

End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE):

History, Successes, and Highlights

Victoria Bourret, ERASE Senior Project Coordinator | **Sarah Gallagher**, ERASE Senior Project Director | **Nada Hussein**, ERASE Project Coordinator

2023

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1	Research and Publications on Tenant Protections	8
II. End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE)	2	2020-2021 Cohort Successes: Setting the Stage for ERA Disbursement	8
Visible-Accessible-Preventative Framework	2	2021-2022 Cohort Successes: Ensuring ERA Is Visible, Accessible, and Preventative	9
Activities	3	2022-2023 Cohort Successes: Extending Emergency Rental Assistance and Enacting Tenant Protections	10
ERASE Cohorts	3	Cohort Member Efforts to Pass Tenant Protections	11
ERASE Cohort 1	4	Next Steps and Recommendations	12
ERASE Cohort 2	4	Appendix A: Funded Grantees by ERASE Cohort	13
ERASE Cohort 3	5	Cohort 1: 2020-2021	13
III. Successes and Highlights of ERASE	5	Cohort 2: 2021-2022	13
Conducting Federal Advocacy to Improve ERA	5	Cohort 3: 2022-2023	14
Tracking Treasury’s ERA Program	6	Appendix B: Summaries of 2022-2023 ERASE Cohort Member Activities	15
Research and Publications on Emergency Rental Assistance	6		
Hosting a National Convening on ERA and the Path to a Permanent Program	7		
Releasing a Blueprint for Permanent ERA	7		
Documenting State and Local Tenant Protections	7		

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all areas of life, including housing stability. Emerging in early 2020, the pandemic resulted in widespread job losses that threatened access to safe, stable, and affordable housing for millions of low-income renters. By the last quarter of 2020, housing insecurity had reached unprecedented levels, with more than 8 million renter-households having fallen behind on at least one rental payment. By March 2021 – one year into the public health emergency – extremely low-income renters nationwide faced a looming eviction crisis.

In response, the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) led a campaign for “[Rent Relief Now](#).” The campaign persuaded Congress to make an historic \$46.5 billion in emergency rental assistance (ERA) available to states, localities, tribes, and territories through two pieces of legislation: the “[Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#)” (ERA1) and the “[American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) of 2021](#)” (ERA2).

Simultaneously, NLIHC launched a new project, “End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions” (ERASE), to ensure that ERA funds reached those renters most in need. The project engaged in advocacy, research, communications, tracking, and outreach at the federal, state, and local levels to support the efficient and equitable disbursement of ERA. From the beginning, the project also compiled lessons learned from the successes of various ERA programs to support future advocacy for a permanent ERA program and broader renter protections.

The ERASE project formally concludes this year. In this brief, we highlight the project’s successes and summarize the activities and achievements of its member organizations. In addition to describing the advocacy and research efforts conducted by the ERASE team, the brief surveys the activities conducted by ERASE cohort members over the course of the project’s life and provides detailed summaries of the projects completed by members of the 2022-2023 ERASE Cohort, which are collected in Appendix B.

Even with ERASE concluding, the work begun by the project to support state and local innovation and tenant protections will continue. NLIHC will utilize the lessons learned from the ERASE project to promote policy innovation at the state and local levels, with the overall objective of supporting federal policies that seek to end homelessness and increase housing stability. NLIHC’s plans to champion state and local policy innovation are a direct result of the momentum built over the course of the ERASE project and the efforts made by NLIHC’s state and local partners to advocate for the expansion of tenant protections in their jurisdictions.

To support such policy innovations, NLIHC plans to convene housing- and justice-based state and local advocacy organizations to draft sample legislative text for local laws and ordinances that support tenants. NLIHC will also build national momentum for the passage of tenant protections by organizing members of previous ERASE cohorts, tenant-led organizations, state and tribal partners, and other interested stakeholders in a collective that will provide information sharing, technical support, and research assistance, while also serving as a vehicle to advocate for the enactment of uniform federal tenant protections. In this way, NLIHC will advance a coherent set of local, state, and federal policies that support housing stability and prevent evictions over the long term.



II. End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE)

In passing the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 and ARPA, Congress took decisive action to stave off evictions for millions of low-income renters. Yet the appropriation of ERA did not guarantee that assistance would reach renters in need. NLIHC had two immediate concerns about ERA implementation. First, the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) was charged with administering the program but had little experience when it came to rental aid. Second, ERA was to be disbursed by over 700 state and local agencies implementing more than 500 ERA programs. Many of these programs were subject to rules and procedures imposed by state legislatures or city councils that created prohibitive barriers for the people most in need.

NLIHC launched the ERASE project to ensure that the \$46.5 billion in ERA1 and ERA2 appropriated by Congress reached the extremely low-income and marginalized renters whom it was intended to help. In addition to seeking to eliminate rental indebtedness caused by the pandemic, the project aimed to set the stage for the enactment of permanent solutions to promote housing stability, advance equity, and prevent evictions. ERASE pursued these aims by tracking and analyzing ERA utilization; documenting and sharing best practices and toolkits; influencing and shaping program design at the federal, state, and local levels; developing key partnerships for outreach and education; and assessing needs to inform advocacy for long-term investments and tenant protections to end housing instability and homelessness in the U.S.

VISIBLE - ACCESSIBLE - PREVENTATIVE FRAMEWORK

To guide its efforts, the ERASE project adopted a three-part framework focused on the objectives of *visibility*, *accessibility*, and *preventiveness*. In August 2021, the project issued a [“Call to Action”](#) to state partners, local jurisdictions, and program administrators encouraging them to make their ERA programs more visible and accessible to low-income renters and to ensure that programs succeeded in preventing evictions. Over time, the ERASE team and its partners developed specific recommendations for each part of the visible-accessible-preventative framework:

VISIBLE: Conduct equitable and robust marketing and outreach efforts to ensure that all landlords, low-income renters, and those already experiencing homelessness due to housing loss know about the ERA program and how to access it in their community.

ACCESSIBLE: Support equitable access to disbursement of financial support to landlords and tenants by ensuring an accessible, streamlined, and low-barrier ERA application process.

PREVENTATIVE: Ensure holistic, responsive interventions at all intersection points (such as state and local courts) to prevent evictions, housing displacement, and homelessness.

The visible-accessible-preventative framework was designed to support partners as they developed and implemented state and local ERA programs and tenant protections that ensured that the lowest-income households and those experiencing homelessness avoided evictions and stayed stably housed.

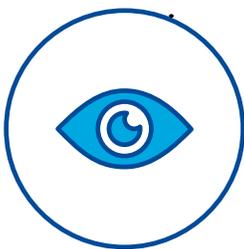
ACTIVITIES

The ERASE project sought to ensure that ERA was visible, accessible, and preventative through a wide range of activities. The project convened and facilitated bi-weekly State and Local Partner Implementation Calls that brought together program administrators and state and local advocates to discuss the implementation of COVID-19 relief packages. Likewise, ERASE held weekly National Calls to explain program guidance and highlight best practices in ERA program administration. The team convened ERA program administrators to troubleshoot issues that arose during the implementation and disbursement of emergency rental assistance, discuss innovative and equitable program practices, and help them connect with each other. The team also conducted advocacy at the federal level, tracked and shared information about existing ERA programs and key design features, and documented the implementation of tenant protections passed around the country. Finally, the project provided grants, technical assistance, and support to state and local advocates. These and other activities are described in greater detail in "Successes and Highlights of ERASE," below.



ERASE COHORTS

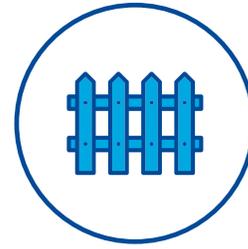
The ERASE team's work with local partners was a cornerstone of the project. By offering its support, the team enabled organizations to build capacity, creating opportunities to push for ERA program improvements, permanent emergency rental assistance programs, and the expansion of tenants' rights. Local partnerships were fostered through "cohorts," whose members received grants, technical assistance, and peer learning opportunities. These cohorts comprised state and local non-profit organizations, advocates, and other justice-based housing organizations working in their communities to serve tenants. Cohort members conducted on-the-ground partnership development, capacity building, outreach and



Visible



Accessible

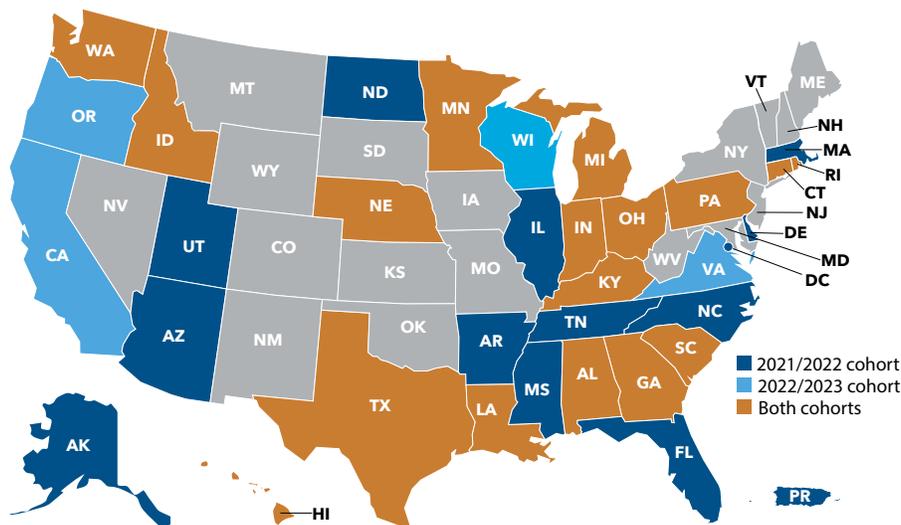


Preventive

education, policy reform, and systems change work to ensure that ERA reached marginalized peoples and communities with the greatest need and to support long-term housing solutions. In addition to working at the state and local levels, cohort members conducted federal advocacy, pushing for the enactment of [federal legislation](#) to keep families stably housed, such as the "[Eviction Crisis Act](#)" and the "[Stable Families Act](#)."

