

Brandywine Communities

357 Lincoln Highway | North Versailles | PA | 15137

412.823.9223

BrandywineCommunities.com



The Honorable Rich Fitzgerald
Allegheny County Executive
101 Courthouse
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

RE: CARES Act

December 1st 2020

Dear County Executive Fitzgerald,

All of us, regardless of what we look like or where we come from, want a safe, secure home where we can earn a good living and keep our families healthy. COVID-19 has shown us that our health and well-being are connected. Now more than ever, our health and the health of our community depends on everyone having an affordable place to call home.

[Census data collected earlier this month](#) reveals that more than 1.3 million Pennsylvania households don't have enough to eat – including 338,000 households with children – and **nearly half a million households in the state (roughly 1 in 5 renters) are behind on rental payments.**

As bad as things are, the situation would be far worse without the protections for families and the economy that the federal government enacted earlier in the pandemic. At Brandywine, we have committed to doing everything we can to ensure that our tenants have not lost their housing in the middle of a global pandemic and economic crisis.

Thankfully, the CARES Rental Relief Program has allowed our tenants the opportunity to stay housed during these multiple crises. The program has been an enormous success and has the potential to keep thousands of families in their homes, especially as we face down a winter surge of a pandemic that has already claimed more than a quarter million lives.

It is critical that the county both extend and further fund the program. There were 8,000 applicants as of the November 4th closing window for applications. While approximately 2500 applicants have received critical relief so far, there are still more than 5,000 families facing imminent eviction just as the virus surges exponentially during the winter months.

At Brandywine, we knew that applying for rental relief can be complicated and labor-intensive, and we helped hundreds of our tenants apply for CARES funding. In many cases tenants juggled multiple jobs, kids, remote schooling, eldercare, and more while spending painstaking hours to complete and submit all the necessary paperwork. Both our tenants and our staff have done everything in our power to keep our tenants housed throughout this crisis. But we can't do it alone.

The County can and should extend the period for paying out the thousands of applications that were submitted by the stated deadline. The program is working, but we're running out of time and money. These are real people; families with young children and elderly folks and those who are infirm – all will be displaced in the middle of a pandemic if we don't extend and further fund the program.

The economic effects of the coronavirus have already been devastating, leaving hardworking people without jobs and income, struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. But if we let rental relief run out, the result will be unimaginable. The County must ensure that all of the applications submitted are paid, and allot more time and more funds to rental relief. It is a moral imperative that we all do everything in our power to prevent the pending disaster of mass evictions.

County Council voted last week to extend the moratorium. Now the County must act to ensure that residents are provided the relief they were promised.

Sincerely,

John Katz, President
Brandywine Communities