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

Mayor Fulop Announces Latest COVID-19 Rent Relief Program for Neediest Small Unit Landlords and Tenants

*Jersey City Increases Financial Aid to Most Vulnerable Residents,
up to \$10,000 for Low-income Families*

JERSEY CITY - **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA)** announce the latest *Jersey City COVID-19 Rent Relief Program*, which will provide up to \$10,000 in much-needed rental assistance to low-income Jersey City families who have experienced significant financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rent Relief Program will prioritize families living in owner-occupied buildings with less than five apartments.

The goal of the rental assistance program is twofold in that each grant will provide rent relief to residents with the greatest need while simultaneously ensuring small property owners that live on the premise also benefit most from the program. The City will dedicate more than \$7 million received from the U.S. Department of the Treasury in Emergency Rental Assistance Program funds administered by the JCHA on behalf of the City to provide up to \$10,000 per qualifying household to cover rent and rental arrears.

“We understand that families are struggling to pay rent, and small property owners are also struggling to keep up with the mortgage and other bills. That’s why we are focusing on owner-occupied buildings with four units or less, because they have been the hardest-hit and will benefit most from this aid, rather than large businesses,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Once we can help our lowest-income residents, we intend to methodically expand the eligibility pool further by income and to non-owner-occupied buildings.”

To broaden access to the program and ensure that it reaches those in need, landlords and social service case managers may also initiate an application for rent relief on behalf of a tenant. The rental assistance will be paid directly to the landlord or property manager.

Per federal requirements, priority households will include those who have experienced financial hardships due to COVID-19, such as reduced income, significant incurred costs, and families where at least one member has been unemployed for the 90 days prior to the application.

Eligibility requirements include the following:

- Jersey City residency
- Income loss due to COVID-19
- Rent owed since April 2020
- Income below 50% Area Median Income (AMI)
- 2-4 unit, owner-occupied buildings
- Incurred significant pandemic-induced cost or financial hardship

Earlier this year, the Fulop Administration dedicated \$2.5 million in direct aid to over 1,600 low-income families for utility and rent relief allocated from the Mayor's COVID-19 Community Relief Distribution Fund and CARES Act funding, where 95-percent of that grant money provided direct aid to residents in Jersey City Heights and neighborhoods in the south-west section of the City.

“The JCHA is pleased to be working closely with the City to administer this latest round of rent relief funding, which will significantly help ease the financial burdens low-income residents and small landlords face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **Vivian Brady-Philips, Executive Director of the JCHA**. “In advance of the application period, JCHA will provide information and outreach to tenants, small landlords, and community-based partners to help low-income residents learn about and apply for the program.”

The online application period for the Jersey City COVID-19 Rent Relief Program will run from Tuesday, August 17, 2021, through Tuesday, August 31, 2021. For additional program details and a link to the application, please visit jcnj.org/HardshipAssistance.

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