Over the course of the project, ERASE worked with a total of 116 different funded and unfunded state and local organizations via three cohorts. The first cohort ran from 2020 to 2021 (pre-dating the formal launch of the ERASE project in January 2021) and consisted of nine state and local partners. For the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 cohorts, the ERASE project invited applications via a Request for Proposal (RFP) process that elicited over 100 applications from organizations seeking funding for their efforts. The second cohort ultimately included 38 funded members and 32 unfunded members. The third cohort had 24 funded members and 47 unfunded members. (Some organizations took part in more than one cohort.) Though they did not receive funding, unfunded members supported state and local efforts, attended ERASE cohort meetings, tracked legislation, and provided feedback about ERA programs and federal policies that were proposed by NLIHC to the Biden administration and Treasury. For a complete list of grantees, see Appendix A.

ERASE GRANTEE COHORT SITES



ERASE COHORT 1

As noted, the first ERASE cohort was created prior to the formal launch of the ERASE project. Running from 2020 to 2021, the cohort consisted of nine state and local partner organizations and focused on generating a better understanding of the economic hardships and housing instability of the lowest-income renters during the pandemic and highlighting the need for emergency rental assistance. Once ERA funding was passed, members of the cohort shifted their efforts to tracking the distribution of funds, as well as the availability of program data, including demographic information and spending data about individuals receiving ERA. The ERASE team used information collected by grantees to inform recommendations sent to Treasury, which then updated its guidance to mandate that programs better serve the most vulnerable communities, track the need for emergency rental assistance, and document ERA program design and areas of potential improvement.

ERASE COHORT 2

The second cohort, which ran from 2021 to 2022, worked to influence state and local ERA programs and ensure that ERA funds quickly reached the lowest-income and most marginalized people to ensure the housing stability of the lowest-income renters in the short term. Cohort members pursued these goals by (1) influencing state and local programs

and accelerating the use of funding; (2) working with partners, local town councils, state legislators, and state and local court systems to implement eviction diversion and prevention measures to prevent evictions over the long term; and (3) encouraging transparency and program improvements by tracking program data, successes, and challenges.

ERASE COHORT 3

Members of the third cohort, which ran from 2022 to 2023, operated in general in one of two specific tracks (though there was significant overlap between tracks). Track 1 grantees focused on standing up state and local ERA programs, while Track 2 grantees sought to advance and enforce state and local tenant protections. Track 1 grantees assessed what worked best in helping low-income tenants avoid evictions and homelessness, assessed the scale of financial assistance needed for ERA moving forward, identified methods for funding ERA, and advocated for permanent programs. Track 2 grantees worked with state and local communities to enact and enforce state and local tenant protections, developed model legislation packages, advocated for federal tenant protections and resources to ensure long-term housing stability, and assessed the impact of tenant protections on preventing evictions over the long term.

III. Successes and Highlights of — ERASE

ERASE and its cohorts achieved numerous successes over the course of the project. On the one hand, the ERASE team conducted federal advocacy, tracked Treasury-supported ERA programs, conducted research on ERA, organized a national convening, released a blueprint for establishing permanent ERA, documented tenant protections at the state and local levels, and released publications on emergency rental assistance and protections for renters. On the other hand, cohort members succeeded in ensuring ERA was visible, accessible, and preventative; worked to extend ERA; and helped pass numerous tenant protections in their communities. In this section, we highlight just a few of the ERASE project's many achievements.

CONDUCTING FEDERAL ADVOCACY TO IMPROVE ERA

Along with its partners, the team used information collected through ERASE to advocate for program improvements and tenant protections that would support successful implementation and sustainability of ERA, especially at the federal level. In total, the ERASE team drafted and distributed 16 sign-on letters to the Trump and the Biden administrations that advocated for policies that would create a more equitable and responsive ERA program and in turn serve renters most in need of assistance. As a result of this advocacy, Treasury released guidance that clarified the use of self-attestation, categorical eligibility, and fact-specific proxy in determining a household's income, as well as the use of direct payments to tenants when landlords refused to participate in the program. Treasury's improvements to ERA guidance resulted in real-time changes and improvements to ERA programs.

TRACKING TREASURY'S ERA PROGRAM

NLIHC's [Emergency Rental Assistance Dashboard](#) was a core component of the effort to ensure that Treasury's ERA program served the lowest-income and most marginalized people. Since launching in 2020, the ERA Database has received more than 3 million views.

The tracker provides information about the disbursement of ERA1 and ERA2 funds, as well as ERA programs' expenditures of allocated funds. In all, the database tracked 514 Treasury-supported ERA programs. (As of October 2023, only 9.9% of Treasury-supported ERA programs were still operating.)

For each of the 514 programs, the database summarized program features, including application flexibilities permitted by Treasury via various guidance, and highlighted eligibility requirements for each of the programs in order to determine whether the most vulnerable renters were being targeted. By tracking the elements of each program, the database brought together information to help identify best practices for disbursement of ERA funds in the future, after COVID-19-era funds have been spent.



In terms of program spending, the database also tracked the disbursement of more than \$23.14 billion in ERA1 funds out of the \$25 billion Treasury had allocated as of October 2023. Treasury had approved or paid out \$16.82 billion of the \$21.55 billion in ERA2 funds it had been allocated. As of October 2023, 97% of ERA1 funds disbursed to states had been distributed. Among programs that shared data, 79% of ERA2 funding had been distributed. (Programs must spend down ERA2 funds by September 2024.)

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS ON EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE

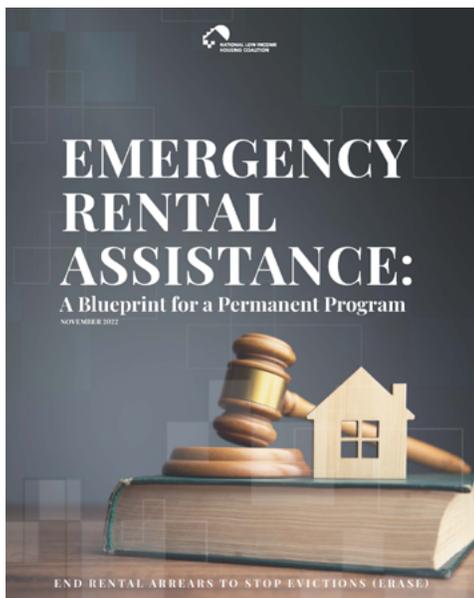
Between July 2020 and October 2023, the ERASE team released 33 reports and briefs related to emergency rental assistance. Released in August 2023, the last report, [Beyond Housing Stability: Understanding Tenant and Landlord Experiences and the Impact of Emergency Rental Assistance](#), finds that Treasury's ERA program offered a vital lifeline to tenants and landlords during the pandemic, improving outcomes in areas well beyond housing stability, including financial security, child well-being, access to healthcare, and overall health.

HOSTING A NATIONAL CONVENING ON ERA AND THE PATH TO A PERMANENT PROGRAM

In addition to conducting federal advocacy, operating the ERA database, and releasing research on ERA, the ERASE project coordinated meetings and convenings devoted to ERA and tenant protections. In October 2022, for example, the project hosted “Emergency Rental Assistance: The Path to a Permanent Program,” a national convening held by NLIHC at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Attended by more than 1,200 people, the hybrid event included five panels, 23 guest speakers, two messages from members of Congress, and over 100 ERASE cohort members. The convening brought together state, local, and research partners, officials from both the Biden administration and Congress, and people impacted by housing instability to share lessons learned from the implementation of ERA and explore the programmatic, policy, and systems changes needed at all levels to establish a permanent rental assistance program. A video recording of the full event is available [here](#).

RELEASING A BLUEPRINT FOR PERMANENT ERA

After receiving input and feedback from partners attending the ERASE national convening, the project released a report meant to support the creation of a permanent ERA program. Released in November 2022, [Emergency Rental Assistance: A Blueprint for a Permanent Program](#) provided an overview of Treasury’s ERA program and spending trends over time, a roadmap for best practices and innovations to be included in future programs, and policy recommendations to preserve the ERA infrastructure, create a permanent emergency rental assistance program, advance tenant protections, and support low-income renters into the future. Following the release of the report, ERASE hosted a national webinar with cohort partners and presented its findings to Treasury officials in a special requested meeting. A year after release of the report, the ERASE project released a follow-up publication, [Emergency Rental Assistance in Action](#), a collection of stories from landlords and tenants that supported the *Blueprint’s* recommendations.



DOCUMENTING STATE AND LOCAL TENANT PROTECTIONS

ERASE also undertook numerous activities to support the implementation and sharing of information about tenant protections. For example, NLIHC launched a [State and Local Tenant Protections Database](#) in January 2021 to track the passage of state and local tenant protections since the pandemic. The database tracked protections passed to ensure that tenants were not evicted unjustly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including short-term protections like eviction safe-harbors, landlord-tenant mediation programs, and local moratoriums, and long-term protections such as the civil right to

counsel, source-of-income protections, rent stabilization ordinances, just cause eviction standards, and eviction record sealing and expungement protections. Over time, the database expanded to document 241 tenant protections that had been passed since January 2021, including 89 short-term protections and 152 long-term protections. The database has also been expanded as of May 2023 to include pre-pandemic tenant protections.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS ON TENANT PROTECTIONS

In addition to collecting information on tenant protections through the organization’s tenant protections database, the ERASE team released four reports related to tenant protections to support members of its cohort working to pass legislation in their localities:

[*Tenant Protections and Emergency Rental Assistance During and Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic*](#), released in January 2022, provides a descriptive analysis of new tenant protections and ERA-related policies enacted or implemented by states and local governments in 2021.

[*Promoting Housing Stability Through Just Cause Eviction Legislation*](#), released in May 2022, overviews the goals of just cause legislation, shares examples of existing just cause protections, and offers recommendations about ways to advance just cause legislation at the local, state, and federal levels.

[*Eviction Record Sealing and Expungement Toolkit*](#), released in April 2023, provides a summary of eviction record sealing and expungement protections nationwide, identifies core components of existing protections, and makes recommendations for lawmakers developing new eviction record sealing and expungement protections in their jurisdictions.

[*The State of Statewide Tenant Protections*](#), released in May 2023, highlights the efforts of state-level lawmakers to pass tenant protections that keep renters stably housed and prevent unjust discrimination and harassment.



