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June 9, 2021

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:

Approval to accept a \$ 906,175.32 grant from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to provide outreach and enrollment services for the Emergency Rent Assistance Program (ERAP) to tenants at risk of eviction or utility shut off.

Albany County is participating in the ERAP managed by the NYS OTDA. OTDA will be responsible for creating an application portal, receiving and managing applications for assistance, verifying certain eligibility criteria, determining eligibility and providing financial assistance directly to landlords for this Program.

An ERAP eligible household is defined as a renter household in which at least one or more individuals meets the following criteria:

- Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19;
- Demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability; and
- Has a household income at or below 80 percent of area median income.

The poorest in our community and most vulnerable come to Albany County Department of Social Services (DSS) for assistance. DSS has an Emergency Team who will be well informed about ERAP and assist in enrolling the most at-risk tenants. DSS is also working with community providers with extensive experience assisting very low income households with housing issues. We have contracted with two specific partners to assist in our outreach and assistance efforts: United Tenants of Albany and Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York.

Sincerely,

Michele G. McClave  
Commissioner

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