



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

Senator Sean Ryan Announces Creation Of Eviction Prevention Program For Upstate New York

SEAN M. RYAN | October 7, 2024

| ISSUE: **EVICTON PREVENTION, NYS SENATOR SEAN RYAN, NYS SENATE DISTRICT 61**



\$1.54 Million in New State Funding Coming to Erie County Expected to Protect More than 1,000 Local Families from Eviction in Year 1

BUFFALO – Today, October 7, 2024, New York State Senator Sean Ryan announced that New York State is launching a program to distribute \$10 million in new eviction prevention funds to the communities of Upstate New York in the coming year, including more than \$1.5 million to Erie County.

Making emergency rental funds more accessible to families in need is one of the four components of *The City of Good Neighborhoods*, Senator Ryan's comprehensive plan to address the shortage of high-quality, affordable housing in Buffalo. In April, **Senator Ryan announced that he had secured significant state funding** to support the plan. The funding included \$80 million to establish two new, proof-of-concept pilot programs to create infill housing and improve vacant rental units, as well as \$10 million to protect families across Upstate New York from being evicted.

In order to distribute the new eviction prevention funds, the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has created the **New York State Shelter Arrears Eviction Forestallment (SAEF) program**. Through this new program, a total of \$10 million will be distributed to New York's 57 counties outside of New York City and Long Island, with each county's allocation determined by its 2023 eviction rates. Erie County will receive \$1.54 million, the highest amount allocated to any of the counties receiving funds. The money will be distributed locally by the Erie County Department of Social Services.

The new program was designed to reach families in need of temporary rental assistance who are left behind by New York's existing Emergency Assistance to Families (EAF) and Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA) programs. Household eligibility for the SAEF program is based on the income limits for EAF and ESNA. To qualify, families with children must have a household income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level and families without children must have a household income at or below 125% of the federal poverty level.

To fill some of the gaps left by EAF and ESNA, the SAEF program omits several of the other programs' burdensome eligibility restrictions that can keep families in need from accessing assistance. For instance, applicants will not be required to demonstrate an ability to pay future rent, and households can be eligible for the SAEF program even if they have already

received rental assistance within the last five years. Omitting these restrictions brings the new program in line with existing eligibility qualifications for downstate residents and matches the way the state administers other emergency programs such as the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) emergency benefit.

The counties receiving the funding have flexibility to determine the overall design of their local SAEF program, but have been encouraged by OTDA to make extra efforts to ensure prioritization of certain households, such as those with children under the age of six, single individuals with a history of housing instability, veterans, and victims of domestic violence.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “Most people would probably be shocked to learn that the average family evicted in Buffalo loses their home over just \$1,200 of owed rent. If \$1,200 is all it costs the state to keep a family from losing their home, that is money well spent – especially when you consider that we spend about \$13,000 for each household that ends up in the shelter system.

New York’s existing emergency rental assistance programs were established with unnecessarily burdensome eligibility requirements that go against our modern understanding of the benefits of eviction prevention. By making more households eligible for assistance, we will provide more families with stability in times of need, get more landlords the rent money they are owed, relieve pressure on our overburdened shelter system, and save thousands of taxpayer dollars in the process.”