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March 3, 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:

For the previous Legislative session approval was requested to accept a nine million dollar allocation from the U.S. Treasury for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program to provide rental and utility assistance to eligible households. This is a federal assistance program to prevent eviction of households with financial hardship due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Due to the timing of the U.S. Treasury approval notice we were not able to request provider partnerships with last month's allocation acceptance request. However, we are now in a position to request approval to contract with United Tenants of Albany to conduct outreach to educate potentially eligible tenants about ERAP eligibility and benefits. UTA will also screen tenants for eligibility and assist the households in applying for ERAP benefits and securing required documentation of eligibility and need.

Outreach will include utilization of its well-known hot line in the community, which is accessed by thousands of households each year. Additionally, United Tenants maintains a presence at many at-risk locations including physical space on Orange Street, near many bus lines, in Albany City Court, at large affordable housing sites, food shelters and homeless shelters. The Provider will conduct outreach in these settings and target those communities that have a high percentage of households whose income is 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) to ensure knowledge of and access to the ERAP program.

Sincerely,
Michele G. McClave

Commissioner

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