

From: [Patricia Robertson](#)
To: [Angela Plaisted](#)
Subject: ESCOG Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 8:54:22 AM

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Good morning, Angie! Please see below a public comment for the 10/16 ESCOG meeting:

Good morning, members of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments,

I, Patricia Robertson, Executive Director of Mammoth Lakes Housing wanted to share with you some statistics from our recent emergency rent relief program that we started after the onset of the public health emergency and the ensuing economic hardship faced by many in our communities. Our program currently pays up to \$500 towards a maximum of four rent payments, for households living in Mono County that have experienced a loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our program has truly been a success because of our partners and neighbors that have contributed financially. We have received contributions from the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mono County, First 5 Mono, CA Coalition for Rural Housing, and private donations for a total of almost \$600,000. To date, we have spent more than \$450,000 on nearly 1,000 rent payments assisting 553 local households. We will continue to process applications on a first-come first-serve basis as funding allows. In the Town of Mammoth Lakes, we will continue the program through the CDBG-CV (CARES Act Funding) allocation process. Additionally, through our fundraising efforts, MLH has secured more than \$16,000 to support this program from private donors.

This Rent Assistance Payment program has helped many friends and neighbors stay in our community. Despite eviction moratoriums, many households nationwide have been “self-evicting” from the stress of being unable to pay rent and knowing that a large debt is accruing. As a tool for homelessness prevention, assisting households with monthly rent payments has eased the minds of many during a time when we are all dealing with so much, and helped them to maintain their safe-havens, their homes. Our homes have become so much more during the last six months—our offices, our children’s schools—and continue to be the sanctuaries we need to recharge for another day. To be able to alleviate some of the pressure for our local community members has been critical, and they are grateful. One resident said:

“Thank you for the assistance from the bottom of our hearts. We were very uncertain on when we would have our normal income flow. Though it has not recovered fully and we only needed 2 months of assistance we couldn’t be more appreciative of the help when we needed it. Thank you for keeping us afloat and keeping our family here in our beloved community!”

It has also played a significant role for local landlords that would not have been able to collect their usual monthly rents. A landlord expressed, “They are lovely tenants, I would do anything to support them through this crisis. I really appreciate their honesty and willingness to communicate their situation and the hardships due to COVID, and I am really glad the [program] is helping them.” And

another stated, "I am just proud to be a resident of Mono County right now, and just really appreciate the [program] is helping..."

I wanted to share this with you as an example of how we have supported our local residents, landlords, and economy during this incredibly trying time by working together. Our vision continues to be that "communities in the Eastern Sierra thrive because everyone has access to safe, affordable, quality housing."

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at patricia@mammothlakeshousing.org.

Thank you,
Patricia

Patricia Ann Robertson

Executive Director



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