



December 9, 2020

Governor Douglas Ducey

Office of the Governor, State of Arizona
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey,

We write to you today with great urgency and concern on behalf of Arizona tenants facing evictions and landlords and property owners facing foreclosures. There is a critical need for your leadership in ordering a new statewide moratorium on evictions in Arizona.

Our requests today include the following approaches to be included in a new Executive Order protecting both tenants and property owners:

- 1. Issue a three-month eviction moratorium to take effect no later than January 1.**
- 2. Invest in expedited rent relief, to avoid spending billions of dollars caring for evicted and displaced families.**
- 3. Replenish the Rental Property Owners Preservation Fund with additional funds as needed and prioritize distributions to small business landlords.**

Executive action is imperative to ensure that hundreds of thousands of Arizona residents are not forced into homelessness as we approach a second, more-deadly wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Executive action is also needed to address the financial stability of property owners--who we depend on for our already-limited supply of affordable housing units--and to prevent the worsening of our housing crisis.

We write to you as a coalition of nonprofit organizations serving Southern Arizonans and beyond. Our services range from affordable housing management and ownership to homelessness service providers, community food banks, direct mental health service providers and community funders. Our collective concern is for our varying client bases and the devastating repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to disproportionately impact our most underserved and vulnerable populations.

Your leadership in protecting Arizonans from the catastrophic effects of the COVID-19 eviction crisis has been demonstrated by swift policy action. At the start of the pandemic, you acted before federal CARES Act protections were in place to sign an Executive Order protecting

Arizona renters affected by COVID-19 until July 22. Anticipating the expiration of your Order and the July 25 expiration of the federal CARES Act moratorium, you were one of few governors who signed [an Executive Order extending Arizona's moratorium on residential evictions until October 31, 2020](#), leaving no gap in protection for Arizona renters.

In September, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued an eviction moratorium that applies to most Arizona renters financially burdened by COVID, but it is set to expire on December 31.¹ In the two month gap between the national CARES Act and CDC moratoriums, evictions spiked as much as 395% above historical averages, and states that allowed moratoriums to lapse saw an [increase in 433,700 COVID-19 cases and 10,700 deaths associated with eviction](#).²

The expiration of the CDC order approaches as Arizona COVID cases have surpassed 340,000. Without intervention, mass evictions will disrupt the lives of tens of thousands of Arizona's renters,³ and will cause severe harm to their economic, social, mental, and physical well-being.⁴ These evictions will also trigger a wave of debilitating downstream costs that will ripple through all of our social systems. Recent research shows the partial annual cost of caring for Arizona families that will face homelessness as a result of eviction is [\\$2.5 billion](#), while the current rental shortfall is only estimated to be between \$200-\$400 million.⁵ Responding to such widespread displacement will require extensive resources and will further strain the budgets and resources of our public health and social service systems.

The expiration of the CDC moratorium will occur simultaneously with the expiration of CARES Act funding, which includes federal unemployment benefits that millions of renters are relying on to pay rent. This concern is amplified by the recent spike in COVID-19 cases, which could force more business shutdowns and job loss.

Our federal lawmakers have failed to provide the rental assistance and eviction protection Arizona renters need, and there is no indication relief will come before the end of the year. Your leadership is needed once again to ensure Arizona does not suffer preventable eviction, homelessness, and death as the nation waits for federal relief.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). HHS/CDC Temporary Halt in Residential Evictions to Prevent the Further Spread of COVID-19, Frequently Asked Questions. Washington, DC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

² https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3739576.

³ Stout estimates that between 137,000 and 278,000 households, or 356,200 - 722,800 arizonans are currently at risk of eviction. Stout. (2020). [Estimation of Households Experiencing Rental Shortfall and Potentially Facing Eviction](#). Retrieved December 2, 2020.

⁴ Stout estimates that between 137,000 and 278,000 households, or 356,200 - 722,800 arizonans are currently at risk of eviction. Stout. (2020). [Estimation of Households Experiencing Rental Shortfall and Potentially Facing Eviction](#). Retrieved December 2, 2020.

⁵ Stout. (2020). [Estimation of Households Experiencing Rental Shortfall and Potentially Facing Eviction](#). Retrieved December 2, 2020.

Our agencies echo the relief called for by State Senators Alston, Bowie, Engel, and Cano, and we are, as stated above, advocating for the following approaches to be included in a new Executive Order protecting both tenants and property owners:

1. **Issue a three-month eviction moratorium to take effect no later than January 1.** The moratorium should protect *all* renters and should freeze the entire eviction process to give time for tenants to secure rent payments before evictions are filed and judgments are entered. The moratorium should also prohibit property owners from filing late fees or penalties for non-payment related to inability to pay due to COVID-19.
2. **Invest in expedited rent relief, to avoid spending billions of dollars caring for evicted and displaced families.**
 - a. Allocate an additional \$10,000,000 to the COVID-19 Rental Assistance Trust Fund;
 - b. Simplify the eligibility criteria required to apply for rental assistance to require only a signed order such as the CDC Order, some proof of identification, and a copy of the lease.
 - c. Authorize landlords to apply for rental assistance on behalf of tenants.
 - d. Condition distribution of state funds upon the landlord's agreement that they will not evict tenants for nonpayment of rent.
3. **Replenish the Rental Property Owners Preservation Fund with additional funds as needed and prioritize distributions to small business landlords.**

There is limited time to act. We respectfully encourage you to provide security and safety for hundreds of thousands of your constituents through our outlined approaches.

Sincerely,

- Meghan Heddings, Executive Director, **Family Housing Resources**
- Marguerite Harmon, Chief Executive Officer, **Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona**
- Carmen Lopez, Housing Counseling and Financial Education, Tucson/Nogales, **Chicanos Por La Causa**
- Michael McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, **Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona**
- Clint Mabie, Chief Executive Officer, **Community Foundation for Southern Arizona**
- Danny Knee, Executive Director, **Community Investment Corporation**
- Maryann Beerling, Executive Director, **Compass Affordable Housing**
- Jon Ehlinger, President, **Garcia Family Foundation**
- Stacy Butler, Director, **Innovation for Justice Program University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law**
- Tom McKinney, Chief Executive Officer, **Interfaith Community Services (ICS)**
- Aaron Rippenkroeger, Executive Director, **International Rescue Committee- Arizona**

- Graham Hoffman, President and CEO, **Jewish Community Foundation of Southern Arizona and Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona**
- Katy Scoblink, Chief Operating Officer, **Old Pueblo Community Services**
- Beth Morrison, Chief Executive Officer, **Our Family Services**
- Cate Oswald, Chief Policy and Partnership Officer, **Partners in Health**
- Maggie Amando-Tellez, Executive Director, **Pima County Community Land Trust**
- Peggy Hutchison, Chief Executive Officer, **Primavera Foundation**
- Ciara Garcia, Chief Executive Officer, **Social Venture Partners Tucson**
- Aaron Cooper, Executive Director, **Sonoran Desert Alliance**
- Jay Young, Executive Director, **Southwest Fair Housing Counsel**
- Michele Mirto, Executive Director/Attorney at Law, **Step Up to Justice**
- Emiel Brott, Executive Director, **The Drawing Studio**
- Tony Penn, President and CEO, **United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona**
- Elizabeth Slater, Chief Executive Officer, **Youth On Their Own**