



Anti-Displacement Stakeholders Demand Release of Rental Assistance

Our Communities need Rent Relief Now

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention extended the eviction moratorium until July 31, 2021 in what was remarked to be one of the last extensions of the moratorium. This extension temporarily resets the ticking clock of a countdown that, when it hits zero, will leave thousands of renters across the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County in dire straits.

Federal Funds not Reaching Local Families in Need

Millions of dollars have flooded into Mecklenburg County for rental assistance. However, many renters are seeing requests left unfulfilled due to stipulations set forth by the North Carolina General Assembly which limit the ability of service providers to distribute funds rapidly. Since the City of Charlotte has chosen DreamKey Partners (formerly the Housing Partnership) as the sole provider of funds from the RAMP CLT program, families who were approved for funds in 2020 are unable to access funds to meet their immediate needs to stave off the threat of displacement. As a result, renters in the Charlotte area are experiencing a new state of precarity on top of the uncertainty of job prospects as well as the rising costs of groceries.

DreamKey Partners: A New Program or More of the Same?

The City's partnership with DreamKey illustrates a pattern of outsourcing work to a service provider with a questionable history. It's been revealed that DreamKey's function as the City's preferred provider for affordable housing is contributing to the gentrification of Charlotte's Druid Hills neighborhood by selling lots, once slated for affordable housing, [to developers who plan to build market rate units](#). They have also used [legal tactics in order to intimidate older residents in Charlotte's Hidden Valley community](#) who refuse to ignore existing deed restrictions on land where DreamKey plans to develop housing in partnership with the Mayfield Community Development Corporation (a CDC affiliated with the Mayfield Memorial Baptist Church). Now, the pressing nature of expiring eviction moratoriums has revealed the extent to which this flawed partnership between the City and DreamKey bolsters their outward reputation as providers of assistance while not providing any meaningful support to renters across Charlotte.

It is unclear if this money that has been earmarked for assistance collects interest as it sits in DreamKey bank accounts. If DreamKey stands to be enriched by sitting



on money designated for needy individuals in our communities, we must seriously call DreamKey's commitment to its stated values into question.

A City in Crisis

All of this is happening at a time when the affordability of Charlotte has declined precipitously as the City and County have failed to utilize any meaningful measures to address displacement and provide a means to secure housing. As a result, Charlotte's home affordability sharply declined by 14% as compared to this time last year, according to the 2021 US Home Affordability Report by ATTOM Data Solutions. We are also ranked as the fourth least affordable city for those making minimum wage by Move.org who calculates that in order to earn the average rent of \$1,082 in the City, a renter making minimum wage must work 149 hours just to make rent. These figures don't account for groceries or any other necessary expenses.

The inaction of our public officials and the inability of DreamKey to distribute millions of dollars in much needed funds to keep renters in place and offer a level of security in housing is absolutely inexcusable. Instead of using their leverage as public officials to distribute these funds more effectively and efficiently to ensure renters are not displaced, there is a complacency and a reliance on the federal government's moratorium which itself is not entirely effective at stopping evictions, as we have seen from the North Carolina Council of States' rejection of extending the eviction moratorium.

Our Call to Action

The Housing Justice Coalition believes that 'Housing is a Fundamental Right' and we demand the following:

1. Public officials and program service partners at DreamKey Partners immediately release the millions of dollars of CARE's Act Funds that have already been received for the Rental and Mortgage Assistance Program (RAMP CLT).
2. DreamKey releases a public accounting statement of all funds that Dreamkey has received and all funds that have been distributed by DreamKey to individuals.
3. All RAMP CLT funds that Dreamkey has failed to distribute and any interest the funds have accrued be immediately transferred from DreamKey Partners to grassroots organizations who are better able to distribute the funds to affected renters in a more efficient and effective manner.

For questions or comments please email housingjusticeclt@gmail.com.



Statement of Signatories

1. **ActionNC**
2. **Alba Sanchez**
3. **Project 70Forward**
4. **Roma Johnson-Durham**
5. **Southern Piedmont Central Labor Council**
6. **Charlotte Community Benefits Coalition**