Mayor Durkan Announces September 30 Extension of Eviction Moratoria and Continuation of Additional COVID-Related Protections

June 23, 2021 by Joaquin Uy Leave a Comment

As State and County Distribute Hundreds of Millions in Rental and Housing Assistance, City of Seattle Will Receive $28 Million in Additional Federal Funds for Seattle Residents

As state and county funds for rental assistance are distributed in the coming weeks, Mayor Jenny A. Durkan announced today that she is extending the residential and commercial eviction moratoria through September 30, 2021, through Executive Order 2021-06. The order will also modify additional COVID-related relief measures related to utility assistance. This marks the fifth extension of the eviction moratoria as part of the COVID-19 civil emergency since March 14, 2020.

The City is in the process of delivering $23 million in rent relief to Seattle’s residential tenants and landlords. In the coming weeks, the City Council will consider an additional $28 million in rental assistance directly allocated from the American Rescue Plan Act to the City of Seattle. In sum, throughout the pandemic, city-funded rental and housing assistance total approximately $75 million for tenants, landlords, and city-funded affordable housing providers, in addition to State and County resources.

“As the first major US city to be impacted by COVID-19, Seattle created an exemplary COVID response template for the rest of the country, which led with establishing one of the first in the nation moratoria on evictions to keep families safe. This swift and early action saved countless lives as we’ve maintained the lowest infection rate, hospitalizations, and COVID-related deaths of the top American cities while also reaching key vaccine milestones,” said Mayor Durkan. “We must also recognize that the economic impact of the pandemic forced many businesses to close, left far too many without jobs, and we are still responding to the fallout. While we continue to be in a state of emergency, this three-month extension will ensure we can provide the cash rental assistance and housing support that is critical to stabilizing the community as we reopen.”

The executive order continues tenant protections prohibiting landlords from issuing notices of termination or otherwise initiating eviction actions with the courts unless there is an imminent threat to the health and safety of the community. Late fees, interest, or other charges due to late payment of rent during the moratorium are not allowed. However, tenants are still legally obligated to pay rent during the moratorium, and landlords are encouraged to offer flexible payment plans. Residential tenants who receive an eviction notice during the moratorium should contact the Renting in Seattle hotline at 206-684-5700 or go online to submit a complaint.

The moratorium on eviction of nonprofit and small business commercial tenants applies to independently-owned businesses with 50 employees or fewer per establishment, state nonprofits, and 501(c)(3) nonprofits. The extension also prevents eligible small businesses and nonprofits from incurring late fees, interest, or other charges due to late payment during the moratorium. For additional questions please see the Office of Economic Development's COVID-19 Lease Amendment Tool Kit.

Extending the residential eviction moratoria to September 30 will allow urgently-needed rental assistance and additional housing resources to reach further into the tenant and landlord community. Currently upon expiration, Ordinance 126075 will take effect, providing additional tenant protections including the start of a six-month period in which a renter may claim a defense against eviction for non-payment of rent if they can demonstrate financial hardship due to COVID-19. This timeline protects tenants from evictions for non/late payments through March 31, 2022, keeping Seattle residents housed through the winter months.

In addition to the moratoria extension, the executive order sets end dates for rent abatement and deferral policies for tenants of City facilities:

- Seattle Center: June 30 for businesses and August 31 for nonprofits
- Seattle Parks and Recreation: August 31 for both businesses and nonprofits
- Finance and Administrative Services: September 30 for both businesses and nonprofits

The executive order also extends certain suspensions put in place to limit the economic impact of the pandemic on Seattle residents and small businesses. These extensions include the Utility Discount Program’s Self-Certification Pilot Program, temporary loading zones for restaurants and small businesses, and non-booting of vehicles for unpaid parking tickets. The City continues to assess when to lift these individual suspensions as it relates to the COVID-19 emergency. Mayor Durkan has also directed utilities to refrain from shutting off service to customers through December 31, 2021.