

# U.S. Poverty Monthly Action

## Evictions halted for now, but crisis continues

In early September, renters struggling to keep a roof over their head got a much-needed break. The Centers for Disease Control declared a national eviction moratorium to prevent the spread of COVID-19 – an important step to keep renters housed short-term through December 31 (although renters must fill out [this form](#) and submit to their landlords in order to be protected; [NLIHC has additional resources](#) for renters).

Public pressure – including 225 media pieces by RESULTS volunteers since March urging Congress to address hardship here in the U.S. – helped build support for the temporary eviction moratorium. But far more is needed. This measure does nothing to help unemployed renters make up lost wages that go to pay the rent.

**Emergency rental assistance is still needed to help renters (and [small landlords](#)) pay the rent.** Otherwise, the moratorium only postpones a tidal wave of evictions for a few months. [Economist Mark Zandi of Moody's analytics](#) estimates that “tenants already owe nearly \$25 billion in back rent, which could reach \$69.8 billion by the end of the year.” We need Congress to pass another relief package NOW that includes \$100 billion in rental assistance.

In addition, with tens of millions of Americans still out of work, hunger is a growing crisis in the U.S. In the latest Census [Household Pulse Survey \(August 19-31\)](#), 12.1 million adults in households with children (14.1 percent) reported that they were without enough to eat in the previous seven days. In addition to rental assistance, it is imperative Congress pass a COVID bill with at least a 15 percent increase in the maximum SNAP benefit.

## Tell Congress to take action now

The next few weeks will determine whether millions of Americans get much needed relief or not. House and Senate leaders and the White House need to know that leaving town to campaign without passing a new, large COVID-19 relief bill is unacceptable.

Contact your congressional offices as soon as possible reminding them again to pass a COVID-19 relief bill before leaving town to campaign that includes the following provisions:

- \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance
- Boost the maximum SNAP benefits by 15 percent

**Contact Senate and House housing and agriculture aides to tell them that tens of millions of Americans are still struggling to make ends meet and that without congressional action now, the situation will get much worse.**

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Forward our [housing](#) and [SNAP](#) request sheets when contacting them. Find other helpful resources on our [Lobbying](#). As always, contact us at [grassroots@results.org](mailto:grassroots@results.org) if you have questions. Also, look for action alerts from RESULTS. After taking them yourself, please forward them to your local action networks and others you know urging them to take action too.

## Keep using media to pressure lawmakers

Media is another tool for keeping pressure on Congress to pass a COVID bill now. RESULTS volunteers have gotten more than 80 media pieces published since August 1 urging Congress to act. Use letters to the editor and op-ed to call on members of Congress and the President by name to return to the bargaining table.

Use our sample [housing](#) and [SNAP](#) letters to the editor on the RESULTS website to get started (you can send it through our website or cut and paste the letter template into your own e-mail). Be sure to personalize the letters before sending them. If you can reference a recent story in your paper that you are writing in response to, that will increase your chances of getting published.

Once you get published, please be sure to leverage your media for maximum effect by doing the following:

- **Send copies of your media and national media packets to the appropriate aides in your House and Senate offices**
- **Tag members of Congress on social media** with your published letters
- Share your media with group members and your Local Action Networks **urging people to write letters in response**
- Plan to deliver all your recent media in **upcoming lobby meetings**

Finally, if you have gotten media pieces recently and taken all the steps above to maximize its impact, remember that **one of the most powerful ways to leverage your influence is by teaching others how to take action too**. Reach out to someone new, perhaps a friend or family member, a new person in your RESULTS group, or someone in your group who has yet to be published this year and offer to help them write and submit their own letter to the editor. Magnify your knowledge and experience by sharing it.

Use our Media Lab [recording](#) and [slides](#) from the 2020 RESULTS International Conference as a guide for teaching others to generate powerful letters to the editor.