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CONSUMER & BUSINESS AFFAIRS

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February 20, 2026

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Rafael Carbajal
Director

REPORT BACK ON IMPLEMENTING AN EMERGENCY RENT RELIEF PROGRAM TO PREVENT EVICTIONS AND HOMELESSNESS (ITEM NO. 12, AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2025)

On September 16, 2025, your Board adopted a motion[1] (Motion) directing the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) to report back to the Board in writing in 150 days on the progress of the Emergency Rent Relief Program (ERRP), including any recommended adjustments to the funding allocated to the categories based on utilization, emerging needs to prevent evictions and tenant displacement, and any additional recommendations for creating flexible, on-going infrastructure to deliver rent relief to tenants at risk of eviction and homelessness.

This report addresses the following:

- Implementation of the ERRP to date;
- Demand and spend down projections;
- Feedback from stakeholders and program evolution; and
- Lessons learned and considerations.

Implementation of the ERRP

On December 17, 2025, exactly 90 days following the passage of the Motion, DCBA, in partnership with The Center by Lendistry, launched the ERRP and began accepting applications for rent and mortgage relief from the public. At

[1] https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/sop/1192958_091625.pdf

the direction of your Board, the ERRP was designed to make landlords whole by providing rent relief payments directly to them, while also stabilizing tenant households by resolving their rental debt and decreasing their risk of displacement. The ERRP also provides targeted assistance to both homeowners who remain displaced by the January 2025 Eaton and Palisades wildfires ("wildfires"), and tenant households countywide—including in incorporated cities—experiencing emergency conditions or other emerging economic hardship, including sudden loss of income, to prevent housing instability and preserve tenancy.

Program Budget, Grant Demand, and Spend Down Projections

As part of your Board's approval of the ERRP in September of 2025, and through multiple Board actions, DCBA was allocated a total of $34.367 million in Fiscal Year 2025-26 and $10 million in Fiscal Year 2026-27 for current and future implementation of the program. These budget allocations are a mix of various funding sources, including American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-enabled Net County Cost (NCC), Care First Community Investment (CFCI), and County Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). A breakdown of these allocations can be found in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Total ERRP allocations for Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27

	Allocation Amounts[2]	
Funding Source	**FY 2025-26**	**FY 2026-27**
ARPA-Enabled NCC	$1,211,000	-
CFCI	$23,368,000	-
AHTF/NCC	$9,788,000	$10,000,000
Total	**$34,367,000**	**$10,000,000**

When the ERRP Round 1 application period closed on January 23, 2026, 4,587 landlords and displaced homeowners had submitted applications for relief, totaling over $84 million in relief requests. Table 2 below reflects this preliminary Round 1 application data. DCBA anticipates the availability of more granular data in the coming weeks as applications are validated, sorted, and categorized for priority.

[2] Note that these are the total current allocations and not reflective of the final amounts that will be awarded in grants after accounting for administrative and programmatic costs.

Table 2: Total ERRP Round 1 application submissions and relief requested as of 2/13/2026

Supervisorial District	Applications Submitted	Relief Requested
1	629	$9,836,950
2	1,320	$23,277,139
3	973	$22,334,940
4	485	$6,895,439
5	1,104	$21,287,934
Pending Mapping	76	$1,078,995
Total	**4,587**[3]	**$84,711,397**[4]

The figures above reflect raw application volume and requested assistance. However, final demand will depend on "application viability," meaning the share of submissions that are complete, verifiable and expected to meet program eligibility and documentation requirements. Based on current application viability projections, DCBA estimates that approximately one-third of submitted applications in Round 1 may be determined eligible and awarded relief, totaling approximately $21 million in grants. While ERRP would be oversubscribed based solely on your Board's initial funding allocation (as outlined in the Motion) of $19.788 million for Fiscal Year 2025-26, the recent additional allocation of $14.579 million in Fiscal Year 2025-26 CFCI dollars[5] provides additional capacity to address demand. Actual coverage will vary depending on final application viability and award amounts. However, DCBA anticipates that this additional funding may allow the program to meet existing and future demand for new applicants in Round 2, which opened on February 9, 2026, and will close on March 11, 2026. Moreover, with $10 million allocated for Fiscal Year 2026-27, DCBA could potentially offer at least one additional opportunity for the public to apply for relief through at least June 2027.