2020-2021 COHORT SUCCESSES: SETTING THE STAGE FOR ERA DISBURSEMENT

Alongside the successes of the ERASE team, the project supported its many cohort members as they worked to extend ERA, strengthen tenant protections, and stop evictions. At the onset of the pandemic, little research existed about the impacts of the public health crisis on renter households. Members of the 2020-2021 ERASE Cohort – the project’s first (though unofficial) cohort – worked in tandem with state and local partners to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to improve understanding about the impacts of the pandemic on tenants. Each of the nine members employed innovative measures to collect data, including surveying and conducting interviews with tenants and even creating a [*“court watching”*](#) program to better understand tenants’ experiences in eviction court, while also ensuring that tenants’

rights were upheld in the courtroom. In all, data collection efforts made by the cohort helped build the necessary evidence to ensure that, once ERA was passed, relief would be targeted to those most in need.

In Utah, for example, the [Utah Housing Coalition](#) was successful in using data from both the Utah State Court system and the U.S. Census Tracker to better understand the disparate impact of evictions across certain cities and ZIP codes in the state to identify existent racial disparities. In a final report, the organization noted that while no existing data showed the impact of evictions on different demographic groups, the data it had collected had been used to support a “Racial Disparities Mapping Project” that revealed where the largest number of evictions were taking place in the state. In Maine, meanwhile, the [Maine Affordable Housing Coalition](#) interviewed tenants to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-income, working renters. The data collected by the Coalition were used to inform policymakers, advocates, and local ERA program administrators about how better to address the consequences of the pandemic and identify those areas of concern of greatest importance to tenants, which included the loss of personal savings, loss of employment, and issues with the state’s rent relief program.

2021-2022 COHORT SUCCESSES: ENSURING ERA IS VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND PREVENTATIVE

Members of the 2021-2022 Cohort focused especially on ensuring that ERA programs were visible, accessible, and preventative. At the end of the grant period, cohort members were asked to assess the impact of their efforts. For each of the three measures, 20 of the 38 funded cohort members responded that they had succeeded in making ERA more accessible, visible, and preventative. Grantees offered a variety of examples of how they had increased the reach of programs or positively influenced programs’ decisions to improve policies, systems, and procedures to better serve the most vulnerable renters. Cohort members shared the following about their activities:

“Our ERA program adopted various language access approaches, ADA compliance, ERA voluntary reallocation, expansion of eviction prevention partnerships with legal aid groups, and partnerships with continuums of care.”

“We set up clinics that ensured people from marginalized neighborhoods were able to apply for the program and receive funding.”

“We helped advance eviction prevention and diversion by assisting with the implementation of a statewide right to counsel program.”

“Our work (workshops and free technical assistance to administrators) led to increased applications to underperforming ERA1 programs, more innovative ERA programs that utilized more of the eligible expenses, and reduced barriers for tenants to apply for and receive funds.”

“Our work focused on educating tenants about new protections, including rental assistance, and pushing for more transparency from our state Department of Commerce (the entity distributing the state portion of our ERA funds.) We reached over 400,000 low-income households through a combination of direct mail, social media, and radio ads, that resulted in significantly increased calls to a legal services hotline established to prevent evictions.”



In addition to ensuring the lowest-income and most marginalized renters could benefit from ERA, 2021-2022 cohort members' advocacy efforts led to the creation of 10 administrative policies and pieces of state/local legislation that improved programs' administrative processes, provided additional funding for ERA programs, and protected ERA recipients' rights. To take one example among many, the [Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama](#) was able to convince administrators of Alabama's state program to implement a Language Access Policy and an ADA Compliance Policy to improve application processes and outreach methods.

In terms of improving usage of ERA dollars, 2021-2022 cohort members were able to successfully advocate for legislation that modified a cap placed on administrative fees, approved the disbursement of the initial allocation from Treasury, and allowed source-of-income protections to cover ERA recipients. Members were also instrumental in getting legislation passed that allowed for the delay of evictions by modifying court processes. For example, one law extended eviction court date scheduling, another mandated pre-trial mediation, a third prevented evictions from being filed if a renter had an open application with the state's ERA program, and a fourth created an eviction task force. Advocates were also successful in ensuring additional funding for rental assistance, including \$1.5 million for a [separate rent bank program](#).

Members of the second cohort were extraordinarily successful in working to introduce and implement tenant protections in their communities. In total, 13 of the 38 funded organizations in the second cohort helped enact tenant protections in their jurisdictions, including eviction record sealing and expungement laws, source-of-income protections, right to counsel, and just cause eviction standards. In Ohio, for example, the [Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio](#) worked to pass statewide 'pay-to-stay' legislation, which allows a tenant to fight an eviction filing by allowing the tenant to pay back all rent owed to remain in their home.

2022-2023 COHORT SUCCESSES: EXTENDING EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE AND ENACTING TENANT PROTECTIONS

Members of the 2022-2023 Cohort focused especially on extending ERA and enacting tenant protections at the local level. Eight members of Track 1 of the 2022-2023 Cohort successfully advocated for the passage of 11 laws funding ERA programs in 2023, 2024, and/or 2025. In total, \$471.5 million in ERA funding was passed as a result of their efforts. Most allocations were funded by general revenue through state budget legislation and went to pre-existing programs (either Treasury-supported ERA programs or programs predating the COVID-19 pandemic). All programs that received funding have income requirements and/or target specific populations.

Likewise, advocacy efforts in support of tenant protections increased threefold with the third ERASE cohort. By Quarter 3, 21 out of the cohort's 24 grantees were working solely on the introduction or passage of tenant protections in their localities. As a result of efforts by members of the third cohort, more than 110 pieces of legislation from the following categories were introduced, implemented, or passed:

- ◀ Anti-harassment/anti-retaliation measures
- ◀ Code enforcement rules
- ◀ Eviction record sealing and expungement legislation
- ◀ Fair rent commissions
- ◀ Just cause eviction standards
- ◀ Landlord and tenant mediation policies
- ◀ Limits to application fees
- ◀ Pay-to-stay policies
- ◀ Rent stabilization measures
- ◀ Rental registries
- ◀ Right-to-counsel laws
- ◀ Right-to-renew laws
- ◀ Source-of-income protections
- ◀ Stronger written notice processes

COHORT MEMBER EFFORTS TO PASS TENANT PROTECTIONS

In general, ERASE cohort members were integral to the push to pass tenant protections in their jurisdictions. Right to counsel provides one example. According to the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel, in eviction court today, [only 3% of tenants are represented by an attorney, while more than 80% of landlords have legal representation](#). Right-to-counsel laws guarantee that tenants who have had an eviction levied against them will have access to legal representation in court. Prior to the start of the ERASE project, only seven cities nationwide had implemented right-to-counsel policies or programs in their localities. As of October 2023, however, right to counsel has been passed in 17 cities, four states, and one county. ERASE project grantees in the states of Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota, and Washington, as well as the cities of Denver, Detroit, Louisville, New Orleans, and Seattle, were instrumental in efforts to pass right-to-counsel legislation.

ERASE cohort members were also successful in pushing to enact eviction record sealing and expungement legislation. This legislation seals eviction records for some tenants from public view, thereby protecting tenants by prohibiting third parties from accessing eviction records, and in certain cases making it illegal for eviction records to be sold to third parties, such as credit reporting companies.

Since January 2021, eviction record sealing and expungement legislation has been introduced and/or implemented in seven states, with ERASE grantees in Indiana, Arizona, Rhode Island, and Connecticut throwing their weight behind efforts to enact eviction sealing and expungement protections. Prosperity Indiana, a member of both the second and third cohorts, advocated for eviction record sealing legislation that was passed in Indiana in 2021. [Arizona Housing Coalition](#), a member of the first and second cohort, supported legislation in Arizona that was passed in 2022 and explicitly prohibited the sale of a tenant's eviction record once it had been sealed. Most recently, the [Housing Network of Rhode Island](#), as well as the [Connecticut Fair Housing Center](#) – both members of the second and third ERASE cohort – worked in tandem with state-level lawmakers, tenant organizers, and other local housing organizations for the passage of state-wide eviction record sealing laws in their respective states. Due to their efforts, eviction sealing and expungement laws were passed in both states in 2023. Under the Rhode Island law, which was passed through "[Senate Bill 912](#)," a tenant's eviction record may be sealed by the court 30 days or more after the conclusion of the eviction case, with the tenant having to apply to have their eviction record sealed. Under Connecticut's law, which was passed through "[Senate Bill 998](#)," a tenant's eviction record is removed from public view 30 days after the conclusion of an eviction case, but only in cases where an eviction is withdrawn by the landlord, the tenant wins their case, or the case is dismissed by a judge.



Next Steps and Recommendations

With ERA spending winding down, the ERASE project officially concludes in 2023. However, NLIHC will continue to build upon the project’s work in several important ways. For example, NLIHC will provide expanded support to state and local partners as they work to strengthen tenant protections in their communities. Likewise, NLIHC will keep advocating for uniform federal policies – like a Tenants’ Bill of Rights and the passage of the “Eviction Crisis Act,” which would create a permanent ERA fund – that protect renter households from the threat of eviction and help tenants stay stably housed.

NLIHC will build upon the successes, best practices, and lessons learned from the ERASE project to support state and local level policy innovations that strengthen tenant protections, divert the threat of eviction for renter households, and help end homelessness. NLIHC will also utilize such state and local innovations to shape and inform federal policies that meet the needs of the lowest-income and most marginalized renters around the country. In support of this aim, NLIHC will convene housing- and justice-based advocacy organizations to troubleshoot tenant-based initiatives and draft sample legislative text for state and local laws and ordinances.

NLIHC will also organize previous ERASE cohort members, tenant-led organizations, and state and tribal partners into a collective that will provide technical support, research assistance, and opportunities for capacity building in an effort to support the passage of tenant protections. Many partners have expressed their desire to continue working to pass tenant protections during upcoming legislative sessions – especially source-of-income discrimination prohibitions, right to counsel laws, eviction record sealing and expungement legislation, rental registries, habitability standards, rent stabilization ordinances, just cause legislation, and rules restricting junk fees. Now that pandemic-era protections have expired and evictions are exceeding pre-pandemic levels in many places, tenant protections are needed more than ever, and NLIHC will promote their creation by drawing on the many successes and lessons of the ERASE project.



