



ERASE Cohort: Advancing Equity, Preventing Evictions, and Ensuring Housing Stability

Request for Proposals

End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) is the National Low Income Housing Coalition's (NLIHC) national effort designed to ensure that the historic \$46.6 billion in emergency rental assistance enacted by Congress reaches the lowest-income and most marginalized renters it is intended to help. The project seeks to eliminate rental indebtedness caused by the pandemic and set the stage for permanent solutions to promote housing stability, advance equity, and prevent evictions for the long term by: tracking and analyzing emergency rental assistance utilization; documenting and sharing best practices and toolkits; influencing and shaping program design at federal, state, local levels; developing key partnerships for outreach and education; and assessing remaining needs to inform advocacy for long-term investments and tenant protections to end housing instability and homelessness in the United States.

With this RFP, NLIHC seeks to select 23 funded grantees to work together from October 2022 through September 2023 to leverage the success of ERASE; the continued success ERA has had on preventing evictions; and the need for continued infusion of federal funds to advance and sustain permanent solutions that prevent evictions, ensure housing stability, and end homelessness. ***In addition to the 23 funded grantees, NLIHC welcomes proposals from organizations who would like to participate in the cohort but do not need grant funds to do so. In this instance, proposals should still be submitted and the organization should indicate that they are not requesting grant funds from NLIHC.***

I. Background: The Need for Permanent Emergency Rental Assistance and Eviction Prevention

According to the latest reporting data from the Department of Treasury, as of May 2022, more than \$30.2 billion in emergency rental assistance had been disbursed through more than 6 million payments to landlords and households. And just as COVID 19 disproportionately impacted low-income communities of color, early demographic data show that our collective efforts to ensure emergency rental assistance reaches households most in need has been successful. Two-thirds of households receiving assistance had extremely low incomes, 43% identified as Black and 20% identified as Latino(a). This success is due, in large part, to NLIHC and the ERASE cohort's work in supporting programs to increase use of flexibilities that ensure the most marginalized have access to assistance, and in our partnership with the White House and Department of Treasury in improving and implementing needed guidance.

NLIHC's work with state and local partners has resulted in more than 150 new federal, state, and local tenant protections passed or implemented since 2021, resulting in increased housing stability for millions of renter households. Early research also indicates that this unprecedented investment in rental assistance, coupled with first time local, state, and federal tenant protections, prevented millions of renter households from being evicted. Eviction Lab research finds that government interventions

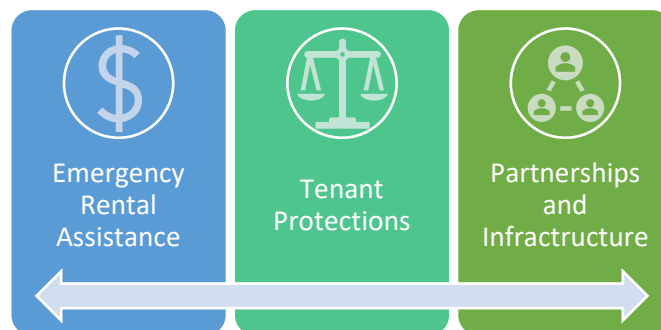
resulted in 1.36 eviction case being prevented in 2021.¹ They note: “The federal government intervened in the eviction crisis in a serious and unprecedented way... and data show that that intervention has paid off.”

Even with this success, however, the crisis is not over. According to NLIHC projections, most state grantees will exhaust their ERA1 and ERA2 funds long before the statutory expenditure deadlines, September 2022 and September 2025, respectively. And many of these states will have only served a fraction of their low-income renter households in need. NLIHC estimates that 23 state grantees and the District of Columbia will exhaust all of their ERA funds by December 2022 if spending trends continue, noting that this could change based on the reallocation of ERA1 and ERA2 funds.

II. ERASE 2.0: Advancing Equity, Preventing Evictions, and Ensuring Housing Stability

NLIHC sees an opportunity to leverage the success of the federal emergency rental assistance program to mobilize state and local partners and ensure the gains made setting up systems to provide emergency assistance and to prevent evictions— are sustained and set the path for permanent emergency rental assistance and tenant protections that meet the needs of all low-income renters.

Through this RFP, NLIHC will provide one-year grant funding, beginning October 1, 2022, ending September 30, 2023, in the amount of \$80,000 to 23 state and local partner grantees. NLIHC will assist additional non-funded cohort participants during the same timeframe. Over the last two years we have learned that successful ERA programs 1) ensure access to financial rental assistance, 2) pass and enforce tenant protections such as right to counsel, just cause, and source of income protections, and 3) develop and support the partnerships and infrastructure necessary for efficient and equitable ERA implementation and a holistic approach to long term housing stability for tenants.



