the first half of 2023, Pima County is focusing on implementing</p>
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	<p>sustainability and transition measures for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, emphasizing co-enrollment of participants into workforce development programs and connecting them to longer-term benefits as appropriate.</p> <p>Notable challenges and status of each challenge</p> <p>An increasing number of applicants have maxed out their allowable 18 months from ERA 1 and ERA 2 combined.</p> <p>Pima County is also encountering more landlords that will not accept assistance for tenants that have rental arrears, or who not accept any type of assistance at all.</p> <p>In these cases, Pima County makes referrals to the EELs program to provide legal services and/or hotel-based shelter, and provides navigation assistance to “mainstream” resources such as homeless services, employment program and benefits, such as cash assistance and or supplemental nutrition assistance.</p> <p>Details on compliance/non-compliance issues and mitigation plans</p> <p>None identified.</p> <p>Requests for additional assistance or guidance from the Treasury</p> <p>None identified.</p>
Narrative on Effective Practices	<p>The EELS program described previously continues to be a best practice. The National Association for County Community and Economic Development recognized Pima County in September with a 2022 Award of Excellence for its innovative program providing legal services for tenants in eviction proceedings. Pima County won the NACCED award in the “Homeless Coordination/Assistance” category. The Community Assistance Division has instituted the following effective practices to improve program responsiveness and effectiveness:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assisting people who have been evicted by paying prospective rent or utilities or mitigating debt for utility bills incurred at their prior residence. 2. “Do not deny due to no contact” procedure for households who have “dropped the ball” on documentation they are required to submit. Applications are held in inactive status until the tenant or CAD is able to re-establish contact. 3. Staff training on data entry and quality assurance functions in the Emergency Services portal, interviewing techniques, de-escalation practices, stress management, training and credentialing to establish access (via County data-sharing agreements) to other portals to help navigate tenants to “mainstream” benefits and local resources. 4. Staff also access Pima County’s vendor registration system in order to help streamline landlord registration in the system so that they can receive payments directly from the County. 5. Tenant telephone hotline to allow online applicants to check on the status of their application.

Federal Financial Reporting

Current Quarter Obligations	\$6,954,305.90
Current Quarter Expenditures	\$6,954,305.90
Cumulative Obligations to Date	\$33,305,782.87
Cumulative Expenditures to Date	\$33,305,782.87

Certification

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