



United Way of Anchorage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: December 17, 2020

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ATTENTION LANDLORDS: Clock is Ticking on Rent Relief Funds

Anchorage AK – Landlords can help their tenants and themselves through the ongoing economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the Municipality of Anchorage Rent and Mortgage Relief Assistance Program. But there's no time to lose.

Federal CARES Act money allocated to landlords for rent relief in the city must be spent by Dec. 30, or the funds are returned. It's a win-win for landlords and tenants to use this money to sustain their property and their housing through the pandemic.

That's why United Way of Anchorage is encouraging landlords – especially those with multiple tenants with overdue rent – to call 2-1-1 to connect with a landlord coordinator, who will provide the paperwork and assistance to secure direct payments for both past-due and current rents. Though 2-1-1 is experiencing extremely high call volumes, United Way has added staff to support the increased calls in addition to adding temporary staff to call back voicemail messages that are left when staff cannot answer directly. Alternatively, emails can be sent to rentsupport@ak.org for landlords looking for assistance or have questions.

"It's been a good week-and-a-half in our office," said Rich Mystrom of American Multiplex, which has close to 330 units. He said the direct-to-landlord part of the program had helped 38 of his tenants in 10 days, compared to 25 over the previous 8 months of individual rent relief.

"It cuts out a lot of the process," he said. Landlords and United Way of Anchorage liaisons take care of most of the paperwork; tenants are left with about five minutes work in the rental office. "It takes a lot of stress out of the tenants' minds," he said, eliminating the wait time for a backlog of individual applications.

Mystrom said the program is fast, efficient and creates teamwork, rather than an adversarial relationship, between landlords and tenants, as both benefit with a way to navigate the income losses of the pandemic. "This really is a feel-good thing."

"Landlords and property owners have come forward across the city to support our community and have proven to be a lifeline for thousands of residents since this summer," said Clark Halvorson, United Way of Anchorage President. "The program helps both tenants and landlords weather the economic strain of the pandemic - it's another example of how we're pulling together to make it through this unprecedented year and beyond."

Lance Lockard, another Anchorage landlord, expressed thanks and delight with the program. It helped one of his struggling tenants, a single mom with a daughter, make rent even as she traveled to Togiak for her brother's funeral.

With schools closed, she'd had to leave her job as an office assistant to take care of her daughter. Lockard said he reduced her rent to help, then connected with the Rent and Mortgage Relief Assistance Program. When Lockard called her in Togiak to tell her the rent check had arrived, she was ecstatic. "She was under so much pressure already."

Mystrom and Lockard are just two of many landlords who have testified to the program's positive results. United Way of Anchorage landlord coordinators have reached out to over 450 local landlords and standby ready to assist more. To date, almost \$13 million in rent and mortgage relief has helped 6,000+ Anchorage-area families.

About United Way of Anchorage

United Way of Anchorage is a community of donors, advocates, volunteers, and partners working together to improve the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. LIVE UNITED.

www.LiveUnitedANC.org