

July 26, 2021

Dear Governor Polis:

Thousands of Colorado renters are waiting in line for rental assistance, with many more submitting new applications each week, and others still unaware that help is available. This is resulting in considerable unpaid housing debt, and instability for tenants and landlords alike. [No one eligible for rental assistance should be put out of their homes](#), especially because of systemic factors beyond their control. Allowing hardworking renters to be evicted at this point in Colorado's recovery would cause particular harm to individuals, families, and our community.

We therefore urge you to take action to ensure that no tenant working to obtain rental assistance is evicted while awaiting funds. An executive order making a tenant's good faith effort to obtain assistance a full defense against eviction for nonpayment is warranted from August 1 through September 30. Starting October 1, the legislature has given tenants [up to the point of judgment](#) in eviction court to secure and pay outstanding rent and remain housed.

As you noted in [EO 122](#) in allowing the current 30-day "right to cure" [executive order](#) to stand even as you moved to end many others: "The demand for this State and federal [rental assistance] has been immense, and these programs need time to provide aid to tenants." That time will still be much-needed even after your latest extension of this order and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's eviction moratorium expire simultaneously on July 31.

The State Division of Housing reports that as of the first week of July, 36,606 applications for assistance have been [approved](#) since March 2020, totaling just over \$100 million—though many tenants with approved applications are likely still awaiting the arrival of a check and remain at risk of eviction. And requests for rental assistance are growing each week. DOH further reports that 12,235 applications representing nearly \$78 million in assistance as [outstanding or currently in-process](#). Fifty-seven percent of these have been reviewed but require further information from the landlord or tenant, often requiring time- and resource-intensive outreach. Notably, these numbers exclude 3,293 "inactive" applications that could become active again with a response from a tenant, landlord, or financial institution, or 9,079 rejected applications, some of which could be revisited and validated with further help.

And even as many Coloradans are beginning to feel relief from the pandemic, many of those hardest-hit face a longer road to recovery. [DOH data](#) demonstrates the heavy burden of housing instability borne by BIPOC Coloradans, with disproportionate request for assistance among Black, Latino, Native American, and individuals who identify as multi-racial. And because eligibility for currently available rental assistance is capped at 80% of area median income, these households by definition have lower incomes.

We appreciate your leadership through the public health and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even as you rescind public health emergency orders, we appreciate your and your staff's efforts to continue to provide for those most impacted by COVID-19 and facing longer roads ahead to recovery.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elected & Public Officials (34)

Arvada Mayor Marc Williams

Aurora Mayor Mike Coffman

Boulder Mayor Sam Weaver

Broomfield Mayor Guyleen Castriotta

Castle Pines Mayor Tera Radloff

Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock

Edgewater Mayor Laura Keegan

Englewood Mayor Linda Olson

Golden Mayor Laura Weinberg

Lafayette Mayor Jamie Harkins

Northglenn Mayor Meredith Leighty

Thornton Mayor Jan Kulmann

Westminster Mayor Anita Seitz

Wheat Ridge Mayor Bud Starker

Aurora City Councilmember Juan Marcano

Aurora City Councilmember Alison Coombs

Boulder City Councilmember Aaron Brockett

Boulder City Councilmember Rachel Friend

Denver City Council President Stacie Gilmore

Denver City Councilmember Robin Kniech

Denver City Councilmember Candi CdeBaca

Denver City Councilmember Jamie Torres

Denver City Councilmember Paul Kashman

Denver City Councilmember Amanda Sawyer

Denver City Councilmember Amanda Sandoval

Greeley City Councilmember Tommy Butler

Larimer County Commissioner John Kefalas

Eviction Prevention Task Force Member Chris Romer

State Representative Yadira Caraveo

State Senator Julie Gonzales

State Representative Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez

Kathy Plomer, President, Adams 12 Five Star Schools Board of Education

Lori Goldstein, Director, Adams 12 Five Star Schools

Dr. Dawn Comstock, Executive Director, Jefferson County Public Health

Organizations & Public Entities (51)

Adams 12 Five Star Schools

AdvocacyDenver

Archuleta Housing Corporation

Atlantis Community, Inc.

B-Konnected.LLC

Children's Hospital Colorado

Colorado Center for Aging

Colorado Center on Law and Policy

Colorado Children's Campaign

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Colorado Coalition of Manufactured Home Owners

Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition

Colorado Fiscal Institute

Colorado Health Foundation

Colorado Poverty Law Project

Colorado Springs Faith Table

CPCD...giving children a head start

Denver Chapter Realtist-NAREB

Denver DSA

Denver Indian Family Resource Center

Denver Metro Fair Housing Center (DMFHC)

Denver Public Health

East Colfax Community Collective

Edgewater Collective

Enterprise Community Partners

Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center

Full Circle of Lake County

Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver

Healthier Colorado

Housing Colorado

Jefferson Unitarian Church Community Action Network

Maiker Housing Partners

Mental Health Center of Denver

Mile High Connects

Neighborhood Development Collaborative

Northeast Denver Housing Center

Rocky Mountain Partnership

Rose Community Foundation

San Miguel Resource Center

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning

The Arc of Aurora

The COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project

The Denver Foundation

The Fax Partnership

The Health Education and Resources Institute (THEARI)

Together Colorado

Tri-County Health Department

United for a New Economy

Violence Free Colorado

YIMBY Denver