Appendix A: Funded Grantees by ERASE Cohort

COHORT 1: 2020-2021

- ◀ Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness
- ◀ Arizona Housing Coalition
- ◀ Florida Housing Coalition
- ◀ Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky
- ◀ Maine Affordable Housing Coalition
- ◀ Nebraska Housing Developers Association
- ◀ North Carolina Housing Coalition
- ◀ Texas Housers
- ◀ Utah Housing Coalition
- ◀ Empower DC
- ◀ Florida Housing Coalition
- ◀ Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc.
- ◀ Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice
- ◀ Homeless & Housing Coalition of Kentucky
- ◀ Hope Enterprise Corporation, MS
- ◀ HousingLOUISIANA
- ◀ Housing Action Illinois
- ◀ Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
- ◀ Housing and Counseling Services of DC
- ◀ Housing Alliance Delaware
- ◀ Housing Network of Rhode Island
- ◀ Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy
- ◀ Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama
- ◀ Miami Workers Center
- ◀ Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness
- ◀ Minnesota Housing Partnership
- ◀ Nebraska Housing Developers Association
- ◀ Neighborhood Preservation, Inc.
- ◀ North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People
- ◀ Prosperity Indiana
- ◀ Richland Library, Columbia, SC
- ◀ Texas Housers

COHORT 2: 2021-2022

- ◀ Ayuda Legal
- ◀ Arizona Housing Coalition
- ◀ Arkansas Coalition for Housing and Neighborhood Growth for Empowerment (ACHANGE)
- ◀ Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness
- ◀ Byrd Barr Place
- ◀ Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)
- ◀ Chicago Anti Eviction Campaign
- ◀ Coalicion de Coaliciones
- ◀ Coalition on Housing and Homelessness in Ohio
- ◀ Connecticut Fair Housing Center
- ◀ Dataworks NC

- ◀ United Community Housing Coalition, MI
- ◀ United Native American Housing Association
- ◀ Utah Housing Coalition
- ◀ Washington Low Income Housing Alliance
- ◀ Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc.
- ◀ Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice
- ◀ Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
- ◀ Housing Network of Rhode Island

COHORT 3: 2022-2023

- ◀ American Civil Liberties Union of South Carolina
- ◀ Association of Community Ministries
- ◀ Bienestar
- ◀ Come dream. Come build. (CDCB)
- ◀ Centro Legal
- ◀ Coalition for the Homeless of Kentucky
- ◀ Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
- ◀ Community Advocates Inc.
- ◀ Community Power Collective
- ◀ Connecticut Fair Housing Center
- ◀ Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy
- ◀ King County Bar Association
- ◀ Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center
- ◀ Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama
- ◀ Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness
- ◀ Minnesota Housing Partnership
- ◀ Nebraska Appleseed
- ◀ Prosperity Indiana
- ◀ United Community Housing Coalition
- ◀ Virginia Poverty Law Center



Appendix B: Summaries of 2022-2023 ERASE Cohort Member Activities

Prior to the conclusion of the ERASE project this year, the ERASE team asked its partners in the third ERASE cohort to summarize their activities during the preceding 12 months. Gathered together in this appendix, these summaries highlight on-the-ground advocacy efforts, partnership building, and research work conducted by 2022-2023 Cohort members and their state and local partners and provide high-level information about member organizations and their work to sustain ERA through permanent programs and expand tenant protections at the state and local levels.

Note: Unfunded cohort members are denoted with an asterisk ().*

Alabama

LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION OF ALABAMA (LIHCA)

Primary Contact:

Jay Williams, jayw@collaborative-solutions.net

Partner Organizations:

AIDS Alabama, Legal Services of Alabama, National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel, Alabama Arise

Project Description:

LIHCA convened local and statewide ERA stakeholders in a cohort focused on streamlining collaboration and coordination between ERA programs, sharing successes and challenges, and furthering tenant protections in the state. Further, LIHCA created a permanent resource for housing supportive services and development. Lastly, LIHCA, its members, and community partners advocated for a \$25 million State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund investment and a dedicated revenue source for the Alabama Housing Trust Fund.

Project Successes:

LIHCA [introduced a bill](#) to fund the Alabama Housing Trust Fund via a dedicated source of revenue.

A bill to eliminate the cap on rental property deposits was [defeated](#) by state advocates.

LIHCA successfully advocated for \$15 million of Alabama's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to be given to Habitat for Humanity for housing production and home repair.

ERASE Project Highlights:

LIHCA released the [Alabama Housing Trust Fund Economic Impact Study](#), which estimates the potential economic impact of a funded and operational Alabama Housing Trust Fund on the economy of Alabama.

Alaska

ALASKA COALITION ON HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS*

Primary Contact:

Helen Renfrew, helen@alaskahousing-homeless.org

Partner Organization(s):

Landlord Housing Project, Alaska Legal Services

Project Description:

The Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness worked on finding alternate sources for ERA to go along with the upstream prevention program being developed through a grant to the Alaska Courts; organizing tenants; and working on source-of-income protections and right-to-counsel legislation.

Project Successes:

The Eviction Court mediation program was implemented statewide.

Through an administrative rule change, eviction cases that are dismissed or found in favor of the renter are removed from public view.

Limited Emergency Rental Assistance was set aside for Anchorage residents and is being administered by United Way in cooperation with the Court's mediation program.

The Eviction Diversion Working Group is still in discussions with AHFC to try to identify ERA2 funds for statewide ERA, and connections were made between the Alaska Courts and an organization with rental assistance funds available in Fairbanks to support the mediation program.

During this timeframe, Alaska's first housing trust fund, Housing Alaskans - a Public/Private Partnership (HAPPP), was established with \$1 million of support from the legislature. HAPPP organized alongside a board and a council of advisors to distribute its first round of grants, which totaled \$750,000.

ERASE Project Highlights:

[Alaska's Housing Trust Fund](#) was created in 2022 and funded initially by the State of Alaska and a grant from the Rasmuson Foundation.

The [Alaska Court Systems Eviction Diversion Program](#) offers free mediation to landlords and tenants. The program is available for use before or after the landlord starts an eviction case in court. Both sides must agree to participate.

[United Way of Anchorage](#) administered Limited Emergency Rental Assistance to Anchorage residents, in partnership with the court mediation program.

California

CENTRO LEGAL DE LA RAZA

Primary Contacts:

Mihaela Gough, mgough@centrolegal.org, and Samantha Beckett, sbeckett@centrolegal.org

Partner Organization:

East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE)

Project Description:

Centro Legal de la Raza (Centro) partnered with East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE) to (1) enforce the recently enacted Concord Tenant Anti-Harassment ordinance; (2) secure government funding for eviction prevention and housing stability services in Contra Costa County, CA; (3) work with local community leaders to pass an Antioch tenant anti-harassment ordinance; and (4) develop self-advocacy materials that tenants can use to enforce state and local tenant protections.

Project Successes:

We successfully secured county-government funding in the amount of \$1,000,000 for legal services aimed at eviction prevention and housing stability services and over \$800,000 for emergency rental assistance in Contra Costa County for FY23-24 and laid the foundation for continued funding through the County's Measure X funding. We also successfully advocated for the passage of the Antioch tenant anti-harassment ordinance, which was passed in September and was signed into law on October 5, 2023. We developed self-advocacy materials that tenants can use to enforce state and local protections, including materials to help tenants fight every stage of the eviction process, and made strides in enforcing the recently enacted Concord Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance by conducting extensive outreach.

ERASE Project Highlights:

Antioch Mayor Lamar Thorpe held a ceremony to sign and celebrate Antioch's anti-tenant harassment ordinance.

Connecticut

CONNECTICUT FAIR HOUSING CENTER

Primary Contact:

Greg Kirschner, greg@ctfairhousing.org

Partner Organization(s):

Partnership for Strong Communities, Center for Leadership and Justice, Make the Road, National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel, Connecticut Legislature, Legal Services Providers, Connecticut Tenants Union

Project Description:

The Center adopted a multi-level approach to increase housing stability for low-income tenants in Connecticut. Center staff worked with tenants, eviction defense providers, municipalities, and within the state legislature to advance the goals of tenants, reduce evictions and improve eviction defense, and increase tenant protections to preserve housing stability.

Project Successes:

The City of Hartford dedicated \$1.95 million to expand housing code enforcement and set aside \$750,000 for direct representation of tenants who reside in the City by legal services as a result of our organizing. We also filed a novel mass payment-into-court action, the only legal way to perform a rent strike, that resulted in favorable outcomes for the participating plaintiffs.

ERASE Project Highlights:

As a member of the 2021-2022 ERASE cohort, we advocated for expanded fair rent commissions, municipal bodies that are empowered by state legislation to deny rent increases and require landlords to make repairs, and then spent the 2022-2023 cohort period providing technical assistance to over 20 municipalities as they expanded or created commissions for the first time. We were also among the five leading organizations in a grassroots coalition of more than 50 organizations (Cap the Rent CT) pushing for a 3% cap on rent increases and expansion of good cause eviction protections to cover all tenants. This was the first sustained campaign for rent control in Connecticut in nearly 40 years, and it used an organizing strategy with high levels of tenant participation. The campaign organized multiple weekly canvasses across the state to engage tenants, held weekly phone banks and on-boarding, and expanded the coalition to include more than 50 grassroots organizations, most of whom committed to actively organizing or lobbying for rent stabilization and universal good cause. The campaign received extensive news coverage, including on all local TV news channels, all major papers in the state, and on the radio. The bill ultimately died in committee, but we hope to build on the massive grass roots support to revisit it this legislative session.

Hawai'i

HAWAI'I APPLESEED

Primary Contact:

Gavin Thornton, gavin@hiappleseed.org

Partner Organization(s):

Mediation Center of the Pacific, Kaua'i Economic Opportunity Services, Maui Mediation Services, Ku'ikahi Mediation Center, West Hawai'i Mediation Center, Catholic Charities (O'ahu), Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, Kaua'i Federal Credit Union, Hawaiian Community Assets, Catholic Charities (Maui), Kaua'i County Housing Agency, Honolulu County Office of Economic Revitalization, Maui County Department of Housing and Human Concerns, Hawai'i County Office of Housing and Community Development

Project Description:

Hawai'i Appleseed (HA) partnered with the island's mediation centers, rent assistance providers, county agencies and other local partners to conduct the necessary research, organizing, and advocacy to enact a permanent statewide rental assistance program and a mandatory pre-trial mediation process.

