



County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

Joe Parisi
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July 8, 2021
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Dane County Partnering with Urban Triage for \$12.5 Million Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Today, County Executive Joe Parisi announced Dane County will partner with Urban Triage to administer \$12.5 million in new emergency rental assistance funds. More than \$10.7 million in direct assistance will be available to households in need, with Urban Triage receiving up to \$1.6 million to cover the costs of standing up and administering the new program.

Many renters have fallen behind on their rent or are in need of assistance to pay future rent due to continued hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on our economy. The CDC eviction moratorium will expire on July 31. The additional emergency rental assistance authorized in the American Rescue Plan can be used in a number of ways to help households in Dane County achieve housing stability and avoid eviction in the coming months.

"Many residents are still struggling to make ends meet or have fallen behind in rent payments due to the unprecedented turbulence of the past 16 months," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "We are committed to helping Dane County residents recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the federal eviction moratorium set to expire at the end of the month, this new round of funding will further our efforts to prevent evictions and housing instability in our community."

In March 2021, the federal government authorized the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic across multiple areas of need. The act included \$21.5 billion in funding for emergency rental assistance, with Dane County to receive more than \$12.5 million of that amount to support local efforts to prevent evictions and provide housing stability. Urban Triage was selected to administer the second round of emergency rental assistance funding via a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process.

"In partnership with Dane County, Urban Triage has improved processes to assure the prompt allocation of funds to families in need of financial assistance for rental arrears, fees, and forward rent. We're eager to offer stigma-free and humanity-centered supports to our community," said Urban Triage Founder and CEO Brandi Grayson. "This moment is historic for many reasons; most importantly, we are an organization for the people by the people, grassroots, Black centered and community-based providing supports for all, in partnership with Dane County. It's a big deal. We're excited."

Dane County's emergency rental assistance allocation authorized in the December 2020 federal COVID-19 stimulus bill is currently being administered by the Tenant Resource Center. Those funds are expected to be spent by the end of August. Dane County's intent is to contract with Urban Triage to administer the second round of funding and work with both vendors on a transition between the programs to avoid duplication of benefit and confusion among people seeking assistance.

Funds for this program will be spent in Dane County communities outside of the City of Madison, as the City of Madison is receiving its own emergency rental assistance allocation and has access to additional funding through the State of Wisconsin. Up to 18 months of rental assistance can be provided per household. Eligible costs include rental and utility arrears, future rent, other expenses related to housing including relocation expenses (such as rental security deposits), and rental fees (including application or screening fees).

Households at 80% area median income (AMI) or below are eligible for assistance if one or more individual has qualified for unemployment benefits, has experienced a reduction in household income, has incurred significant costs, and/or has experienced other financial hardship due directly or indirectly to the COVID-19 pandemic, and where one or more individuals can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Per federal guidelines, households that make 50% area median income (AMI) and below and in which one or more member is unemployed and has been unemployed for longer than 90 days must be prioritized among all applicants.

Landlords or owners may apply on behalf of tenants meeting the eligibility requirements if the tenant cosigns the application, the landlord provides the necessary documentation to the tenant, and the payments are used to pay the tenant's rental obligation to the owner.

A resolution to approve this \$12.5 million emergency rental assistance program with Urban Triage will go before the Dane County Health and Human Needs Committee this evening. It is expected to be approved by the County Board in the coming weeks.

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