As ERRP finalizes categorization of existing Round 1 applications, initial data analysis suggests Categories 2a[6] and 3,[7] as defined within the Motion, are the primary reasons tenant households have fallen behind in rent. Should this trend hold, DCBA does not currently recommend adjustments to funding allocations across categories. With the infusion of your Board's most recent allocation of $14.579 million in CFCI dollars to ERRP,

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[3] The total applications reported in this report differs from a previous, publicly reported preliminary figure (4,644). The current figure (4,587) is slightly lower due to ongoing clean-up of duplicates and may continue to decrease as more erroneous applications are identified.
[4] The total relief requested figure is reflective of aggregate relief demand from all applications and not adjusted for grant award maximums that may be applied once applications are reviewed and sorted into their respective categories.
[5] https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/210305.pdf
[6] **Category 2a**: Countywide tenants, including those living in incorporated cities, who would otherwise qualify under Category 1 with verifiable wildfires-related income loss, but without self-certification forms.
[7] **Category 3**: Tenant households Countywide, including those in incorporated cities, that face emergency conditions and other emerging economic hardships—including sudden loss of income—due to federal actions targeting immigrant communities.

and based on current preliminary projections, the program is not expected to be oversubscribed in Categories 1-2, and available funding is not expected to constrain DCBA's ability to continue considering the relief needs for current applicants and anticipated Round 2 demand through the current application window, subject to final eligibility determinations and verified award amounts.

DCBA plans to provide your offices with program progress reports on a regular cadence and as we begin to better understand the landscape of relief needs, any new and/or changes to existing recommendations for your Board's consideration will be included therein.

Given where we are in the administration of Round 1, the earlier than anticipated launch of Round 2, and evolving demand trends, these projections remain preliminary and subject to change. DCBA will continue to closely monitor application volume and funding utilization and will coordinate with the Chief Executive Office to assess potential funding gaps and identify any additional support that may be necessary to sustain the program.

Stakeholder Feedback & Program Evolution

In the lead up to ERRP's launch to the public on December 17th, DCBA and its network of local partners conducted significant outreach and stakeholder engagement, including participation in a televised County resources phonebank in collaboration with Telemundo as well as a townhall presentation put on by Immigrants Are Los Angeles (IRLA). Once launched and through the application's closure on January 23rd, ERRP facilitated 44 program outreach, education, and technical assistance events.

During these community engagements, residents offered meaningful feedback on the design of the ERRP and shared candid insights into how families are navigating economic hardship. Several themes emerged that raise important policy considerations around timing of intervention, design flexibility, and the balance between program integrity and tenant-centered access to relief. Community members reported that many tenant households are relying on high-cost loans or borrowing from friends and family to remain current on rent. While this may prevent immediate eviction, it often shifts instability into unmanageable debt, increasing the risk of future delinquency and displacement. Others emphasized that some households require support not only with accrued rental arrears, but also with near-term rent obligations as they recover from a destabilizing event. Stakeholders also noted that when landlords decline to participate in the ERRP, tenants have limited recourse. Although current data from Round 1 and prior experience with the County's previous rent relief efforts do not suggest this is a widespread or systemic issue, it is a concern worth acknowledging.

As currently structured, ERRP is an arrears-based program, meaning the existence of unpaid back rent is a threshold eligibility requirement. This framework does not account for households that incurred other forms of debt to remain current, nor does it include prospective rental assistance that could allow earlier stabilization before arrears accumulate. Similarly, allowing relief to be redirected to tenants for relocation assistance could potentially reduce eviction filings among households. Expanding eligibility or who would be eligible to receive assistance payments would represent material shifts in program design, fiscal assumptions, and administrative capacity. Given the program's early stage of implementation, such changes would not be feasible without affecting current operations. These types of modifications to the ERRP would require substantial adjustments to verification protocols, payment controls, eligibility standards, case management, and fraud prevention safeguards.

Cumulatively, these considerations present both significant opportunities to strengthen housing stability and important operational implications that require careful evaluation as the program evolves. Any future expansion of ERRP's scope and design should include a comprehensive review of existing County and community-based programs that already provide prospective rental assistance or relocation support. This assessment will help ensure alignment, prevent duplication, and identify necessary adjustments or expansions to effectively meet the identified needs.

Beginning in Round 2, DCBA worked with our third-party administrator to refine the ERRP's application intake to allow tenant households to initiate an application in the online portal, to mirror the existing application process for landlords/property owners. Allowing tenants to start an application strengthens access and equity, supports earlier identification of at-risk households, and enables the ERRP, through an expanded network of outreach and application-support partners, to engage landlords and encourage their full participation in the application process. This adjustment reflects DCBA's commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness to community feedback received during Round 1.

Lessons Learned Round 1 and Board Considerations

The lessons below are based on early application patterns and stakeholder feedback and are intended to directly inform the programmatic considerations that follow. Collectively, they highlight the main drivers of program performance and housing outcomes, including where demand is concentrated, how landlord participation and intake design affect access and timeliness, and why some households need a stabilization pathway beyond arrears-only relief. They also underscore how reliance on high-cost debt emerges as a housing instability risk when households lack timely, affordable options.

In response, DCBA has already incorporated improvements into Round 2, including enabling tenant-initiated applications and expanding the network of community partners to support outreach, application assistance, and landlord engagement. The remaining lessons identify some key program design and infrastructure considerations as we evaluate a permanent, flexible rent relief framework that can be activated quickly and scaled during future emergencies.