Project Successes:

Our bills to create a Hawai'i pre-litigation mediation and rent relief program ([HB1439](#), and its Senate companion, [SB1439](#)) passed through both the House and Senate. Unfortunately, the bills died on the last day of the legislative session, failing to make it out of conference committee – sharing the fate of many other budget-related bills that fell victim to [last minute chaos surrounding Hawai'i's state budget](#). However, the fact that the bills made it so far through the legislature in the first session in which they were considered suggests that there is a strong potential of passage in the future. A bill such as this one passing through both the House and Senate during the first year of consideration is unusual in Hawai'i. The typical timeline for passage of a new program is five to seven years. We intend to build on the foundation laid during the 2023 session to advocate for passage in the coming year.

ERASE Project Highlights:

Op-ed highlighting the impacts of eviction and the need for continued emergency rental assistance in Hawaii: [Seitz, Abbey, and Chevelle Davis, "Covid has slowed but Hawai'i still needs rent assistance," Honolulu Civil Beat, March 31, 2023](#)

[Video](#) explaining House Bill 1439, which, if enacted, would provide rent relief and mediation assistance to keep Hawaiians housed.

Earned media highlighting the high costs of eviction: [Consillio, Kristen, "Hawai'i taxpayers are paying a high cost for evictions," KITV4, March 7, 2023.](#)

Blog post on Act 57 (which provided emergency relief and pre-litigation mediation) and House bill 1430: [Thornton, Gavin, "Hawai'i can increase housing stability through a rent relief & mediation program," February 14, 2023.](#)

Idaho

IDAHO CENTER FOR FISCAL POLICY AND THE IDAHO ASSET BUILDING NETWORK

Primary Contact:

Kendra Knighten, kknighten@jannus.org

Partner Organization(s):

Jesse Tree of Idaho

Project Description:

The Idaho Asset Building Network and Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy convened a Fairness in Renting Working Group in order to (1) reassess greatest needs for Idaho renters; (2) refine a policy agenda and legislation to enhance and enact renter protections in Idaho; and (3) develop an advocacy plan and tactics to advance legislation during the 2023 Legislative Session. The network also led advocacy efforts to (1) urge the Legislature to authorize the Idaho Housing and Finance Association to spend down the remaining \$15.5 million in ERA2 available to Idaho until all ERA2 funds are exhausted; and (2) urge the Legislature to create a state-funded emergency rental assistance program.

Project Successes:

The Idaho Legislature approved and the Governor signed [House Bill 324](#), which authorized the use of Idaho's remaining \$32 million in ERA2. This was achieved despite widespread dislike of federal funding among members of Idaho's majority party, significant turnover in both chambers of the legislature, and a convoluted budget process resulting from new legislative and budget committee leadership. In total, ERA administered through the Housing Preservation Program provided assistance to 23,943 households and provided \$100.6 million in assistance. We helped pass a bipartisan bill, [SB 1039](#), that requires all fees imposed on tenants to be reasonable and that will create greater transparency about fees. In addition to requiring that residential landlords disclose all fees in written rental agreements, SB 1039 prevents landlords from charging fees in an amount greater than that specified in the rental agreement and requires 30 days' notice for any change in fees.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We released a [research report](#) that highlighted the impact of eviction prevention efforts in the state, including the importance of federal emergency rental assistance on keeping eviction rates down.

We released a [fact sheet](#) that showcased the inextricable link between housing and every aspect of daily life, including, but not limited to, health outcomes.

We published an [op-ed](#) that requested additional emergency rental assistance funds to be allocated to the state to help ward off pandemic induced evictions.

Illinois

HOUSING ACTION ILLINOIS (HAI)*

Primary Contact:

Bob Palmer, bob@housingactionil.org

Partner Organization(s): N/A

Project Description:

Housing Action Illinois partnered with others on multiple initiatives to increase funding for ERA programs and to strengthen tenant protections. HAI advocated for state legislation that seals eviction court records when the parties to the eviction action agree to seal, the court dismisses the case with or without prejudice, either party files a satisfaction of judgment, the court enters judgment in favor of the tenant, or the complaint does not allege a material violation of the lease. The legislation would also require all eviction records be sealed after seven years and prohibit the dissemination of information about a sealed court file by consumer reporting agencies, including tenant screening companies.

Project Successes:

We were very pleased that the Illinois final state budget for fiscal year 2024, developed by the General Assembly in collaboration with Governor JB Pritzker, included a new \$200.3 million Home Illinois line item that makes historic increased investments in preventing and ending homelessness. Within the Home Illinois line item, \$85 million is new General Revenue Fund resources that we and our partners advocated for. This included a record one-time increase for the Homeless Prevention Program (\$10.8 million) that almost doubles the current funding available. Based on past average grant amounts and households served, this increase in funding will assist more than 5,000 households, more than half of them families with children. The program assists people at risk of homelessness with past due rent, as well as other resources to help people maintain or secure a home. Unfortunately, our coalition efforts to pass eviction sealing legislation in 2023 were not successful due to strong opposition from interest groups representing rental property owners.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We helped advocate for the state to invest in long-term housing solutions, with the state passing over \$200 million in funding for housing investments within the state's final budget during the 2023 legislative session. In the budget, historic amounts of funding were allocated to addressing the needs of the state's homeless population.

We wrote a [blog post](#) that highlighted the need for a permanent eviction record sealing law, which was introduced through bill "[HB1569](#)."

Primary Contact:

Andrew Bradley, abradley@prosperityindiana.org

Partner Organization(s):

Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition (HHNC) Steering Committee, the Indiana Tenant Association, Housing Alliance Indy (an emerging Indianapolis housing advocacy group), City of Indianapolis IndyRent, eviction diversion Tenant Assistance Program (TAP), IERA Housing Stability Network leadership (Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority, Indiana Community Action Association, Prosperity Indiana, and Indiana Bar Foundation)

Project Description:

Prosperity Indiana sought to stand up permanent ERA programs and services and strengthen local, state, and federal tenant protections. Prosperity Indiana worked in partnership with the City of Indianapolis to evaluate and strengthen IndyRent and the TAP court-based eviction diversion program to utilize as models for permanent locally administered ERA. Prosperity Indiana also worked with IERA and state policymakers to sustain the Housing Stability and Legal Networks and to increase the statewide floor of renter protections through policies that advance habitability standards enforcement, affordability, and court-based services.

Project Successes:

The Indiana ERASE project was able to help stand up ERA programs and services and pass tenant protection policies that will continue to benefit vulnerable Hoosier tenants long after the initial ERA program and funding are gone. Prosperity Indiana and the Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition successfully advocated for the state to use ERA funding for Housing Stability Services that have provided housing counseling and stability case management and legal services alongside ERA funds. Prosperity Indiana and HHNC also helped pass HEA 1214, which creates the state's first eviction filing sealing law, and advocated for SEA 114 to put large properties which fail to maintain utilities for tenants into receivership.

ERASE Project Highlights:

Highlights include partnering with community groups to create an Indiana Court Watching Toolkit to empower local advocates to share tenant stories; working with local ERA programs to create permanent court-based eviction diversion programs; and strengthening the advocacy capacity of the 2,000-member strong Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition to activate on state and federal ERASE priorities.

Kentucky

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY MINISTRIES (ACM)

Primary Contact:

Mark Steiner, mark.steiner@louisvilleran.org

Partner Organizations:

Coalition for the Homeless, The Hope Village, Kentucky Housing Corporation, Kentucky Justice Resource Center, Kertis Creative, Legal Aid Society, Louisville Urban League, Metropolitan Housing Coalition, Metro Louisville Office of Housing, Metro Louisville Center for Health Equity, VOCAL-KY

Project Description:

Association of Community Ministries worked with the Louisville Eviction Prevention Working Group (EPWG) and the 13 area community ministries that make up the Association of Community Ministries' membership base (and together cover the entirety of Metro Louisville) to reduce barriers to rental assistance and build housing stability for households in crisis. ACM supported the efforts of partners who were already doing advocacy work around local, state, and federal rental assistance/housing stability funding. Concurrently, ACM built community support for, and established a team to advocate for, State and Metro rental assistance/housing stability funding while also exploring the establishment of a private rental assistance fund supported by area philanthropists, businesses, foundations and concerned citizens.

Project Successes:

We were able to distribute \$5 million in ERAP funds to Jefferson County families in crisis abandoned by the state portal. We were able to secure \$10 million in additional rental assistance funds after the city mis-allocated it towards infrastructure projects. We worked with the Metro Government to build a program to distribute that \$10 million through community service providers who will provide a greater degree of wrap-around support and case management and focus more on the most vulnerable populations, such as families with young children, those with health challenges, and seniors and others living on fixed incomes. Meanwhile, we are working with our partners to collect the data that will support additional ERA funding.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We reduced rental assistance program barriers by challenging Office of Housing Requirements, including removing social security number requirements from the application process.

We made assistance more accessible by offering live help in the form of Rent Clinics at a dozen locations across the city, including during the evening and on weekends.

We set up a pilot utility assistance program to maintain services for families facing shut offs in service areas with the highest poverty rates.

We stood up an emergency rental assistance program to assist 2400 applicants who had been abandoned by the state portal during a reallocation process.

We stood up a re-envisioned ERA program (the Neighbor Network) grounded in a relational trauma-informed approach to distribute the last of the city's ERAP dollars.

After experimenting with texts in addition to email and phone-based client communication we adopted texting as a major communications tool.

We added the presence of Office of Housing and Legal Aid representatives at our rent clinics to provide immediate access to information and services.

We arranged for extensive trauma-informed care trainings to support client interactions for each of ACM's 13 members.

We actively engaged partners, community members, elected officials, and media in conversations about the need to include adequate eviction prevention and rental assistance funding in our city budget.

We actively engaged with community members, the mayor's office, and media when millions of dollars were allocated away from direct rental assistance to other housing programs.

