January 27, 2022

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair and Presiding Officer
and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: Update on the City’s Rental and Utility Relief Program

Thank you for your interest in and support of the Rental and Utility Relief Program (RURP). I am writing to update you on the status of the RURP.

The City and County of Honolulu (City) has finalized new agreements with Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) to administer the RURP. These agreements mean that the City’s first tranche of $23 million in Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA2) funding under the American Rescue Plan is now available for expenditure. CCH and CNHA have several thousand pending recertifications and new applications to review. We also expect to execute agreements soon to start expending $30 million in ERA2 funding from the State of Hawaii which was sub-awarded to the City.

Changes to the RURP:

- Allows an increase in the length of financial support from 12 months to 18 months per household. For example, a household that received 10 months of support last year can now qualify for an additional 8 months of financial support.
- Expands eligible households to those who are suffering economic harm during the pandemic, rather than those suffering directly due to the pandemic.

These changes will help more of our neighbors on O‘ahu receive financial assistance for rent and utility relief, and guide them on a better path towards financial stability.

The RURP is federally funded and regulated by the United States Treasury (Treasury), and has advised the City that the following fees are allowable expenditures.
Fees Paid for Leasehold Homes Can Qualify

- If you are a homeowner on leasehold land, you can apply for help paying your leasehold property fee.
- Households must meet income limits and other eligibility requirements.
- This applies only to leasehold property fees on O'ahu. (Rent and utility relief programs for Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui counties may have different policies.)
- Leasehold mortgage payments are not eligible RURP expenses.

Mooring Fees for Boat Owners Can Qualify

- If you are legally renting and legally living aboard a boat on O'ahu, you may apply for help paying your mooring fees.
- Households must meet income limits and other eligibility requirements.
- This applies only to households who are legally living aboard their vessels on O'ahu. (Rent and utility relief programs for Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui counties may have different policies.)

The RURP has helped more than 10,000 O'ahu residents stay safely housed and invested over $110 million into our island’s recovery.

Please visit https://www.oneoahu.org/renthelp for more information on the program and access to the RURP application. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at amy.asselbaye@honolulu.gov or at 768-5764.

Sincerely,

Asselbaye, Amy

Amy Asselbaye
Executive Director
Office of Economic Revitalization

APPROVED:

Michael D. Formby
Managing Director