COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY SEEKS RENTAL ASSISTANCE ON BEHALF OF RESIDENTS

The County of Santa Cruz has applied for funding through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program, designed to assist households that are unable to pay their rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Authorized through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, $25 billion is being provided nationally for emergency rent support. The County's grant amount has not yet been confirmed by the Treasury, but is estimated at approximately $8 million. Funds may be used to pay for rent, utilities and home energy costs, rent and utilities arrears, and related housing costs of the eligible tenant.

Renters in all cities and unincorporated areas will be eligible, with application details to be released following award confirmation, the issuance of federal guidance and input from local stakeholders. To qualify for this program, renter households must include at least one individual who meets the following criteria:

- Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19
- Demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability
- Has a household income at or below 80 percent of the area median income

Under the legislation, households with individuals unemployed for 90 days prior to application and households with income at or below 50 percent of the area median will be prioritized. Rental assistance provided to an eligible household may not be duplicative of any other federally funded rental assistance provided to such household.

The County previously allocated $1.1 million of its federal CARES Act funds for a similar rental program for residents impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.