We launched four "subgroups" within the Louisville Eviction Working Group to deepen the impact of our work: Policy, Immediate Assistance, Community Organizing, and Infrastructure.

COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Primary Contact:

George Eklund, geklund@louhomeless.org

Partner Organization(s):

The Louisville Eviction Prevention Workgroup

Project Description:

The Coalition for the Homeless and the Louisville Eviction Prevention Workgroup built on previous work to prevent and address evictions in Louisville by working to strengthen tenant protections that can be expanded statewide. The team worked with tenants and advocates to raise their voices about the need to increase tenants' rights and implement policy change.

Project Successes:

The Coalition for the Homeless used the short 2023 session to start building support for eviction expungement. We were able to make significant progress with key lawmakers to create an eviction expungement statute in Kentucky. This was critical for laying the groundwork for success in 2024. In 2023, after three years of our advocacy work, the state legislature passed HB2, a homeless ID bill, which we helped write and champion, resulting in lower costs and increased access to driver's licenses and IDs for unhoused people and unaccompanied young adults. This was the final piece of our young adult advocacy agenda from 2019. We plan to use this bi-partisan bill to build relationships with a diverse set of lawmakers and use the bill as an opening to talk about other renter protections.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We met with 35 state elected officials, 11 Metro Council members, and the newly elected mayor’s administration to develop relationships and share priorities in 2022-23.

We worked with persons with lived experience of homelessness to testify in front of Metro Council and the Kentucky state legislature 12 times.

We helped community members speak up to their elected leaders through 8,241 emails and over 500 postcards.

We mobilized directly impacted people and students to advocate in Frankfort with elected officials for eviction expungement and ID reform for homeless young adults:

Six members of the Community Consulting Board shared their lived experiences, Groups from Mercy Academy and Ballard High School met with elected officials, and our Youth Action Board shared their experiences as young adults facing homelessness.

We hosted lunch forums in Louisville and Frankfort to share priorities with state representatives.

The actions listed above, as well as three years of advocacy with the state legislature resulted in the passage of HB21, which we helped write and champion, resulting in lower costs and increased access to driver’s licenses and IDs for unhoused people and unaccompanied young adults. This was the final piece of our young adult advocacy agenda from 2019.

We were able to make significant progress with key lawmakers to create an eviction expungement statute in Kentucky. This was critical for laying the groundwork for success in 2024.

Louisiana

LOUISIANA FAIR HOUSING ACTION CENTER (LAFHAC)

Primary Contact:

Monique Blossom, mblossom@lafairhousing.org

Partner Organization(s):

Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative, New Orleans Renters Rights Assembly

Project Description:

Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center worked to advance state and local tenant protections for BIPOC households, who are disproportionately at risk of eviction and homelessness. Locally, LaFHAC focused on a healthy homes campaign, anti-retaliation protections, and continued Right-to-Counsel funding, while at the state level, we focused on research and advocacy to invest in the state housing trust fund and provide tenant protections for people with criminal records.

Project Successes:

Anti-retaliation protections, a key component of the Healthy Homes campaign, went into effect for all Orleans Parish renters on July 1, 2023, and an eviction defense attorney through our Right-to-Counsel program at LaFHAC successfully used the protections to prevent the eviction of her client. We created a resource surveying all affordable housing units across the state of Louisiana funded by the Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC), giving residents a way to find affordable units that also must be in compliance with LHC's inclusive criminal background policy.

ERASE Project Highlights:

New Orleans' Healthy Homes Program will begin a roll-in implementation starting in January 2024, and LaFHAC continues to advocate for proper staffing and resources for a successful program. At the moment, we are working to ensure budget allocations to continue the local Right-to-Counsel program to prevent evictions for disproportionately BIPOC households in Orleans Parish.

Maryland

UNITED WAY CENTRAL MARYLAND*

Primary Contact:

Jessie Keller, jessie.keller@uwcm.org

Partner Organization(s):

Public Justice Center, Arundel Community Development Services, Inc.

Project Description:

United Way of Central Maryland (United Way) convened a Task Force of tenants, landlords, government officials, and other stakeholders to fund emergency rental assistance and create a permanent program. The United Way used state and local data, including an examination of ERA reporting provided by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), survey data from STEP (Strategic Targeted Eviction Prevention) participants, and feedback and insights from landlords across the region to inform the Task Force and guide advocacy efforts.

Project Successes:

The Maryland Emergency Rental Assistance coalition, a task force of housing and legal services providers, tenant advocates, and ERAP providers, successfully lobbied the Maryland General Assembly to fund \$2 million for eviction prevention in the state budget. (Unfortunately, this amount was far less than the \$175 million requested.) Recently, members of the task force commissioned a Stout Risius Ross study to assess the need for emergency rental assistance in Maryland and analyze national best practices for rental assistance. The task force continues to meet with legislators and plans on using the study to advocate for additional rental assistance funds in the 2024 General Assembly Session.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We helped to advocate for \$2 million in state funding for emergency rental assistance in our state.

Michigan

MICHIGAN COALITION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS (MCAH)

Primary Contact:

Lisa Chapman, lchapman@mihomeless.org

Partner Organizations:

MI State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), MI Poverty Law Program, University of Michigan-Poverty Solutions, various legal aid organizations

Project Description:

The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) built upon existing relationships and fostered additional ones with legislators, government officials, and advocates across the state; cultivated new relationships with tenant and housing-focused associations; and convened partner networks and collaboratives to advocate for additional tenant protections and a Permanent Emergency Rental Assistance program across Michigan.

Project Successes:

Several tenant protection bills were introduced in 2023 in the state legislature including: SB 202-207 & HB 4062 - 63, which would allow source-of-income to be a protected class under the state's fair housing law; HB 4818, which would prevent credit scores from being used as a deciding factor in denying a lease; and HB 4878, which would generally prohibit a landlord from using an individual's criminal record when evaluating the individual's rental application at any stage in the application process. Lastly, the Michigan Supreme Court Administrative Office incorporated several COVID pandemic changes permanently, including virtual first hearings.

ERASE Project Highlights:

An ERA program called the Homeless Prevention Program was developed statewide with \$5 million of ARPA funding.

Tenant advocates were engaged by MCAH in the statewide coalition for expanding housing access and advocated for tenant protections, including by testifying at a Senate committee hearing and telling their stories of housing insecurity, evictions, and homelessness.

Public housing authorities and MCAH engaged in a discussion on tenant screening and best practices.

Statewide homeless response agencies participated in peer-to-peer discussions on housing stability services, effective engagement with courts and legal aid, creative conversations focused on tenant shelter diversion, and landlord outreach and retention practices.

MCAH and the Campaign to End Homelessness are advocating for the governor to prioritize funding for a new Emergency Rental Assistance program and providing policy recommendations for additional tenant support.

Subcontractor MI Poverty Law Program worked with state legislators on bill language for many tenant protections, as well as with the State Supreme Court Administrative Office on eviction proceeding rules.

UNITED COMMUNITY HOUSING COALITION (UCHC)

Primary Contact:

Tonya Myers Phillips, mstphillips@gmail.com

Partner Organization(s):

Michigan Legal Services, Detroit Action, Congress of Communities, and the Wisdom Institute

Project Description:

The Keep Detroiters in their Homes (KDITH) project (a coalition of UCHC, Michigan Legal Services, Detroit Action, Congress of Communities, and the Wisdom Institute) trains and supports tenants and residents to conduct on-the-ground advocacy, outreach, partnership development, systems change, and policy reform to shape, create, and enforce permanent tenant protections in the City of Detroit. The goals, upon conclusion of the project, are to (1) obtain full funding and equitable implementation of the Detroit Right to Counsel ordinance; (2) establish a permanent eviction diversion program with local district court and community organizations; (3) create guides and/or publications on equitable engagement and leadership of community members and impacted persons in policymaking; (4) use collaborative organizing models to enact legislation and achieve policy making goals; and (5) establish a story bank and dedicated forum for tenant/resident leaders to lead and influence future housing justice policies.

Project Successes:

We successfully obtained an additional \$2.5 million appropriation from the State of Michigan to fund the Detroit Right to Counsel Ordinance. Our advocacy has now brought \$20.5 million in public funds towards fully funding free legal representation for Detroiters facing eviction. We also successfully advocated for reversing a district court policy that temporarily mandated 100% in-person attendance for vulnerable defendants facing eviction and preserved the right for vulnerable community members to appear remotely. Further, we were successful, along with our statewide ERASE partner MCAH and others, in our advocacy to secure a permanent court rule change that (1) protects tenants' rights to virtual court hearings in eviction proceedings; (2) includes protections through a mandatory adjournment of proceedings if a tenant applies for rental assistance within five days of going to court; and (3) requires heightened notice requirements for landlords/plaintiffs to secure default judgments against tenants.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We held bi-weekly coalition meetings of all KDITH team members.

We held bi-weekly meetings of the Detroit Action Renters' Rights Workgroup.

We organized citywide advocacy for full funding and equitable implementation of the Detroit Right to Counsel Ordinance.

We implemented a successful Poetry Slam/Slam Evictions event targeting youth and young adult leadership and cultivating activism and ownership of our narrative.

We developed and distributed Right to Counsel educational and outreach materials (door-to-door, community events, online, email, text, and social media) to prevent evictions and reduce the overall rate of evictions in our city.

We worked collaboratively with Wayne State University Law School to envision and begin planning for a legal navigators program for students and community members to help tenants navigate the eviction process to prevent homelessness and evictions. We aim to launch the effort next year.

We launched a web portal through Detroit Right to Counsel Coalition for tenants to invite tenants to share their stories.

Minnesota

MINNESOTA ERASE CAMPAIGN/MINNESOTA HOUSING PARTNERSHIP (MHP)

Primary Contact:

Elizabeth Glidden, Elizabeth.glidden@mhponline.org

Partner Organization(s):

Co-convenors of the Minnesota ERASE Campaign include African Career Education Resource (ACER), Housing Justice Center, and MHP (Minnesota Housing Partnership)

Project Description:

The primary objective of the Minnesota ERASE campaign was to continue working to advocate for a permanent state emergency rental assistance program. The secondary objective was to advance state and local tenant protections; to this end the campaign continued ongoing work to advocate for advance notice of eviction, expungement reform, and protection against source-of-income discrimination.

