NEW YORK, NY (November 18) – Late yesterday, 68 New York-based corporations and law firms sent a letter urging the New York State’s Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the state agency that administers New York’s Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), to fully re-open the ERAP application portal for all low-income tenants living in New York.

Last Friday, Governor Kathy Hochul announced that the state would stop accepting ERAP applications, a move corporations and law firms say prematurely cuts renters off from unspent emergency funds, takes away essential eviction protections from tenants in housing court, and removes a vital tool for assessing how much additional funding renters actually need to pay their rent. The following corporations and law firms who signed the letter directly assist renters with ERAP applications through Legal Services NYC’s pro bono clinics.


Read the letter [here](#).

“We believe that ERAP has the potential to substantially blunt the impending eviction crisis by compensating landlords for unpaid rent during the pandemic, avoid burdening housing courts with hundreds of thousands of nonpayment cases, preserve neighborhoods and communities by preventing the mass exodus of low-income residents, and give vulnerable tenants housing stability and peace of mind,” signatories said in the letter. “The tenants who need ERAP the most—the elderly, people with disabilities, those without access to technology or limited English proficiency, among others—simply need more time and help to pursue this relief.”

“Closing the ERAP application portal now severely hampers our ability to help New York City’s most vulnerable tenants and punishes them when they may have no other relief but ERAP,” said Jack Newton, an attorney at Legal Services NYC. “Our corporate and law firm partners and even landlords agree that New York should keep the ERAP application process open so at-risk-communities can continue to apply for new and existing funds and so the state can get an accurate read on just how many tenants need in rental assistance across the state.”

Signatories point out that nearly $1.1 billion in obligated funds are still unspent due to landlord inaction which could be returned to the pot for other applications in addition to a possible $1 billion in funding that Gov. Hochul recently requested for New York. Closing the application portal now will hurt community trust that spurred applicants to apply the first time around, signatories said, and remove an essential eviction protection in housing court. Having a pending ERAP application pauses eviction proceedings for tenants in housing court.

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