



## **NLIHC ERASE Evaluation RFP**

### **I. Introduction**

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) is pleased to release this Request for Proposals for a consultant, evaluation firm and/or academic institution to conduct a multi-site evaluation that will assess the impact and effectiveness of COVID-response emergency rental assistance (ERA) programs in selected sites.

Results from this study will be used to assess the impact of ERA on tenants, inform program development and on-going implementation, and guide policy recommendations related to the need and provision of emergency rental assistance beyond the pandemic.

### **II. Emergency Rental Assistance**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused two unprecedented developments affecting low-income renters. The first: the pandemic has caused millions of people to fall behind in their rent, placing them at risk of ultimate eviction. The second is more promising: unprecedented federal emergency rental assistance has been provided to eliminate and avoid rental arrears. Over 6 million renter households are estimated to be behind in their rent. Overwhelmingly, they are low-income tenants and disproportionately people of color. According to a recent U.S. Census Pulse Survey, approximately 29% of Black renters and 18% of Latino renters – compared to 8% of white renters – were behind on their rents.

Congress provided a total of \$46.5 billion for emergency rental assistance (ERA) to assist low-income renters in addressing rent and utility arrears. State and local governments have worked to design, scale up, and distribute aid to renters and landlords, a significant undertaking during a global pandemic. And Congress and the Biden administration have taken historic action to provide state and local governments with the flexibility needed to quickly distribute emergency assistance to renters and landlords in need. Despite these efforts, however, too many programs are distributing emergency aid much too slowly. Through the end of September 2021, just \$9.9 billion of the ERA 1 allocation had been spent or obligated, according to NLIHC's tracking<sup>1</sup> and analysis<sup>2</sup> of nearly 500 state and local ERA programs.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2021). *State and local rental assistance*. Retrieved from: <https://nlihc.org/rental-assistance>

<sup>2</sup> Reina, V., Aiken, C., Verbrugge, J., Ellen, I. G., Hauptert, T., Aurand, A., & Yae, R. (2021). *COVID-19 emergency rental assistance: Analysis of a national survey of programs*. Housing Initiative at Penn, NYU Furman Center, & National Low Income Housing Coalition. Retrieved from: [https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/HIP\\_NLIHC\\_Furman\\_Brief\\_FINAL.pdf](https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/HIP_NLIHC_Furman_Brief_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2021). Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Dashboard. Retrieved from: <https://nlihc.org/era-dashboard>

### III. End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE)

Through NLIHC’s ERASE project, NLIHC is tracking the implementation of ERA to understand what is working, inform advocacy efforts, and develop a plan for replication and sustainability of ERA. NLIHC currently provides funding and technical assistance to 36 state and local nonprofit partners (the ERASE Cohort) to conduct on-the-ground partnership development, capacity-building, outreach and education, policy reform and systems-change work to ensure that ERA funds reach renters with the greatest need for assistance, especially Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and other marginalized people and communities and build support for long-term housing solutions. NLIHC and the ERASE Cohort will be partners in the proposed evaluation by making resources available, providing information on the implementation of the ERA program in each of the sites, and making state and local connections and introductions as needed.

### IV. Evaluation Sites

NLIHC anticipates the selected evaluator will assess the tenant outcomes associated with the local and state programs in sites that are participating in the NLIHC ERASE Cohort. See Appendix A for a list of ERASE sites and grantees.

### V. Level of Analysis

NLIHC is looking to understand the impact of ERA on two levels: 1) the participant level and 2) systems level. This RFP focuses on the impact of ERA at the participant level (i.e. tenant outcomes). A systems-level analysis will be conducted by the NLIHC ERASE team, building off work NLIHC conducts to track ERA program implementation and features along with other program data. The evaluator selected through this RFP process will work with the NLIHC ERASE team to coordinate the participant and the systems level analysis.