Project Successes:

We established an ongoing campaign presence that includes renters, property owners/managers, and housing advocates, and members of our campaign leadership were regularly invited to state agency and lawmaker discussions about emergency rental assistance. We successfully secured state funding for emergency rental assistance in the amount of \$120.5 million by expanding a small existing program called Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program (FHPAP). Previously, this program was funded at \$20 million per biennium for the entire state. We established emergency rental assistance as a priority issue in the state legislature – a major feat since emergency rental assistance had not been a topic of discussion in the state legislature until the pandemic – and helped ensure bipartisan support for expanding this funding in 2022 and 2023. For example, in 2023 a bill for \$50 million for ERA (called the “Fast Track ERA” bill) was passed early in session to address the need for ERA, one of only a small number of bills to be approved before the end of the legislative session. Finally, we helped establish a narrative about the need for emergency rental assistance, driven by renter leaders and housing advocates from our campaign. Our narrative was amplified by many media stories.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We helped to advocate for the state to pass an additional \$50 million in ERA funds, with our work highlighted in the media through two articles, which are available [here](#) and [here](#).

We published a research report, [Emergency Rental Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings and Recommendations for Preventing Evictions and Rental Arrears](#), showing the disparate impact of eviction filings on BIPOC communities. The research report also highlighted efforts to distribute ERA funds statewide, noting that the state was successful in distributing funds at a quicker rate than other states were, and that most importantly, help reached those most in need. The research report also highlighted the need for a permanent ERA program to be passed at the state-level to ensure tenants have a safeguard against the threat of eviction.

Nebraska

NEBRASKA APPLESEED

Primary Contact: Ken Smith, J.D., ksmith@neappleseed.org

Partner Organization(s): Women's Fund of Omaha and Together Omaha

Project Description: Nebraska Appleseed's ERASE project drove long-term systemic solutions that promoted housing stability in Nebraska by (1) developing a lasting base of grassroots advocates for housing policy and systems change in Nebraska; (2) working to end source-of-income (SOI) discrimination, increasing access to crucial legal representation during eviction cases, and making it more difficult for landlords to evict people without just cause; and (3) advocating for the maximization of Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds.

Project Successes:

We created a statewide ERA program. Our advocacy efforts were successful in finally bringing ERA2 funds to Nebraska in May 2023, meaning \$48 million became available to 91 counties across the state to increase housing stability. (Prior to this, Nebraska had failed even to apply for ERA2 funds, and the only areas of the state with ERA programming were the urban hubs of Omaha and Lincoln, leaving the rest of the state without any assistance.)

We introduced and/or supported eight bills at the Nebraska Legislature in 2023 related to tenant protections. While no legislation was passed this year, we anticipate continuing to push at least three or four of the bills that remain in Committee during the next session. We are also working on new legislation to secure the right of Nebraskans facing eviction to have a jury trial.

We launching a campaign and petition to demand protections against source-of-income discrimination for community members in Lincoln and gathering over 400 petition signatures so far.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We developed a lasting base of grassroots advocates for housing policy and systems change in Nebraska.

We held a number of meetings, listening sessions, etc. with impacted community members to inform our work and build

relationships with future advocates (including at least 14 formal meetings and 10 one-on-one meetings).

We connected with 117 community members and engaged more deeply with 9 people in housing advocacy.

We coordinated, attended, or supported at least 57 community events around housing advocacy.

We provided or connected at least 13 community members affected by housing insecurity to Know Your Rights trainings and created and distributed at least 60 Know Your Rights booklets (which we will translate into Spanish).

Ohio

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING IN OHIO (COHHIO)

Primary Contact:

Gina Wilt, ginawilt@cohhio.org

Partner Organization(s):

Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio and Ohio Poverty Law Center

Project Description:

COHHIO is building on recent successes facilitating the passage of local tenant protection ordinances; defending tenants' rights at the state level; promoting the federal Eviction Crisis Act; and supporting advocates' efforts to create permanent emergency rental assistance programs at the city and county levels.

Project Successes:

We (1) successfully advocated to lift the Ohio legislature's efforts to restrict ERA spending by the Ohio Department of Development; (2) facilitated the expansion of local Source-of-Income and Pay-to-Stay ordinances in dozens of cities throughout Ohio; and (3) increased public awareness about the negative impact of predatory institutional investors on the local housing market.

ERASE Project Highlights:

COHHIO, through its Tenant Protection Roundtable, worked to expand tenant protections throughout Ohio. Acting as a forum for communication for local community action agencies, legal aid groups, and local advocacy coalitions, COHHIO shared best practices, recent legislative updates, and national expertise to educate and empower members to advocate for tenant protections within their own communities. Since the Tenant Protection Roundtable was created, Ohio cities have enacted 14 additional Pay-to-Stay ordinances and 11 Source-of-Income ordinances, with more of each on the way. Right to Counsel is also attracting interest since Cleveland and Toledo have passed their own versions into law. Access to counsel is a growing priority among larger local jurisdictions, with several of our members securing dollars to provide free legal assistance to clients facing eviction. COHHIO is currently working on advocating for legislation that will discourage predatory investors from accruing more single-family properties in Ohio, driving up rental rates.

Primary Contact:

Itzel Hernandez Spehar, ihernandez@bienestar-or.org

Partner Organization(s):

Welcome Home Coalition

Project Description:

Bienestar, in partnership with Welcome Home Coalition, advocated at the local and state level for State and Local Fiscal Recover Funds (SLFRF) and other funding (i.e., local levy income) to be used for ERA and for evictions to be put on hold if tenants had applied for assistance. Bienestar and Welcome Home advocated to ensure ERA funds were visible, accessible, and preventative using NLIHC's tools to assess these programs.

Project Successes:

In December 2022, we advocated for quarterly Supporting Housing Services (SHS) funds to prioritize ERA in Multnomah County. The Board of Commissioners unanimously passed \$16 million in local tax revenue for ERA. In February 2023, the Washington County commission approved the use of SHS funds for local ERA. Community Action, a local nonprofit, received a two-year contract for \$6 million funded by SHS using unspent revenue while SHS homeless programs continue to be built out, with the expectation that additional and permanent resources will be identified at the federal or state level to address the ongoing and elevated risk of eviction after the end of pandemic era funding. Recently, in September 2023, Multnomah County board approved the use of \$10.1 million of unspent ARPA funds for local ERA. Continuing to ensure that SHS funds are used for ERA is challenging because many stakeholders feel this money should be used for long-term rent assistance and wrap-around services to ensure people who have experienced chronic homelessness can stay sustainably housed. However, it is hopeful that the new Governor of Oregon has prioritized addressing our homelessness and housing crisis and that in June 2023, the Legislature passed a historic investment for the Oregon Housing and Community Services agency. The \$1.14 billion biennium budget includes \$33.6 million to prevent 8,750 households from becoming homeless by funding rent assistance and eviction prevention services statewide. Even so, we will have to wait to see how much of that amount comes to the Portland Metro region.

ERASE Project Highlights:

Bienestar, in partnership with the Welcome Home Coalition, offered its first bilingual (English and Spanish) Advocacy Training in February 2023. The advocacy training program offers basic education about housing policy in our region, the importance of storytelling for advocacy, and practice crafting personal stories. The goal of the program is to empower people who want to see more accessible and affordable housing in our region. The training aspires to enable people to tell their housing stories from a place of confidence.

Bienestar, in partnership with the Welcome Home Coalition, held a housing forum in Spanish on May 17, 2023. Elected officials and community members gathered at a community center to talk about the most pressing housing issues, including emergency rent assistance and tenant protections, in the region. The forum created a safe space for all

attendees to engage in conversations about housing issues.

The Welcome Home Coalition conducted several other advocacy trainings throughout the grant period to grow its base of new community advocates with lived experience of homelessness and/or housing instability. Of the 61 people it engaged through Voices for Housing Justice programming, 62% identified as BIPOC. Ensuring that more BIPOC residents and residents living on low incomes in our region have the tools to engage in housing policy issues helps advance our goal of eliminating housing inequities based on race and class. Many of the advocates they engaged testified or provided comments on the importance of access to rent assistance.

Pennsylvania

HOUSING ALLIANCE OF PENNSYLVANIA (HAP)

Primary Contact:

Gale Schwartz, gale@housingalliancepa.org

Partner Organization(s): N/A

Project Description:

The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania via the *Disrupting Evictions Everywhere in Pennsylvania Project* (DEEP) advocated for the implementation of state and local tenant protections that change the outcomes of eviction filings for the lowest-income households and people at risk of homelessness, thereby promoting greater housing stability.

Project Successes:

We have laid the groundwork through research and interviews with people with lived experience for multiple state bills to be introduced in the fall of 2023 or early 2024.

Tenant Protections: A state legislator will introduce a bill to seal/expunge eviction records. This will be introduced in early 2024 at a time when it will receive the most attention. We will be pushing for a hearing shortly after introduction.

Rental Assistance and Funding for Local Programs: We have crafted a proposal to allocate specific funds for rental assistance and eviction prevention strategies through an existing state homeless prevention and assistance program. We are seeking support from state legislative leadership to include this in the next state budget.

We have launched a full-scale press to lay out the reasons why eviction prevention should remain a priority in the post-pandemic era.

We continue to support a number of local program strategies and continue to meet with partners at the local level to encourage them to adopt a program strategy and help us move forward state policy.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We have created a set of fact sheets, toolkits, and videos and are widely disseminating the information and our message that eviction prevention should be a priority.

We sent letters to the committee of the PA Supreme Court to adopt rule changes that clarify that local Judges can allow for court-connected alternative dispute resolution programs in partnership with local service organizations. This type of coordination is essential to delivering assistance “where tenants are” at court and helping to negotiate between landlord and tenant to avoid an eviction even after the eviction has been filed.

We provided testimony before the Pennsylvania House Housing and Community Development Committee on the harm caused by evictions.

Rhode Island

HOUSING NETWORK OF RHODE ISLAND (HNRI)

Primary Contact:

Katie West, kwest@housingnetworkri.org

Partner Organization(s):

RIHousing, Rhode Island Center for Justice and Rhode Island Legal Services, HousingWorks RI, Housing Network members (nonprofit community developers), and organizations in Homes RI

Project Description:

The Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) worked in partnership with key stakeholders and the Homes RI coalition to advocate for, fund, and implement a state permanent emergency rental assistance program and advocate for and implement tenant protections.

