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April 6, 2022

Hon. Andrew Joyce, Chairman
Legislative Clerk's Office
112 State St., Room 710
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Chairman Joyce,

The Department of Social Services respectfully requests legislative approval for the following:

Via resolution 96 adopted 3/8/2021 approval was granted to contract with United Tenants of Albany to assist in implementing the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) allocation, funded by the US Treasury.

Approval is now requested to amend the contract with United Tenants of Albany to extend the dates an additional six months to continue assisting the Albany County Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide assistance to eligible Albany County households that are unable to pay rent and/or utilities due to COVID-19. The original contract term date is March 31, 2022.

UTA will continue providing services on behalf of Albany County to Albany residents in the form of outreach and education regarding tenant protections provided by ERAP and targeted eviction prevention outreach for pandemic-impacted tenant hardships.

Although there are not currently funds available for tenants in our area through ERAP, once one applies for ERAP, they cannot be evicted because their lease has expired, or because they did not pay rent during the COVID-19 Pandemic. A good faith application to ERAP effectively provides COVID-19 impacted tenants with eviction moratorium protections. When they submit their ERAP application they will be provided with a notice with an application number. They can show the notice to their landlord, and to the Court if their landlord starts a proceeding in Court to evict them because their lease expired, they are a holdover tenant, or because they were unable to pay rent that would be eligible for coverage under ERAP.

Sincerely,

Michele G. McClave
Commissioner

cc: Dennis A. Feeney, Majority Leader
Frank A. Mauriello, Minority Leader
Rebekah Kennedy, Majority Counsel
Minority Counsel