Participant Level	Systems Level
Conducted by Contracted Evaluator	Conducted by NLIHC ERASE Team
Looks at:	Looks at:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participant Characteristics</li><li>• Participant Outcomes</li><li>• Participant Experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact of ERA on Evictions</li><li>• Impact of state and local context on program implementation and outcomes</li><li>• Program features that lead to equitable, rapid distribution and positive outcomes</li><li>• Policy reform and system changes adopted due to ERA</li><li>• Sustainability of emergency rental assistance past 2022.</li></ul>

#### ***Participant-Level Analysis***

The overall goals of the participant-level analysis are to:

- 1. Understand the characteristics and the need of households requiring emergency rental assistance.*** In order to design effective ERA programs, it is important to understand the characteristics and needs of tenants requesting assistance such as household size and characteristics, past housing instability, type of assistance requested, and household’s stage within the eviction process.
- 2. Measure the impact of ERA on short- and intermediate-term tenant outcomes.*** Short-term outcomes may include likelihood of participants receiving assistance, improved housing stability,

and avoidance of evictions. Intermediate-term outcomes may include 6 and 12-months housing stability, avoidance of homelessness, changes in income or wealth, change in employment status, changes in health and/or mental health status. NLIHC anticipates that current funding will only allow for a maximum of 12 months follow up for tenant outcomes. Tenant-level outcomes tracking may be extended for longer time frames if additional funding is secured.

- 3. Understand the tenant experience with the emergency rental assistance program.** Based on the tenant experience, the analysis will identify factors that have contributed to and/or hindered successful tenant outcomes and desired impact of ERA programs.

## **VI. ERASE Research Questions**

### Participant Level Research Questions

For the participant-level analysis, the selected grantee will work with NLIHC to develop both the final research questions and evaluation approach. Potential research questions that may be addressed include:

1. What are the characteristics of households in need of emergency rental assistance?
  - What circumstances (loss of job, medical crisis, already in need prior to pandemic) led households to need emergency rental assistance?
  - What type and how much assistance did households need when they applied for emergency rental assistance?
  - What types of other supports beyond financial assistance did households request and/or need such as housing navigation, budgeting, mental health services or others?
2. What are the short- and long-intermediate-term impacts of ERA on tenants who received assistance?
  - Who did not get serviced by ERA and why? Are there differences in the household characteristics (e.g. geography, race, income, citizenship status, disability status) of those who receive assistance and those who fail to receive?
  - What is the impact of emergency rental assistance on housing stability and homelessness?
  - What is the impact of emergency rental assistance on other tenant outcomes such as income, wealth, employment status, health and/or mental health status?
  - How do outcomes differ for different populations who receive emergency rental assistance? For example, are there differences in participant outcomes by geography, by race, or by other factors?
3. How do program features —such as documentation requirements, availability of self-attestation and direct-to-tenant assistance, access to community-based services, access to housing navigation services or others—impact tenant experience and outcomes?

## **VII. Coordination with NLIHC**

The selected evaluator will work with the NLIHC Team and ERASE Cohort Grantees to engage tenants and program administrators and collect additional data as needed. The NLIHC ERASE Team will provide

program information collected through the NLIHC [ERA Dashboard](#) and the [ERA Spending Tracker](#) to help support the work of the tenant outcomes evaluation. Additionally, NLIHC has conducted and will continue to conduct interviews with ERA program administrators and collect additional program-level data that may be helpful for the tenant outcomes evaluation.

**VIII. RFP Project Requirements**

NLIHC is asking respondents to propose a methodology that will best help us to achieve our evaluation goals. The selected evaluator will work closely with the ERASE Cohort and NLIHC to develop a list of and outreach to potential sites that are part of the ERASE Cohort, build relationships with state and local ERA programs, and develop an outreach plan and outreach to ERA applicants. We anticipate that the methodological approach should be consistent across participating sites, allowing for further analysis across programs.

Tasks for this project include:

- Working with NLIHC to prepare a detailed evaluation plan within the first month of the contract period;
- Working with NLIHC and the ERASE Cohort to implement the evaluation in a coordinated manner across participating sites;
- Managing data collection processes, including working with state and local program administrators, courts, homelessness systems, and other public agencies to obtain access to administrative data as needed;
- Conducting tenant surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups to understand tenants’ characteristics, experience with ERA and outcomes.
- NLIHC expects that the selected evaluator will enter into a data-sharing agreement with NLIHC to ensure that raw data can be shared with NLIHC to support the systems evaluation as described above.
- Working with NLIHC and ERASE Cohort to integrate program implementation and participant level data to better understand ERA program design impact on outcomes.
- Regular check-in and planning meetings with NLIHC ERASE Team.
- Preparing regular progress reports and one final report documenting findings from the evaluation.
- Participate in external webinars with NLIHC as needed.

