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The undersigned organizations are writing to urge your organization's state, county and municipal policymaker members to quickly and fully allocate available American Rescue Plan federal funds to provide assistance to renters, consumer-facing small businesses, and impacted industries such as retail, tourism, travel, and hospitality that are having trouble paying rents, mortgages or remaining viable enterprises due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The need for assistance to renters is urgent. On September 4, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) published an Agency Order that halts evictions nationwide, which was recently extended again until June 30, 2021.<sup>1</sup> Many states have implemented similar measures. While these moratoriums temporarily delay evictions for Americans who are unable to pay their rent during the pandemic, they do not prevent those tenants from ultimately being evicted. Without rental assistance, tenants may find themselves with unmanageable backlogs of unpaid rent at the end of the moratorium period.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/04/2020-19654/temporary-halt-in-residential-evictions-to-prevent-the-further-spread-of-covid-19>

The CDC Agency Order and other eviction moratoriums also put tremendous financial pressure on the owners of rental housing, many of whom are small business owners, who must meet their obligations to pay taxes, insurance, mortgage payments, and most importantly maintain a safe and habitable housing that tenants deserve.

The need for assistance to small businesses, travel, tourism, and the entire hospitality industry is also urgent.

These businesses have suffered due to government-imposed restrictions intended to slow the spread of COVID-19. According to Alignable,<sup>2</sup> a small business network, 49% of small businesses could not make rent payments in March 2021, up 11% from February and 16% from January. This includes 67% of minority-owned businesses, 53% of women-owned businesses, and 48% of nonminority-owned businesses. Furthermore, the American Hotel & Lodging Association<sup>3</sup> reports that half of hotel rooms are projected to remain empty throughout 2021, and business travel, which drives more than half of the industry's revenues, is forecasted to remain anemic as the nation recovers. More than 500,000 hotel employees are projected to remain out of work this year and it will be 2024 before the hotel industry returns to its pre-pandemic performance levels. Numerous businesses remain closed or are open at unsustainable – and unprofitable – levels of capacity.

For many small businesses, the Paycheck Protection Program has been extremely helpful. Unfortunately, many apartment, retail, hospitality and consumer-facing business owners were unable to access such loans due to programmatic restrictions.

Fortunately, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Act) provides funds that states may use to supply assistance to COVID-19 affected renters as well as to small businesses and the hospitality industry. For example, the Act provides \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance to help those who have fallen behind on their rent. Our members are concerned about the need for this assistance to be distributed quickly and without unnecessary programmatic restrictions.

In addition, the Act provides \$350 billion in additional state and local aid that states are permitted to use to assist households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.

We strongly urge elected municipal, county, and state leaders and other policy makers to target any remaining portions of their allocations, and any other available funding, to rental assistance, small business assistance and to aid the travel, tourism, and hospitality industry. Such assistance would make a big difference in the lives of thousands upon thousands of COVID-19 affected renters and businesses in their cities, counties, and states and would also provide stability to the buildings and communities in which they live.

We recognize that cities, counties, and states are already working to address a wide variety of issues arising directly and indirectly from the COVID-19 pandemic, and that policy makers in communities across the country have to make many hard choices as to how to use all available funds. Our organizations urge all of them to prioritize households, small businesses, and the hospitality industry.

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<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://www.alignable.com/forum/alignable-nearly-half-of-all-small-businesses-couldnt-pay-their-rent>

<sup>3</sup> Available at: [2021 state of the industry 0.pdf \(ahla.com\)](#)

If you have questions, or would like more information, please contact Mike Flood (mflood@mba.org), Senior Vice President, Commercial/Multifamily Policy and Member Engagement at the Mortgage Bankers Association.

Respectfully,

American Hotel & Lodging Association  
American Resort Development Association  
Appraisal Institute  
CCIM Institute  
Commercial Real Estate Finance Council  
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing  
International Council of Shopping Centers  
Institute of Real Estate Management  
Manufactured Housing Institute  
Mortgage Bankers Association  
Nareit  
National Affordable Housing Management Association  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Apartment Association  
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of Housing Cooperatives  
National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies  
National Association of REALTORS®  
National Housing Conference  
National NeighborWorks Association  
National Leased Housing Association  
National Multifamily Housing Council  
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future  
The Real Estate Roundtable