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*** **PRESS RELEASE** ***

Jersey City Approves 1,600 Households Rent and Utility Relief Grants to Help Low-income Residents Struggling amid the Pandemic

Jersey City Allocates over \$2.5M in Direct Recovery Assistance to Help Prevent Eviction, Regardless of Immigration Status; City Announces 2nd Round of Rent Relief for May that will Allocate an Additional \$7M in Rent/Utility Relief

JERSEY CITY - **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** joins the **Jersey City Economic Development Corporation** (JCEDC) to award over \$2.5 million in rent relief and utility assistance to over 1,600 low-income households throughout Jersey City who are among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the application process for the Jersey City COVID-19 Hardship Assistance Program, every resident who applied for financial assistance and met initial program screening will be notified that they are eligible for \$1,500 in hardship relief funds, with 95-percent of the grant money providing direct aid to residents in The Heights and south west sections of the City.

“It’s well established that those most affected by this pandemic are disproportionately low-income and people of color, which is why we have been working on a municipal level to provide direct aid to our residents facing income loss and eviction, regardless of their immigration status,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “As soon as the pandemic hit, we set up a fund with the intention of helping our most vulnerable, and that’s exactly what we’re able to do here today.”

Of the 1,638 qualifying applications, the locations of eligible households are as follows:

- Ward A – 19%
- Ward B – 20%
- Ward C – 17%
- Ward D – 12%
- Ward E – 5%
- Ward F – 27%

The average applicant owed \$6,350 in past due rent.

Through grant funds from the City and the JCEDC, the administration’s nonprofit rental relief partners, **York Street, Women Rising, United Way, and Puertorriqueños Asociados for Community Organization (PACO)**, will now begin providing direct case management to families in need. Each partner

will work with approximately 400 households identified as eligible for hardship relief funds. These community-based nonprofits will each receive \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds and an additional \$125,000 each from the Mayor's COVID-19 Relief Fund to provide utility and rental assistance for families struggling to make ends meet.

Additionally, the Mayor's Relief Fund will provide grants to **Welcome Home** (\$25,000) and **Church World Service** (\$50,000) to provide rental and utility assistance to vulnerable immigrants, explicitly focusing on residents who may be ineligible for federal funding.

The grants will be paid directly to the tenant's landlord or service provider. Eligibility requirements included households that fall below federal income limits, owe rent/utility payments for over three months or fewer since March 2020, as well as additional criteria outlined here.

"To enhance the City's capacity to serve low-income residents, the Mayor's Fund, which is administered by the EDC, focused on providing additional funding support to ensure that more vulnerable residents could be served, including those who may be ineligible for other programs due to immigration status," said **Vivian Brady-Philips, Vice-Chair of the JCEDC**. "By working closely with our nonprofit community-based partners on the ground, we know that this combined rent relief effort will help residents in need identify a broader range of potential resources."

"There were nearly 3,000 applications during phase one of this process, and the households that did not meet program criteria included those who did not owe any rent, experienced no income loss, nor reported that they had the resources to pay their rent. The over 1,600 households found eligible are residents who truly need assistance right now to feed their families and prevent eviction," said **Carmen Gandulla, Director of the Jersey City Division of Community Development**. "We understand there is still a continuous unmet need, and we hope to help in many areas as possible."

Additionally, the City has commenced its planning efforts for the second round of rental assistance, homeless prevention, and eviction work. The City plans to spend a combined total of \$10 million obtained through various grant programs. The United Way will receive \$2 million for homeless prevention funded by the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), while the Jersey City Housing Authority may assist the Division of Community Development to help administer \$7.8 million in U.S. Department of Treasury funds. The City will be granting \$500,000 in assistance for landlord-tenant and other legal services to prevent eviction, benefits counseling, immigrant rights, and other related services.

Under the second phase of the Jersey City COVID-19 Hardship Assistance Program, the grant program's eligibility criteria has been expanded under direction from the U.S. Department of Treasury. Eligible households may receive up to 12 months of rental assistance, plus an additional 3 months. Individuals who applied during the initial application window and were deemed ineligible do not need to apply again. Those applications will be reevaluated, and the applicant will be connected to additional resources. New applicants interested in applying for the second round of rental assistance can sign up to receive alerts [here](#).

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at kscalcione@jcnj.org.