

**From:** Larry Keys

**Date:** April 8, 2020 at 8:40:49 PM EDT

**To:** Larry Keys

**Cc:** Michal Machnowski

**Subject: NAHMA Grassroots Alert: Ask Congress to Provide Housing Relief from the Devastating Impact of COVID-19**

Dear NAHMA Members,

Many Americans are continuing to suffer a loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, including current affordable housing residents and property management staff. Currently, Congress is considering additional financial assistance to address the urgent and mounting needs in our industry. **NAHMA urges members to contact your Members of Congress and request that adequate relief be provided, including rental assistance to meet current and expected housing needs for the duration COVID-19 pandemic.** Congress must include robust housing assistance, as they continue to consider various economic stimulus packages. As we learn more about upcoming legislation, NAHMA will provide members additional updates, targeted talking points, and letter templates. Members can utilize the most recent joint real estate industry [letter](#) for additional details.



**As Congress develops and drafts the next financial assistance legislation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:**

- 1. Urge Congress to Enact More Emergency Rental Assistance Funding Legislation**

Urge your lawmakers to include an emergency rental assistance fund to help families that are currently unassisted by federal programs. These individuals are struggling to afford rent, utilities, and other basic needs because of a pay cut or job loss associated with COVID-19. It is imperative that such emergency assistance be quickly dispatched and be immediately available in urban, suburban, and rural communities. To expedite the delivery of this funding, Congress must utilize the capacity and expertise of private housing providers, public housing agencies (PHAs), housing finance agencies (HFAs), and state or local jurisdictions to ensure funds are quickly and effectively deployed throughout rural and urban communities. Congress must adequately fund all current rental assistance programs, including Project-based Rental Assistance, Housing Choice Vouchers, the Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance, and Rural vouchers. In addition, a model similar to the past Disaster Housing Assistance Program, can be adopted and combined with HUD's block grant programs, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME program to target the individuals who are not currently assisted. Under the block grant programs, states and localities have flexibility to target emergency rental assistance and provide funding to affordable multifamily owners to meet increased operating costs directly related to the COVID-19.

***TELL CONGRESS: Support and Enact an Emergency Rental Assistance Fund to help struggling families who do not receive federal housing assistance through HUD, USDA or other federal programs.***

## **2. Urge your Legislators to Clarify and Further Target Eviction Moratorium Protections**

Congress approved a 120-day moratorium on eviction filings, late fees and other penalties starting on March 27. This protection was not limited to those financially impacted by COVID-19. Congress must swiftly address this discrepancy by clarifying that the national eviction moratorium be limited to those negatively impacted by COVID-19.

***TELL CONGRESS: Limit the national eviction moratorium to those impacted by COVID-19 by requiring residents to officially notify the property owner of temporary financial hardship and request temporary assistance/relief from the property owner and acknowledge the contractual terms of the lease remain in effect. Additionally, to maintain the health and safety of rental housing***

***communities, Congress needs to clarify language to specifically identify the ability of property owners to move forward with evictions in cases of criminal activity or activities that endanger the community.***

### **3. Ask your Lawmakers to protect the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)**

LIHTC finances more than 90 percent of all affordable housing production and preservation, and is critical for the housing stability of millions of low-income families. Congress should prevent consequential disruptions in transactions and construction due to COVID-19's impact, by providing timing relief and preventing projects from losing their tax credits. Immediate assistance should be provided to LIHTC properties in the development process, as well as consider measures to bolster future production and preservation of affordable housing.

***TELL CONGRESS: Adopt recommendations to protect the LIHTC Housing Credit by including an immediate one-year extension for three key deadlines: 10 percent test deadlines, placed-in-service deadlines, and rehabilitation expenditure deadlines and to enact a minimum 4% Housing Credit rate for bon financed properties.***

### **4. Tell Congress about the Need for Enhanced Financial Mitigation Measures**

Rental properties are owned by individuals and small businesses that have financial obligations, including mortgages, utilities, payroll, insurance and taxes. While the CARES Act provided rental relief for some residents, shortfalls in rent payments are already impacting the ability of rental properties to pay their own bills. In order for owners and operators to ensure viability of apartment and rental housing communities, financial assistance and protections should be expanded to other property-level financial obligations such as property taxes, insurance payments, and utility services. Congress and federal regulators must also ensure that forbearance protections are in place for the same length of time as any local, state or federal eviction moratoriums. Forbearance protections should also be extended to loans that are privately financed by banks, by life insurance companies, through community development financial institutions, state and local housing finance agencies, or commercial mortgage-backed securities.

***TELL CONGRESS: Provide financial support to rental property owners, including financial obligations (utilities, taxes, insurance), to mitigate the loss of rental income due to COVID-19. Congress should reconcile forbearance and eviction moratorium timelines, so that no eviction moratorium should exceed the forbearance period for the property. Congress must also expand the forbearance protection to ALL loans, as only 50 percent of multifamily mortgages are federally-backed.***

**Please take a moment to contact your lawmakers.**

### **How to Find Your Congressional Representatives**

- Write directly to your Senators and Representatives by using this grassroots tool: <https://democracy.io/#/>
- Locate your [U.S. senators'](#) website and contact information.
- Find your [U.S. representative's](#) website and contact information.

**Your legislators want to hear from you. [Reach out](#) to NAHMA Government Affairs staff for assistance with advocacy in DC and in your district. Write directly to your Senators and Representatives!**