

CDBG-CV2-12 Public Hearing Text

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

In late 2020 Montgomery County received a grant award of up to \$2,973,228 in federal CDBG-COVID funds made available through the State of Maryland to address negative COVID impact in the County. The County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) proposed and was awarded the funds for the purpose of providing up to six months of rental assistance to low-income County residents who became delinquent in their rent payments due to the effects of the COVID pandemic. Such effects included loss of income due to unemployment or reduced work hours, loss of childcare, and increased medical or other expenses related to COVID.

Originally, the program was structured to be run by the County's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). However, given the influx of emergency funding that HHS was processing, their capacity was severely reduced. Consequently, the CDBG-CV2-12 program was reworked so that the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) would serve as the subrecipient to implement the grants.

Through an MOU with Montgomery Housing Partnership, Inc. (MHP) and Affordable Homes and Communities, Inc. (AHC), HOC enabled residents of its properties and those of MHP and AHC to request arrearages that were owed to their three organizations. HOC, AHC, and MHP conducted extensive outreach and provided comprehensive assistance to needy renters to facilitate applications for rent relief.

However, staff at HOC, AHC, and MHP reported that while \$1.7 million had been provided in assistance to cover arrearages, they had difficulty getting additional responses and completing applications from some needy tenants. Comprehensive and repeated efforts in multiple languages did not always result in complete applications. The program wound down toward the end of August 2023, with no remaining eligible tenants. The County is satisfied that it assisted the maximum number of renters possible, given that as time passed, it also became more difficult to connect rental arrearages to COVID causes.

In total, 286 income-qualified rental households received arrearages relief amounting to \$1,702,542.13, providing much-needed support for those struggling to make rent payments due to the impact of COVID on their families. Administrative costs to implement this program came to an additional \$79,728.83 bringing the total expended to \$1,782,270.96.