



MITCH D. ROTH
MAYOR

November 1, 2022
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**COUNTY'S RENTAL, UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ANNOUNCES SUCCESSES &
PLANS TO WIND DOWN**

Hawai'i County's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), administered by Hawai'i Island-based nonprofits, will begin winding down starting today, November 1.

Since launching, ERAP has disbursed nearly \$23 million in rent and utility assistance helping more than 7,800 Hawai'i Island children, and adults prevent eviction, utility shutoffs, and homelessness. Locally and nationally, the program was identified as a best practice in bringing together multiple nonprofit organizations to increase the amount of assistance disbursed to the community.

As the County waits for additional federal funding, there is a limited amount of funds available for rent and utility assistance. In August 2022, the program administrator stopped accepting new applications as they processed applications received and not yet approved for financial assistance. All financial assistance approved moving forward will be prioritized, and funds will be disbursed to households facing eviction, utility shutoff, or who have an unemployed adult individual in their household and are at risk of homelessness. Financial assistance will be paid out on a first-come, first-serve basis. All applicants will be directed to available job opportunities, resources, and services, including landlord-tenant mediation, legal services, and other financial assistance programs.

The County will be working to develop a new rent and utility assistance program that will include connectivity to housing stability services such as workforce development programs, financial empowerment services, community services, and resources and the development of a sustainable housing plan. The County anticipates that this new program will be available in early 2023.

"Ensuring our local families were able to remain in their homes with the lights on through the Pandemic and beyond was and is an absolute priority of ours, and we were

honored to have helped almost 8,000 families do just that,” said Mayor Mitch Roth. “Injecting nearly \$23 million into the community would not have been possible without the amazing nonprofits islandwide that continue to go above and beyond to serve our residents daily. We’d also like to mahalo the staff at our OHCD for their tireless work to attain the funds and coordinate our on-island efforts.”

As the island transitions to post-pandemic times, renters across Hawai‘i Island are encouraged to develop sustainable plans for paying rent and utilities without ERAP assistance. Residents who need assistance transitioning away from ERAP benefits are encouraged to contact the Coordination Center for referrals to resources and services that can assist at this time. Financial counselors are also available at County Financial Empowerment Centers.

Additional services and job openings currently available can be found on our website at www.HawaiiCountyERAP.org or by calling or texting the Coordination Center at 808.501.1413.