To enact the Eviction Crisis Response Act to create the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. (A) As used in this section:

(1) "Assistance group" means an individual or group of individuals who reside together and are treated as a unit for purposes of determining eligibility for and the amount of assistance provided under the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

(2) "Qualified alien" has the same meaning as in 8 U.S.C. 1641.

(B) There is hereby established the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The Development Services Agency shall administer the program for sixty days after the effective date of this section, or as long as state funds are provided for the program.
(C) Under the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program, the Development Services Agency shall provide rental assistance benefits as specified in division (E) of this section to assistance groups that meet the requirements of division (D) of this section. Rental assistance benefits under this section are available for months beginning April 2020 through the last month that the program is administered.

(D) An assistance group seeking to participate in the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program shall submit an application in the form and manner specified by the Development Services Agency. The application shall include all of the following:

(1) The social security number of each adult member of the assistance group, or proof of an application for a social security number for each adult member of the assistance group;

(2) Proof that at least one member of the assistance group is a United States citizen or national, or a qualified alien;

(3) Certification that no member of the assistance group has fraudulently received assistance under Ohio Works First or the Prevention, Retention, and Contingency program without having repaid any such fraudulent assistance;

(4) Documentation regarding the amount of the assistance group's monthly rent;

(5) Documentation regarding earned and unearned income for each member of the assistance group for the thirty-day period immediately prior to the application date;

(6) If the assistance group is applying for an accumulated
assistance amount, as set forth in division (E)(2) of this section, documentation regarding liquid assets of the assistance group, including the total amount of funds in every bank account of every member of the assistance group as well as disclosure of any cash available to any member of the assistance group.

(E) An assistance group determined to meet the eligibility requirements of this section may elect to receive either of the following under the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program:

(1) A standard assistance amount equal to twice the assistance group's monthly rent, less the assistance group's total earned and unearned income, up to a maximum of one month of rent or one thousand five hundred dollars, whichever is less;

(2) For assistance groups that owe more than one month of rent, an accumulated assistance amount of the assistance group's standard assistance amount multiplied by the number of full months of rent owed, less the assistance group's total liquid assets.

(F) Rental assistance awarded to an assistance group under this section shall be paid directly to the assistance group's landlord. No landlord shall manipulate rents owed in order to receive greater amounts of benefits from the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program. A landlord who violates this division shall be guilty of fraud, a misdemeanor of the first degree, except that if the value of benefits obtained in violation of this section is one thousand dollars or more, it is a felony of the fifth degree.

(G) The Development Services Agency shall establish fair and equitable procedures for the delivery of the benefits under
this section, including standards for certifying assistance
groups' eligibility for rental assistance under this section.

Section 2. On the effective date of this section, or as
soon as possible thereafter, the Director of Budget and
Management shall transfer $269,155,419 cash from the Budget
Stabilization Fund (Fund 7013) to the General Revenue Fund.

Seventy days after the effective date of this section, or as
soon as possible thereafter, the Director of Development
Services shall certify to the Director of Budget and Management
the unexpended, unencumbered balance of appropriation item
1955XX, COVID-19 Rental Assistance, earmarked for the COVID-19
Emergency Rental Assistance program. The Director of Budget and
Management shall transfer cash from the General Revenue Fund to
the Budget Stabilization Fund (Fund 7013) in the amount
certified.

Section 3. All items in this section are hereby
appropriated as designated out of any moneys in the state
treasury to the credit of the designated fund. For all
appropriations made in this act, those in the first column are
for fiscal year 2020 and those in the second column are for
fiscal year 2021. The appropriations made in this act are in
addition to any other appropriations made for the FY 2020-FY
2021 biennium.
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COVID-19 EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The foregoing appropriation item 1955XX, COVID-19 Rental Assistance, shall be used to support the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

The Director of Development Services shall cease making payments for the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program sixty days after the effective date of this section.

Section 4. Within the limits set forth in this act, the Director of Budget and Management shall establish accounts indicating the source and amount of funds for each appropriation made in this act, and shall determine the form and manner in which appropriation accounts shall be maintained. Expenditures from appropriations contained in this act shall be accounted for as though made in the main operating appropriations act of the 133rd General Assembly.

The appropriations made in this act are subject to all provisions of H.B. 166 of the 133rd General Assembly that are generally applicable to such appropriations.

Section 5. This act shall be known as the Eviction Crisis Response Act.

Section 6. This act is hereby declared to be an emergency
measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety. The reason for such necessity is to address urgent needs for rental assistance arising from the COVID-19 state of emergency. Therefore, this act shall go into immediate effect.