



August 30, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
Washington, D.C.

To Secretary Yellen:

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) and the Eviction Lab are requesting a data sharing agreement with the US Department of Treasury to make available to both NLIHC and the Eviction Lab more granular data about the distribution of ERA funds.

Specifically, both organizations are asking to receive aggregated data related to households receiving emergency rental assistance (ERA). We are requesting this information monthly by either the census tract or zip code level on and by race and ethnicity when possible:

- number of applications
- demographic breakdown for both applicants and recipients
- number of applications approved ERA funds
- number of applications denied for ERA funds
- average household size
- income level of recipients
- number/percent of assistance going to landlords
- number/percent of assistance going to households via direct-to-renter payments
- total amount of ERA funding distributed
- total amount of ERA funding obligated
- total ERA spending disaggregated by category (utilities, rental arrears, future rent payments, other housing related expenses)
- median amount received by household
- median duration of assistance per household

We will use those data to pursue three sets of analyses as follows:

1. First, we will analyze the relationship between ERA payments and eviction patterns (both historical and during the pandemic). Are ERA payments going to neighborhoods that have, historically, seen the highest rates of displacement through eviction? Do we see relatively lower eviction filing rates moving forward in neighborhoods that are receiving proportionately more ERA funding? What sort of dose-response relationship do we see on ERA pay-outs and neighborhood eviction filing rates? Answers to these questions are critical in evaluating the efficacy of ERA distributed in response to the pandemic and in planning for any future national ERA efforts.

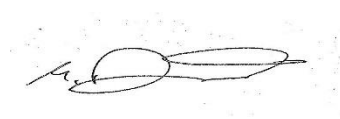
2. Second, we will analyze the neighborhood racial characteristics of ERA distribution. How much ERA funding went to majority-Black and Hispanic communities? Were payments in these communities equivalent to those made in majority-white neighborhoods, when accounting for differences in rental prices. Were there differences in these communities in the rates at which payments were made directly to tenants rather than landlords? This analysis is critical to evaluating potential racial disparities in the distribution of ERA funds.
3. Third, we will further examine the relationship between program elements and ERA distribution. Do any program elements, such as self-attestation or direct-to-tenant assistance, correlate with fund distribution overall and funds distributed to areas of renters in high need? (Renters in high need may be indicated by areas with higher housing cost burdens, COVID-related unemployment, or other sociodemographic or housing-related indicators.) Through this analysis we intend to highlight elements for model programs moving forward and better understand gaps between programming and ERA distribution.

If aggregated data cannot be provided, but household-level microdata can be provided, NLIHC and Eviction Lab can share a detailed plan on the computer security procedures we will implement while in possession of the requested data and complete a data license agreement as needed.

Sincerely,



Diane Yentel  
President and CEO  
National Low Income Housing Coalition



Matthew Desmond  
Principal Investigator  
Eviction Lab

CC:

Erika Poethig, Special Assistant to the President for Housing and Urban Policy at the White House Domestic Policy Council  
Jacob Leibenluft, Counselor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury  
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