

Emergency Rental Assistance Program
Housing Stability Services
Annual Report

January 1, 2021-June 30, 2022

The Department for Children and Families Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) awarded over \$4.8 million in federal funding under the Emergency Rental Assistance Program Housing Stability Services (ERAP-HSS) to 23 non-profit organizations¹ across Vermont for projects beginning in winter and spring 2021 and ending June 30, 2022. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) also administered ERAP-HSS grants during this period. Their subrecipients' results are not included in this report.

The U. S. Treasury made funds available for ERAP to assist eligible households who were otherwise unable to pay rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Housing Stability Services are provided to identify and support households applying for ERAP financial assistance, as well as support households that have already been determined eligible and have or will receive financial assistance. Households eligible for Housing Stability Services experienced financial hardship due directly or indirectly to the COVID-19 pandemic, were experiencing homeless or at risk of housing instability, and had an income \leq 80% of area median income (AMI).

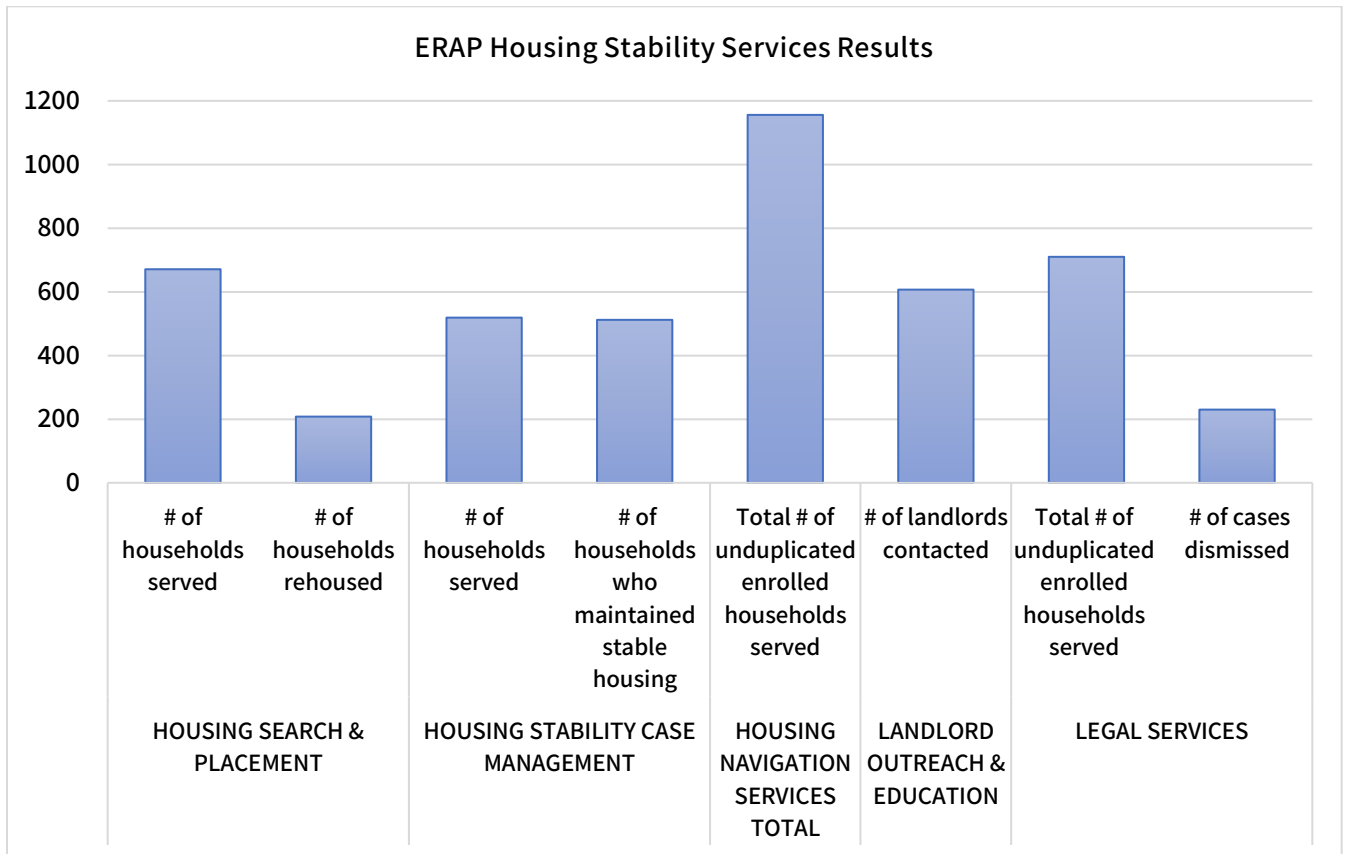
Funded activities included:

- Outreach to eligible Vermont households
- Direct services support for application (including recertification) assistance
- Landlord outreach and education
- Housing navigation services
- Landlord-tenant mediation services
- Legal services

¹ ERAP Housing Stability Services Award Summaries are available at <https://dcf.vermont.gov/oEO/resources/awards>

Housing Stability Services projects achieved the following:

- 1,156 households received housing navigation services including housing search and placement and housing stability case management,
- 4,130 households and 475 landlords received application assistance,
- 607 landlords received outreach and education,
- Over 3,100 households received outreach about the availability of ERAP HSS-funded legal services,
- 710 households received legal services,
- Three households received representation during landlord-tenant mediations and all were successfully mediated.



Housing Stability Services providers shared challenges such as finding or retaining staff, a lack affordable housing, substantially increasing rents, initial issues with applying for and recertifying for rental assistance and other expenses related to housing payments, overcoming a lack of or problematic rental history, and finding appropriately sized rentals in the region clients wanted or needed to live. Providers also shared successes that were a result of rental funds and being able to support clients under program grant monies. Below are a few examples:

“Many households have been able to address other unmet needs because of this funding. One household reported purchasing snow tires for the first time while another was able to buy every household member a new pair of boots.” John Graham Housing & Services, Addison County

“We can no longer imagine a future, at least one of progress and success, without our Landlord Liaison. This program is now essential to how we can address housing needs and shortages in our region. We would like to thank those of you who have worked to extend funding for this program. We continue to find that many landlords lack access to technology or the technological literacy to access the...VERAP program in order to receive their tenant’s rental assistance. Additionally many have needed assistance in strategies to communicate with their tenants about the VERAP program and the assistance it can provide. Having a Landlord Liaison who can assist them has been essential in the utilization of this program and has saved many from the more lengthy process of having to have payment sent to the tenant. One landlord wrote in an email ‘I would not have been able to navigate the paperwork without the help of the Landlord Liaison.’” CVOEO Franklin Grand Isle

OEO granted \$14.5 million for a second round of the ERAP-HSS, beginning on July 1, 2022, to continue to support providers who are helping households to find and maintain stable housing.