

#CancelRent & #CancelMortgages:

How It Works



Forgive Rent for All Renters

Suspend rent payments for the rest of the pandemic and cancel rental debt.

- **Universal:** Reaches all renters who need it, immediately! No application process, no lotteries, no barriers around documenting need.
- **Effective:** Reaches the informally employed who lack unemployment insurance. Reaches renters regardless of immigration status. Ends debt.
- **Equitable:** Mostly and disproportionately benefits low-income households, who comprise the [majority](#) of renters.¹
- **Swift:** No administrative nightmare.
- **Cost-Efficient:** Little public cost to implement.

Why? As many as [40 million people](#) nationwide face eviction due to inability to pay rent.² Millions more are likely [shouldering unsustainable debt, dipping into savings, or cutting food and medications](#) to make rent.³ But unemployment insurance, stimulus checks, and rental assistance funds are [leaving out millions](#) of needy renters.⁴

Why? Low-income homeowners especially need protection against displacement. Affordable housing providers and small landlords need help staying in business.

Forgive Mortgage Payments

For all homeowners, all affordable housing providers, and all small landlords.

- Swiftly and effectively assists all homeowners.
- Alleviates lost rental income for all affordable housing providers and small landlords.

Provide Added Relief to Needy Landlords

For those landlords who demonstrate need — and comply with renter protections.

- Shifts burden of applying for relief from renters to landlords.
- Efficiently uses public funds by screening out the largest corporate landlords.
- Expands adherence to renter protections like eviction moratoriums, automatic lease renewal, rent freezes, and more.

Why? Non-profit and small landlords may need additional targeted relief to stay afloat — but many large corporate landlords don't. Tenants need stronger protections.

Why? Even before the pandemic, [8 out of 10](#) of low-income renter households, and about [half](#) of all renters, were charged too much⁶ for housing.⁷ We must address the nation's long-standing shortage of affordable housing, and reverse cuts to its public financing.

Create an Affordable Housing Acquisition Fund

To acquire and convert distressed or vacant property to permanently affordable housing.

- A [Social Housing Development Authority](#) should have first right of purchase through the recovery period. Public entities, non-profit affordable housing providers, community land trusts, and tenant cooperatives will be ultimate owners of property acquired for permanently affordable housing.⁵
- Stops Wall Street landlords from gobbling up distressed or vacant property.
- Directs public spending at long-term solutions to the housing affordability crisis.

Tax Corporate Landlords

To pay for relief and affordable housing creation.

- Redirects excess profits of the largest landlords towards relief payments for needy landlords, and the Affordable Housing Acquisition Fund.
- Helps level the playing field between small landlords and big real estate investors.

Why? Real-estate leasing recently ranked as the [second most profitable](#) of U.S. industries.⁸ Large corporate landlords are benefiting from [\\$470 billion](#) in tax breaks.⁹ They can afford to pay more, and help families stay in their homes.

Notes

1 Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, "America's Rental Housing 2020" (Harvard University, 2020), https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard_JCHS_ARH_2020_Appendix_Tables_Revised.xlsx.
2 Emily Benfer et al., "The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: An Estimated 30-40 Million People in America Are at Risk," The Aspen Institute, August 7, 2020, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/the-covid-19-eviction-crisis-an-estimated-30-40-million-people-in-america-are-at-risk/>.
3 Kim Parker, Rachel Minkin, and Jesse Bennett, "Economic Fallout From COVID-19 Continues To Hit Lower-Income Americans the Hardest," *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project* (blog), September 24, 2020, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/09/24/economic-fallout-from-covid-19-continues-to-hit-lower-income-americans-the-hardest/>; Michael Manville et al., "COVID-19 and Renter Distress: Evidence from Los Angeles" (Los Angeles: UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies; USC Lusc Center for Real Estate, August 2020), <http://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/covid19-and-renter-distress/>; Lisa K. Bates, "Stability, Equity, and Dignity: Reporting and Reflecting on Oregon Tenant Experiences During the Covid-19 Pandemic" (Portland: Community Alliance of Tenants; Portland State University, September 2020), <https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness/sites/g/files/znlchr1791/files/2020-09/Renters%20in%20Covid-Oregon%20summer%202020.pdf>.
4 Kim Parker, Rachel Minkin, and Jesse Bennett, "Economic Fallout From COVID-19 Continues To Hit Lower-Income Americans the Hardest," *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project* (blog), September 24, 2020, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/09/24/economic-fallout-from-covid-19-continues-to-hit-lower-income-americans-the-hardest/>; Paulina López González and Tracy Anderson, "6 Months in Crisis: The Impact of COVID-19 on Domestic Workers" (National Domestic Workers Alliance;

NDWA Labs, October 2020), https://domesticworkers.org/sites/default/files/6_Months_Crisis_Impact_COVID_19_Domestic_Workers_NDWA_Labs_1030.pdf; Rebecca Burns, "When Shelter Comes Down to the Luck of the Draw," *The Nation*, June 5, 2020, <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/rental-assistance-lotteries-eviction/>; Gary Blasi, "UD Day: Impending Evictions and Homelessness in Los Angeles," May 28, 2020, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2gz6c8cv>.
5 Gianpaolo Baiocchi and H Jacob Carlson, "The Case for a Social Housing Development Authority," (Urban Democracy Lab, NYU, November 2020), <https://urbandemos.nyu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/SHDA-whitepaper-Nov2020.pdf>.
6 These households are "rent-burdened," meaning they spend more than 30 percent of income on rent and utilities.
7 Andrew Woo, "How Have Rents Changed Since 1960?," Apartment List, June 14, 2016, <https://www.apartmentlist.com/research/rent-growth-since-1960>; Ameer Chew and Sarah Treuhart, "Our Homes, Our Future: How Rent Control Can Build Stable, Healthy Communities" (PolicyLink; Center for Popular Democracy; The Right to the City Alliance, 2019), https://ourhome-sourfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/RTTC-Report-2019_4_WEB.pdf.
8 Mary Ellen Biery and Sageworks Stats, "These Are The 10 Most Profitable Industries in 2017," Forbes, August 6, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sageworks/2017/08/06/these-are-the-10-most-profitable-industries/>.
9 Sofia Lopez and Sara Myklebust, "Make Them Pay: Corporate Landlords Should Cancel Rent, Mortgages, and Utilities for the Duration of the COVID-19 Pandemic" (Action Center On Race and the Economy, May 19, 2020), <https://acrecampaigns.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Make-Them-Pay-May-2020.pdf>.