

Texas Rent Relief Program Highlights



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The Texas Rent Relief program was the first statewide rental and utility assistance program in Texas. The program launched in February 2021 and closed in the summer of 2023. The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs administered the program with Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds from the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

By providing rent and utility assistance, Texas Rent Relief helped low- and moderate-income Texas renters remain stably housed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

BY THE NUMBERS



Over **\$2.2 billion** in rent and utility assistance paid to help more than **323,000** Texas households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic keep their housing.

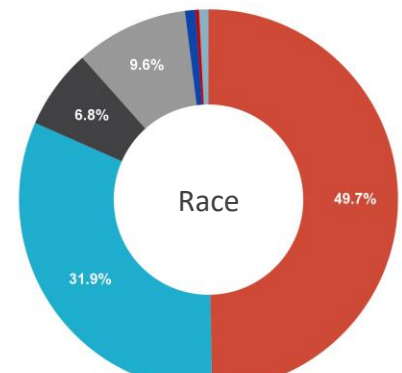
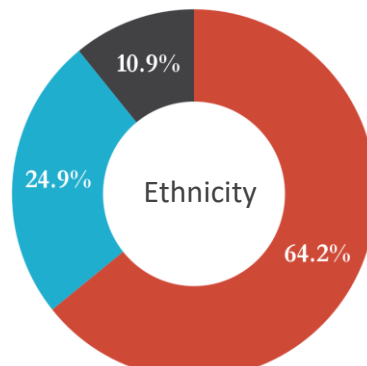
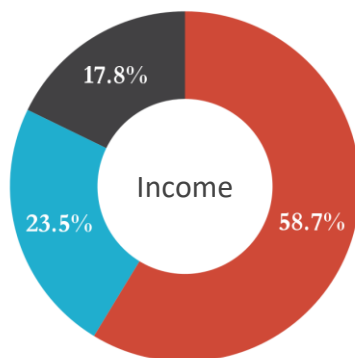


250 out of **254** Texas counties served – a 98% reach of the vast Texas territory.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION



More than **82%** of households served were at or below 50% of their area median income.



● Extremely Low Income - below 30% Area Median Income
● Very Low Income - 30%-50% Area Median Income
● Low Income - 50%-80% Area Median Income

● Non-Hispanic or Latino
● Hispanic or Latino
● Not Provided

● Black or African American
● White
● Other Multi-Racial
● Not Provided
● American Indian or Alaska Native
● Asian
● Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

EVICTION DIVERSION



Through the Texas Eviction Diversion Program (TEDP) partnership with the courts, **more than 25,000 applicants** received **more than \$243 million in assistance** and had their evictions stopped and made confidential from their records.



Through the [Housing Stability Services \(HSS\) Program](#), TDHCA has allocated **more than \$209.8 million of ERA funds** to local communities and non-profits to keep Texans housed and prevent homelessness. Through December 2023, **98,746 households have been assisted by HSS-funded organizations**. Of the total ERA HSS funds, **\$44.5 million has been allocated to legal aid organizations** to provide eviction prevention and other housing stability related legal services. So far, **39,328 households have received free legal assistance**, including representation in eviction court, legal counsel, and mediation services. Through local partners, **HSS has also assisted 32,941 households with free legal counsel** to prevent eviction and address fair housing violations. The HSS Program is estimated to continue through July 2025.

OUTREACH



More than 410,000 bilingual (English and Spanish) postcards mailed to low-income renters statewide and **nearly 500,000 flyers and door hangers** distributed to community partners in five different languages.



[TexasRentRelief.com](#) had more than **6 million users** and **30 million page views**, including views of content in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese.

CONTEXT AND HISTORY

The Texas Rent Relief Program (TRR) was administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). TRR was funded through the U.S. Treasury's Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program, which was established in two parts:

- ERA1, established as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021
- ERA2, established through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

As part of the ERA1 relief package, the State of Texas received approximately \$1.3 billion to assist tenants and landlords; additionally, 36 local governments in Texas with populations greater than 200,000 received an additional \$638 million as direct allocations of these funds. Through ERA2, the State of Texas received over \$1 billion in additional funds to assist tenants and landlords, while the 36 Texas local governments received over \$460 million. Through several rounds of reallocations from the Treasury, TDHCA received over \$299 million in additional ERA funds that were reallocated from local and county programs across Texas. In total, across the different funding sources, TRR dedicated over **\$2.2 billion** to assist tenants and landlords affected by the COVID-19 pandemic across Texas.

PROGRAM EVOLUTION

Based on feedback from applicants, program staff, and other stakeholders, TDHCA continuously updated TRR policies and procedures to simplify the application process, to improve the efficiency with which the program assisted tenants and landlords, and to help more Texans access TRR assistance. During the lifetime of the program, changes made to program policy included:

Prioritizing Applicants Facing Eviction

- Prioritized the processing of TEDP applications (when the parties had an active eviction case in court), which meant processing TEDP applications an average of 22 days faster than other applications, from submission to payment.
- Allowed applications to be updated and prioritized if a tenant was sued for eviction while waiting for assistance.

De-incentivizing Evictions

- Expanded assistance provided by TRR to include past-due rent at a tenant's previous residence, as long as no formal eviction judgment or writ of possession had been issued.

Maximizing Assistance and Eviction Protection Period

- Maximized the amount of rent provided to include current and future months, protecting tenants from future eviction for up to three months, giving tenants time to obtain stable income and pay rent without further assistance.

Reducing Documentation Requirements

- In alignment with Treasury guidance, accepted applicants' self-attestation instead of documentation where possible, including:
 - Tenants and landlords attesting to the amount of past-due rent owed by the tenant
 - Tenants attesting that they met federal eligibility requirements of qualifying for unemployment benefits or having experienced financial hardships due to COVID-19
 - Tenants attesting that they were self-employed or received no income

- Landlords attesting that they owned the property where they and their tenants were requesting assistance
- Waived income documentation requirements for renters with an eviction court docket number or a utility disconnection notice.

Paying Utility Assistance Directly to Tenants

- To improve the accuracy and efficiency of TRR utility assistance payments, starting in October 2022, TRR made all utility assistance payments directly to tenants. This change helped TRR reduce the average timeline for making utility assistance payments from 28 days to 7 days.

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

For many, the Texas Rent Relief program offered a second chance to catch up and get life back on track. Hear from a few Texans who participated and found relief through the program.

“I have never needed help like this before, but knowing that [relief] was coming, lifted a huge burden I’ve been carrying for months off my shoulders.”

– Samaj N., Austin Tenant

“I felt like I could finally take a breath. Now I can focus on my business that I depend on so much, building back my clientele and business to what it can be.”

– Johnny F., Dallas Tenant

“The program gave me a second chance to catch up on our bills and have a home for my family. We are very appreciative of Texas Rent Relief to get us through a difficult time.”

– Tunde G., Tarrant County Tenant

STAKEHOLDER EFFORTS

This effort would not have been possible without feedback from tenants, landlords and utility providers throughout the development of the program. TDHCA is grateful for the collaboration from apartment associations, tenant organizations, legal aid providers, utility providers, local Emergency Rental Assistance Program administrators, statewide agencies such as the Office of Court Administration, the Supreme Court of Texas, and the Public Utilities Commission, and elected officials statewide. These stakeholders helped Texas Rent Relief share outreach materials and information about available assistance so those most at risk of eviction or utility disconnection could get the help they needed.