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Civil Rights and Housing Groups Call on HUD to End Evictions in Its Own Properties

HUD's Latest Regulation Falls Short of Protecting Tenants

Washington, DC—Today, 49 civil rights, affordable housing, and tenants' rights organizations, including 25 national groups, called on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to act immediately to end evictions in HUD housing and to do more to stop the national eviction crisis. [View the letter here.](#)

Many of these groups have already been urging HUD to do more for 20 months, since the pandemic began, during both the Trump and Biden Administrations. This latest effort is in response to HUD's Interim Final Rule (IFR) that goes into effect today entitled, [Extension of Time and Required Disclosures for Nonpayment of Rent](#). The rule aims to increase access to federal emergency rental assistance but does little to ensure that HUD tenants – who are primarily African- American and Latinx households with extremely low-incomes, households headed by women, people with disabilities, and older adults – have the appropriate resources to receive the funds.

“We are calling on HUD today to use its authority to prevent evictions in its own housing,” said Deborah Thrope, deputy director of the National Housing Law Project. “It is inexcusable that HUD is still allowing people to be put on the street during the pandemic, when there are billions of dollars in rental assistance still available. HUD should do everything in its power to make sure tenants and landlords are working together to apply for emergency funds.”

“Evictions risk lives and push families deeper into poverty,” said Diane Yentel, president and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. “While HUD's latest rule aims to ensure HUD-assisted households are better able to access emergency rental assistance, HUD must do more to ensure the nation's lowest-income renters – who remain at the greatest risk of eviction –keep a roof over their heads during the ongoing pandemic.”

A recent survey of legal services attorneys conducted by the National Housing Law Project revealed an alarming number of HUD evictions in communities across the country. For example:

- In Pennsylvania, a HUD-subsidized landlord evicted and subsequently locked out a mother and her two children while they were quarantining with COVID. They were waiting for the emergency rental assistance they had already applied for. The lockout was a surprise and the family was forced to leave medication and pets behind;
- In Hamilton, OH, five tenants have been threatened with eviction by a HUD-subsidized landlord who refused to accept emergency rental assistance or failed to cooperate with the agency administering assistance;

- In Atlanta, GA, a tenant in HUD housing was denied emergency rental assistance because the property manager did not respond to the required verification request. The tenant is now being evicted.

These evictions are occurring despite the billions of dollars the federal government has invested to keep Americans housed. HUD does not collect data on evictions which means no one knows the full scale of evictions currently facing HUD tenants.

HUD's latest rule does little to help tenants. The rule would only require that housing authorities and HUD landlords provide additional notice to some tenants prior to eviction and to inform tenants about the availability of emergency rental assistance. It does not require landlords to cooperate with rental assistance applications, which is a huge barrier for tenants trying to access the funds.

With regard to the new rule, the letter asserts that the notice requirements are:

...completely disconnected from the reality of how most emergency rental assistance programs distribute funds on a local level and the barriers to accessing the funds faced by tenants. Only about 29% of all programs provide direct-to-tenant assistance and of those that do, most only allow it as a last resort after a landlord has declined to participate or not responded to program requests.... To actually help tenants access federal funds, HUD must *require* landlord cooperation in the emergency rental assistance application process and suspend *any* notice period during the application process....

HUD has provided no detailed legal explanation as to why the agency is not fully utilizing its authority to safeguard families. In a memo dated August 31, 2021, the National Housing Law Project [outlined clear legal authority for HUD](#) to implement a number of eviction prevention policies. In the meantime, evictions will continue.

The organizations are calling on HUD to use its authority to act more comprehensively to prevent evictions.

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