**IX. Eligible Organizations:** Eligible organizations include universities, research institutions, and research consultants.

**X. Selection Criteria:**

Successful contractor will be selected base on the following criteria.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
Relevant Experience	25
Feasibility and quality of evaluation plan, including current or potential data sources	25
Ability of the evaluator to initiate work on this project in an expedited manner	25
Capacity to produce interim findings and reports in a timely way, according to a schedule agreed upon by the evaluator and NLIHC	25

## **XI. Proposal Format**

To respond to this RFP, please submit your proposal and all required documents to [eraseproject@nlihc.org](mailto:eraseproject@nlihc.org) by no later than **5:00 p.m. ET on November 22, 2021**. Please send questions related to the RFP to [eraseproject@nlihc.org](mailto:eraseproject@nlihc.org) by **November 10, 2021**.

Proposals shall include the information outlined in this section. Our ability to interpret and apply your proposal to these questions will factor into our decisions.

- A. Name of Organization/Contractor
- B. Name of principal contact, voice telephone and e-mail address;
- C. Amount Requested:
- D. A brief description of the organization including capacity, qualifications and relevant experience delivering the specified services outlined above in the "Project Requirements" section;
- E. Short biographies and/or resumes of each identified team member for this project;
- F. A brief description of content knowledge of emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention, including ERA's target population;
- G. Scope of Work including (remember this RFP is ONLY for the participant-level analysis):
  - a. Approach
    - i. Describe your overall approach to the evaluation
    - ii. Please address all program requirements listed in Section 7 of this RFP
  - b. Timeline
  - c. Preliminary Evaluation Plan and Methodology, including how you will address racial equity in your research design and evaluation plan
    - i. Plan for proposed # of sites, site selection and engagement
    - ii. Potential data sources and experience accessing proposed data
    - iii. Tenant Engagement Plan including potential compensation
  - d. Deliverables

(Again, NLIHC expects that the selected evaluator will enter into a data-sharing agreement with NLIHC to ensure that raw data can be shared with NLIHC to support the systems evaluation as described above.)
- H. Three (3) references for similarly contracted services within the last (10) ten years including name, address, phone number, email address, scope of services provided and length of service;
- I. Two (2) sample work products of similarly conducted evaluation reports; and

J. Budget: Please complete Attachment B: Budget Template and submit with your proposal. Pricing shall be inclusive of all costs. Maximum overhead rate for this proposal is 20%.

**Attachment A: Sites of ERASE Cohort Members**

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Connecticut
- DC
- Delaware
- Florida
- Miami, FL
- Georgia
- Hawai'i
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Detroit, Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Nebraska
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Puerto Rico
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- United Native American Housing Association
- Utah
- Washington
- Seattle, Washington

**Attachment B: Budget Template**

<b>Expenditures Description-Please list expenditures for each budget category.</b>	
<b>Personnel Services:</b> Includes a breakdown of salaries for each of the people whose time is spent working directly on this project should be listed here; include fulltime and part-time staff, consultants and trainers. Fulltime equivalency (FTE) may be defined according to the agency's policy (i.e. 37-40 hours). Indicate the formula used to determine payroll-related expenses (use percentages currently used by the agency).	
Explanation	Total Amount Requested
<b>Service/Program Materials and Supplies:</b> Includes a breakdown of materials and supplies which are directly related to carrying out this project.	
Explanation	Total Amount Requested
<b>Travel:</b> Includes travel relevant to the project being proposed.	
Explanation	Total Amount Requested
<b>Tenant Compensation:</b> Includes funds to compensate tenants for interviews and/or survey participation	
Explanation	Total Amount Requested
<b>Other:</b> May include indirect costs or administrative fees. Max overhead rate for this proposal is 20%	
Explanation	Total Amount Requested
<b>Budget Summary</b>	
Please list the total amount requested from each category above.	
Category	Amount Requested
1. Personnel Services	
2. Service/Program Materials and Supplies	
3. Travel	
4. Other	
Total Budget	