Project Successes:

We supported the passage of **seven** key tenant protections bills, including bills banning rental application fees, creating a statewide rental registry, establishing court-based tenant escrow accounts, enforcing lead hazard safety laws and closing loopholes that allowed children to be lead poisoned, and developing a pathway to seal eviction records.

We built momentum for the implementation of a permanent, state-funded ERA program in Rhode Island.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We executed focus groups with 15 tenants (six English-speaking and nine Spanish-speaking) and 12 landlords (seven English-speaking and five Spanish-speaking) to understand their attitudes and experiences with Rhode Island’s ERA program and their thoughts about a permanent program and produced a draft report to help guide advocacy for a permanent ERA program.

We submitted a draft ERA program concept to the RI Department of Housing based on available funding (\$10 million) and the desire to complement existing legal services that were funded through ERA2.

We conducted a qualitative study among mission-driven housing providers (seven community development corporations and two public housing authorities) to understand how they were using available ERA dollars and the ways they worked with tenants throughout the pandemic to prevent evictions.

We worked with a coalition of state legislators on multiple tenant protections bills in 2023, tracking 38 landlord-tenant bills that were introduced.

We worked closely with the State Attorney General's Office, leading public advocacy for the passage of a package of three lead poisoning prevention bills that created a statewide rental registry, court-based tenant escrow accounts, and a bill to allow families affected by childhood lead poisoning to recover up to three times the damages if a landlord violated lead hazard safety laws. A key part of the advocacy efforts was the [Lead Poisoning Prevention Day](#) at the RI State House in May 2023.

We surveyed Rhode Island municipalities to understand barriers to code enforcement and inform 2024 tenant protection advocacy around housing quality conditions. Twelve cities and towns responded, and we plan to conduct additional focus groups with the code enforcement and town administrative staff to put together a legislative/policy proposal to enhance code enforcement efforts.

We facilitated outreach to more than 40 organizations in partnership with RI Legal Services to offer training on tenant rights and responsibilities and help people understand their services.

South Carolina ACLU OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Primary Contact:

Jace Woodrum, jwoodrum@aclusc.org

Partner Organization(s):

NAACP South Carolina State Conference, One80 Place, Root and Rebound, South Carolina Housing Justice Network, South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

Project Description:

The South Carolina ERASE Cohort developed statewide policy advocacy infrastructure needed to support the passage and implementation of tenant protection legislation in South Carolina with a specific emphasis on strengthening tenant-led advocacy, education, outreach, and organizing. The immediate focus was to pass a statewide right to counsel in South Carolina, and the longer-term focus was supporting the passage of a comprehensive set of federal, state, and local tenant protections.

Project Successes:

Our successes included a presentation to the SCAccess to Justice Commission on efforts to pass Eviction Right-to-Counsel legislation; growth and expansion of tenant organizing in South Carolina led by the South Carolina Housing Justice Network; and the identification of eviction sealing legislation as a priority tenant protection.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We released a research report that highlighted the proposed positive impacts that the would-be passage of a statewide right-to-counsel program would have on eviction rates in the state. The report is accessible [here](#).

We advocated for the introduction of a statewide right-to-counsel bill. (Legislative text of the bill can be found [here](#).)

We held a convening for our partners statewide on the importance of eviction prevention measures titled “Innovations in Eviction Defense.”

Texas

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF BROWNSVILLE (CDCB)

Primary Contact:

Daniel Elkin, delkin@cdcb.org

Partner Organization(s):

Cameron County, Housing Partnership Network

Project Description:

As the Rio Grande Valley’s top administrator of ERA funds – with over 2,000 households served – cdcb utilized its data and experience to produce an extensive research campaign focused on the impact of, need for, and path forward for establishing permanent rental assistance, particularly in low-income and BIPOC communities. This research produced deliverables in multiple formats, including policy papers, policy proposals, presentations, webinars, op-eds, and teach-ins, all aimed at engaging state and local institutions to make the case for permanent rental assistance programs.

Project Successes:

Affordable Housing Advocacy Day at the Texas Capitol in March 2023: We advocated for the use of ARPA funds to continue the Texas Rental Relief program in Texas and to preserve deeply affordable housing in the state.

Justice of the Peace Eviction Education Presentation: We met with our Justices of the Peace and connected them with resources around Cameron County to prevent evictions, displacement, and homelessness. We also discussed our programs with them.

ERASE Project Highlights:

[We published a policy paper](#) and a [fact sheet](#) on Emergency Rental Assistance in Cameron County.

We presented on Eviction Prevention at the TACDC Conference in South Padre Island.

We testified multiple times in front of the Texas legislature for more affordable housing and against state preemption, particularly with respect to eviction ordinances.

Virginia
VIRGINIA POVERTY LAW CENTER

Primary Contact:

Christie Marra, christie@vplc.org

Partner Organization(s):

Virginia Housing Alliance

Project Description:

Preventing Evictions through Advocacy and Collaboration (PEAC), our organization’s main ERA-related advocacy campaign, led tenants, tenant advocates, and their local and state partners in a campaign to reduce Virginia’s eviction rate through advocacy to increase state funding for local ERA programs (prioritizing local programs in BIPOC communities) and advancing state legislation that prevents evictions and establishes a right to counsel in eviction cases in Richmond, where the neighborhoods with the highest eviction rates are predominantly Black and Latino.

Project Successes:

We have secured a patron for legislation that will be introduced in January 2024 as an amendment to the biennial budget. This budget amendment will seek to double the amount of funding for the statewide Virginia Eviction Reduction Fund from \$3.3 million annually to \$6.6 million annually. Additionally, we have held an initial meeting with the Office of the Mayor of the City of Richmond regarding the establishment of a right to counsel for tenants facing eviction. Furthermore, we successfully advocated for stronger notice requirements to tenants regarding automatic rent increases and mass termination of month-to-month tenancies. (Termination of multiple month-to-month tenancies in the same complex now necessitates a 60-day rather than 30-day notice.) Finally, we have advocated (and will continue to advocate) for the creation of the 5,000 Families Pilot Program, which would provide state-funded rental vouchers to about 5,000 families with school-aged children. We have secured bipartisan patrons for this budget amendment and are actively working on a communication campaign to garner wide support for the program.

ERASE Project Highlights:

In addition to the successes noted above, we have worked with local tenant organizations to convene a Know Your Rights training.

Washington

HOUSING JUSTICE PROJECT AT THE KING COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

Primary Contact:

Amy Kangas, amyk@kcba.org

Partner Organization(s): N/A

Project Description:

The Housing Justice Project's goals were to create a stable, statewide rental assistance program administered through a single office and readily available to tenants facing eviction, and to pass local tenant protections with a particular focus on (1) providing a streamlined process for tenants to enforce their rights and (2) limiting rent increases and other charges.

Project Successes:

We have been successful in expanding legal services throughout the state, particularly through the opening of our legal clinic in Spokane. We have also been successful in securing multiple contract extensions and additional funding for our courthouse-based rental assistance program for tenants in active eviction proceedings.

ERASE Project Highlights:

We distributed over \$14 million in rental assistance to over 1,000 households since October 2022.

Wisconsin

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES, INC.

Primary Contact:

Andi Elliott, andie@communityadvocates.net

Partner Organization(s):

Apartment Association of Southeastern Wisconsin, City of Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services, Hope House, IMPACT Inc., Legal Action of Wisconsin, Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, Mediate Wisconsin, Milwaukee County Division of Housing, The Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin, Inc. (UEDA), Stout Risius Ross, LLC (Stout), INPOWER Marketing and Outreach Firm

Project Description:

The Community Advocates Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program, the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute (CA PPI), and the Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center (MKE RHRC) along with an array of stakeholders, tenants,

and landlords assessed the strengths and opportunities of emergency rental assistance and eviction diversion for long-term solutions that ensure housing stability and end homelessness.

Project Successes:

The availability and successful disbursement of over \$80 million in emergency rental assistance to 10,300 households by Community Advocates since 2020 has been in sync with the timely development and launch of the Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center (MKE RHRC). This center now serves as a virtual and physical clearinghouse of information and a comprehensive referral network, connecting individuals to rental assistance, legal and mediation services, and homeless prevention resources. Notably, this partnership includes the Rental Property Association of Wisconsin (RPA), the largest trade association of landlords and property owners in our state. Their involvement will continue to be instrumental in advocacy efforts for a continuation of funds that we believe will yield successful results in the future.

ERASE Project Highlights:

InPOWER Marketing and Outreach Firm, our qualitative analysis partner, conducted surveys and prepared three reports with insights from tenants, landlords, and partners. These surveys aimed to capture the experiences of individuals navigating the rental assistance program and understand the program's perceived necessity in our community. The responses yielded valuable data points, offering a clearer picture of the current state of housing security and the program's significance to families in Milwaukee County. These insights are being integrated into cases for support and program pitches/designs.

Stout Risius Ross, LLC (Stout), our quantitative data analysis partner, has created a robust methodology and dynamic model to estimate the annual need for emergency rental assistance in Milwaukee County, factoring in various scenarios. This tool will now equip us with the ability to precisely forecast and communicate the necessary funding levels when engaging with key government leaders and philanthropic stakeholders. Notably, Stout holds a pivotal role as a central data analyzer not only in Milwaukee but also in other jurisdictions nationwide, particularly in matters related to eviction prevention. This encompasses emergency rent assistance, right to counsel, and comprehensive eviction court data. This unique position empowers us to leverage this collective data for insightful comparisons to our collective efforts in eviction prevention and housing stability.

New Partnerships with Philanthropic Partners: Since 2020, we have achieved a remarkable increase in interest and funding secured from philanthropic partners for emergency rental assistance. While these funds often come with more stringent eligibility criteria, we anticipate even more potential in this sector. We believe that sustained support and active involvement of philanthropic partners are emerging as commendable best practices in government circles, showcasing the potential to diversify the funding landscape in the future. This collaborative approach holds promise for greater impact and sustainability in our endeavors.