Focus Areas

Given the success of this multi-pronged approach, cohort members will develop and implement strategies that result in the creation of permanent state and local emergency rental assistance programs and tenant protections that ensure the lowest-income households most at risk of eviction, and people experiencing homelessness, have access to assistance in time to prevent eviction and promote housing stability. Cohort members will also work with NLIHC and state and local partners to advocate for federal emergency rental assistance legislation and develop the state and local infrastructure to deploy these resources once they are in place. Cohort members will center race equity as well as the participation of

¹ <https://evictionlab.org/us-eviction-filing-patterns-2021/>

people with lived expertise, BIPOC, and other marginalized communities in the development and implementation of their proposals, advocacy strategies, and local partnerships.

Cohort participants will propose activities in one or more of the following focus areas:

1. Stand Up Permanent Emergency Rental Assistance Programs
2. Strengthen and Enforce Local, State, and Federal Tenant Protections

Track 1: Standing Up Permanent Emergency Rental Assistance Programs

Over the last 18 months, more than five hundred state and local jurisdictions have stood up ERA programs using federal dollars, many established from scratch for the first time. However, as the federal ERA dollars wind down, we know that funding will not be sustained at the level provided through ERA moving forward, placing this new housing infrastructure at risk. States and localities must act quickly to sustain the progress that has been made, bridge the gap created by the potential loss of ERA, and invest in long-term housing solutions.

Starting in the summer of 2021, NLIHC began to release resources on how state and local governments can use some of the \$350 billion in [Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#) (Fiscal Recovery Funds) allocated by the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) (ARPA) for affordable housing. Fiscal Recovery Funds provide flexibility for governments to meet local needs, including providing emergency rental assistance, addressing the housing and health needs of people experiencing homelessness, and building and preserving affordable housing in impacted communities. Fiscal Recovery Funds can be an important bridge to extending emergency rental assistance. Cohort members will build upon these initial opportunities and resources to encourage states and localities to utilize state and local funds to advance equity and invest in permanent housing solutions for the lowest-income renters and people experiencing homelessness.

Grantees in this track will work with state and local communities to:

- Assess what worked best in supporting low-income tenants and in preventing evictions and homelessness.
- Assess the scale of financial assistance needed for emergency rental assistance moving forward as well as the best mechanisms for getting that assistance to low-income renters in need.
- Leverage federal, state, and local funding to sustain ERA and advocate for states/localities to use ample State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) for this purpose.
- Engage and make the case to federal policymakers on the need for a permanent ERA program

Track 2: Advancing State and Local Tenant Protections

The power imbalance between renters and landlords puts renters at risk of housing instability and homelessness. In many states, landlords can evict renters for no reason, and there are no federal protections against arbitrary, retaliatory, or discriminatory evictions or other abusive practices by landlords.

NLIHC's work with state and local partners throughout the country resulted in more than 150 new state and local tenant protections passed or implemented since 2021, leading to increased housing stability for millions of renter households. These protections have been key in supporting tenants' housing stability.

Working with NLIHC, state and local cohort partners will advance tenant protections and assess the impact of various tenant protections on preventing evictions. The result will be an increased number of states/localities who have advanced legislation to implement and enforce tenant protections, publications assessing the impact of these protections, and the development of advocacy resources and *model state and local tenant protection legislation*.

Cohort members will participate in peer-to-peer learning opportunities and national webinars to highlight states and localities that have been successful in advocating for tenant protections and the impact they have had on preventing evictions and ensuring housing stability.

Cohort members in this track will work with state and local communities to:

- Enact and enforce state and local tenant protections that prevent evictions and promote long-term housing stability;
- Work with community stakeholders and tenant groups to develop model legislation packages;
- Work with NLIHC to advocate for federal tenant protections and resources to ensure long-term housing stability; and
- Assess the impact of tenant protections on preventing evictions and increasing housing stability

III. Collaboration and Strategic Partnerships

Throughout the last two years, experience has shown that ERA systems that utilized a partnership approach including program administrators, state and local courts and judges, legal aid organizations, community-based organizations, tenant groups, landlords, data partners, case management providers and others, to support planning and design for permanent ERA, exhibited the greatest impact and success. In addressing the goals of this RFP, NLIHC will prioritize proposals and activities that utilize a collaborative approach and engage cross sector partners to advocate for permanent resources and enact, enforce, and analyze tenant protections., and develop the infrastructure necessary to disburse funding to low-income and marginalized renters