As indicated previously, any significant changes or expansion of the ERRP's scope and design would necessitate additional assessments to determine alignment with existing programs, avoid duplication, and evaluate what adjustments or expansions should be made to meet new programmatic needs.

1. Demand and targeting

What we learned: Demand was high and uneven across geographies and applicant types. Early submission patterns, as reflected in Table 2, suggest the program needs ongoing, data informed targeting by Supervisorial District, category, and household circumstance to ensure outreach and partner capacity align where demand is concentrated.

Programmatic consideration for the current ERRP design: Maintain current category allocations until Round 1 validation is complete and initial award and spend down data are reported, at which point DCBA can recommend any targeted rebalancing that may be needed based on demonstrated utilization and unmet demand. While this consideration is specific to the current iteration of ERRP, timely program data will be essential to fully inform future category allocations and to support the design of any permanent rent relief framework.

2. Landlord participation and access

What we learned: Landlord participation is a key success factor and a key point of failure. Since payments are issued directly to landlords, participation barriers such as non-responsiveness, documentation concerns, and misconceptions about program requirements can delay awards and limit tenant benefit even when hardship is verified. Access barriers also persist when intake is landlord initiated only. Allowing tenants to initiate applications improves equity and access and helps identify at risk households earlier, but outreach to engage both tenants and landlords' remains critical to complete submissions.

Programmatic consideration: Assess an alternative tenant pathway when landlord participation is missing, including defined process triggers for direct assistance to tenants, eligible tenant-directed uses for financial assistance, such as relocation or stabilization assistance, and assistance integration with navigation and referral supports.

3. Stabilization needs and household financial strain

What we learned: Many households need both arrears relief and a pathway to stabilization. Community feedback indicated that some households experience temporary hardships that are not resolved through arrears-only assistance, increasing the risk of repeat delinquency and displacement. Community feedback also indicated that households are using high-cost debt such as payday or same day loans to address immediate needs and avoid eviction, but the resulting repayment burden can undermine future rent payments and increase longer term housing instability.

Programmatic considerations: 1) Assess the feasibility of including arrears relief and, when warranted, a time limited prospective rent component for stabilization, including eligibility rules, duration limits, and controls to manage cost and ensure equity; and 2) Explore the incorporation of light touch navigation into the ERRP framework, including costs, to strengthen a stabilization pathway for households whose hardship is not resolved by arrears only assistance and to reduce reliance on high-cost debt by connecting households to income supports and financial counseling.

4. Implementation timeline and quality control constraints

What we learned: Standing up and scaling an emergency program on a compressed timeline, particularly one with multiple complex eligibility categories, is feasible but creates operational constraints These constraints limit the program's ability to fully build and test quality-control measures and to resolve implementation issues before launch. As a result, it becomes difficult to simultaneously (1) conduct thorough application review and validation while disbursing assistance as quickly as possible, (2) develop fully accessible, multilingual resources for applicants, and (3) execute a comprehensive, targeted outreach strategy in high-need geographies, especially within rigid administrative, budgetary, or programmatic frameworks.

This reinforces the need for a permanent, flexible infrastructure that can be activated quickly and scaled as needed during future emergencies or disasters.

Closing

Round 2 of the ERRP opened on February 9 and will close on March 11, 2026. Building on Round 1 lessons, DCBA has already strengthened outreach and application support through community-based partners, while continuing to track demand and utilization and maintain verification and compliance controls. The Board's additional $14.579 million in CFCI allocation will help expand ERRP capacity and will enable the County to serve more tenant households and participating landlords experiencing documented hardship.

The feedback captured through stakeholder engagement highlights important considerations regarding stabilizing households, access and participation, and the potential role of prospective assistance. However, given the program's early stage of implementation, the ongoing validation of Round 1 applications, and the active administration of Round 2, it would be premature to recommend substantive structural modifications to the program at this time.

Any future adjustments to ERRP's design would require deeper analysis of outcomes, participation rates, administrative capacity, and fiscal sustainability. It would also require an assessment of existing County and community-based programs that already provide prospective rental assistance, relocation support, or stabilization services to determine alignment, avoid duplication, and evaluate what adjustments or expansions should be made to meet these identified needs.

Next Steps

DCBA will continue to monitor utilization trends, outcomes, and funding availability, and will report back with data-informed observations as the program matures. As we move beyond this initial implementation phase and gain a clearer understanding of program performance, DCBA will be better positioned to advise the Board on funding needs and design refinements that support a sustainable rent relief infrastructure.

Accordingly, DCBA will report back to the Board, in writing, in 90 days with an additional progress report, including updated demand and spend data, award and disbursement totals, trends by category and Supervisorial District, and recommended program adjustments.

If you need additional information, please contact me or Christian Olmos, Deputy Director, Community and Consumer Services Bureau, at (213) 626-9407 or COlmos@DCBA.LACounty.gov.

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c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
County Counsel