June 19, 2023

Marin County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Stephanie Moulton-Peters
Supervisor Katie Rice
Supervisor Dennis Rodoni
Supervisor Eric Lucan
Supervisor Mary Sackett

Dear Esteemed Supervisors:

Marin County, like many communities across the Bay Area and the state, is in the midst of a housing crisis. People of color, people of low-income, seniors, and people with disabilities are bearing the brunt of this crisis and are facing disproportionate hardship and displacement from Marin. This reality undermines the strength and vibrancy of our community and runs counter to the county’s stated commitment to racial equity.

As the county makes final decisions for the 2023-24 budget and given the Board’s priority focus on increasing affordable housing and addressing homelessness, as well as its critical support of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), we request that you include additional one-time funding for ERAP to help meet urgent housing needs through the end of this calendar year.

Community Action Marin is dedicated to advancing racial and economic justice. We are the largest nonprofit human services provider in Marin County. Our county-wide efforts help individuals and families to meet their basic needs and forge a path to self-sufficiency and thriving. We serve over 7,000 households each year with a focus on addressing the causes and consequences of poverty.

We took over the ERAP program beginning mid-November 2022 and to date have dispensed more than $4.1 million to 582 renter households via landlords.
More recently, our contract with the county was extended through December 2023 and an additional $2.7 million was allocated to meet community need.

We are proud of our partnership with the county and what we’ve achieved together to provide rental assistance as a lifeline for people wanting to stay housed in Marin. While ERAP and other types of services are not a solution to the housing crisis, ERAP specifically has allowed eligible tenants to maintain stable housing as they recover from the impacts of the pandemic. This has produced positive ripple effects on individual and community well-being, including school attendance and children’s learning, as well as local employers’ ability to retain a workforce and uplift our economy. It has supported the vital role that these households play in the overall fabric of Marin.

To date, approximately $2 million of ERAP funding remains to be disbursed. Our most recent data shows that the pace of ERAP disbursement has been faster than anticipated and we already had two particularly large months in February and May of this year. The monthly disbursement averages between $600,000 to $800,000 based on need and we are ahead of that rate already for June. Given applications pending and our projections based on the current rate of approval, **we will need to close the waiting list at the end of June 2023 in order to stay within the remaining funding available.**

**We urge the county to allocate $2.5 million in additional one-time rental assistance funding in the final budget to help fill the gap through the end of this calendar year.** Our $2.5 million request based on the data would allow us to keep the waiting list open through the end of September with funds to be paid out by the end of calendar year 2023.

There are several components of the housing system in Marin that are closely connected and interdependent. **We request that additional funds for this purpose come from sources outside of the existing housing system so as not to destabilize these existing efforts.**

We raise this community need and urge your timely response because without additional funding, we will need to close the ERAP waiting list at the end of June. Our partnership with the county will also include communicating about your decision and next steps for those seeking help. Our commitment is to proceed with clarity and transparency to ensure that we can communicate effectively in community.

In closing, many authorities have noted that it will take years for Marin to build our way out of the current housing crisis. We must take steps now to preserve existing affordable housing and also to protect tenants from displacement. Your additional investment in
ERAP is a timely and important step that the County of Marin can take to prevent the displacement of tenants of low-income (disproportionately people of color) and others who are vital members of our community. Thank you for your consideration.

With appreciation,

Chandra Alexandre
Chief Executive Officer