IV. Cohort Outcome Measures

NLIHC Cohort members will be required to track and work towards the following measurable outcomes:

- **Measure 1:** # of state and local jurisdictions that stand up and/or continue to fund and provide emergency rental assistance programs with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and other sources.
- **Measure 2:** \$ from state and local funds invested in permanent emergency rental assistance programs.
- **Measure 3:** # of state and local Cohort partners engaged in advocating for a permanent national housing stabilization fund.
- **Measure 4:** # and type of state and local tenant protections passed/implemented.
- **Optional:** Other measures as proposed by grantee

V. NLIHC Cohort Support

NLIHC will support the next cohort through one-on-one technical assistance, regular cohort calls, tools and resources to support the work of the cohort, opportunities for shared learning and peer-to-peer

support, and connecting cohort members with national and subject-matter experts both within and outside of the cohort meetings. Grantees will be required to actively participate in regular cohort activities. Some activities may be open to organizations outside of the ERASE cohort.

Cohort members should also plan to participate in the ERASE Convening on October 17 and 18, 2022. The convening will take place in Washington DC with a hybrid option. NLIHC will provide a stipend to cover travel and hotel for one staff member from each cohort organization to participate in person at the ERASE Convening.

VI. Eligible Applicants and Applicant Requirements

- Eligible applicants are non-profit organizations with 501(c) 3 status from the Internal Revenue Service who are in good standing with their states or Tribally Designated Entities (TDEs) (please affirm and/or include documentation).
- NLIHC strongly encourages collaborative applications representing a team of organizations. Partners may include landlord or tenant groups, legal aid organizations, local data intermediaries or others that add unique values and strength to the proposal.
- Government and public-sector agencies can be included as members of teams but may not serve as lead applicants.
- Grant funds may not be used for direct or grassroots lobbying as defined by the IRS.
- Subgrantees must be willing to participate in regular remote NLIHC Cohort Calls, peer-learning meetings, and other national convenings as needed.
- Grantees that have received prior grants from NLIHC, including for ERA, disaster housing recovery, the HoUSed campaign, and Opportunity Starts at Home are eligible to apply for this opportunity.

VII. Proposal Format

NLIHC invites responses to this RFP from state and local partners from within NLIHC's broad network for one-year grants of up to \$80,000. NLIHC is accepting non-funded proposals from organizations that would like to participate in the cohort but do not need funding. Proposals should be no longer than 5 pages in length. Page count does not include letters of support, budget and budget narrative, and IRS 501c(3) designation. Proposals should respond to each question listed under Sections A-F below:

A. Application Overview

Lead Organization:

Lead Staff Person:

Email:

Phone:

Address:

Amount Requested:

List of Other Organizations Participating as Part of the State/Local ERASE Team:

B. Project Description and Scope of Work

1. Provide a one to two sentence description of your proposed project.
2. Provide a description of the proposed scope of work, including key strategies, activities, timeline, and measurable outcomes related to each goal listed above.

3. Describe the key staff who will be working on the project including their agency affiliation, role, and approximate amount of time dedicated to the project.
4. Describe how your proposed project will meet the goals described in focus areas 1 and/or 2.
5. Describe how your proposed project advances equity and addresses current and historic racial disparities within the housing system.

C. Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

1. Describe the key partners and roles for your project, including, but not limited to, state and local ERA program administrating agency(s), elected and government officials, legal services, state and local court systems, low-income renters, organizations serving BIPOC and other marginalized populations, and others.
2. Describe how you will engage state and local elected and/or government officials in your project. Please attach any letters of support.
3. If you do not currently have a relationship with state and/or local government partners or ERA program administrators, describe how you will build these relationships for this project.
4. Describe how you engaged low-income renters and BIPOC in the development of this proposal, as well as how they will be engaged in the work moving forward

D. Opportunities, Constraints, and Technical Assistance

1. Describe what you anticipate will be the greatest opportunities and challenges in carrying out your project?
2. Describe any capacity, resource or technical assistance needs that NLIHC could support you with through the grant period?

E. Proposed Budget: For proposals that are requesting grant funds, please attach a high-level line-item budget and brief budget narrative for the proposed workplan. If you are not requesting funding, you do not need to submit a proposed budget.

VIII. RFP Timeline

- Proposal Due Date: August 31, 2022
- Award Notification Date: September 16, 2022
- Proposed Start Date: October 1, 2022
- ERASE National Convening: October 17 and 18, 2022
- Project End Date: September 30, 2023

Submit completed proposals to eraseproject@nlihc.org

Please direct any questions regarding the ERASE RFP to eraseproject@nlihc.org