

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
EASTERN DISTRICT**

IN RE: FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF : No. 21 EM 2020
PENNSYLVANIA :

In accordance with the Court's Order of October 28, 2021, the Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, hereby files this response in support of the Philadelphia Municipal Court's Request to continue the Philadelphia Municipal Court Landlord-Tenant Diversion Program for 120 days.

1. On August 2, 2021, the Governor wrote a letter in support of continuing the Philadelphia Municipal Court Landlord-Tenant Diversion Program (Diversion Program).
2. On August 16, 2021, this Honorable Court authorized the extension of the Diversion Program through October 31, 2021.
3. The Governor's office has been closely following the successes in counties, such as Allegheny, Bucks, Montgomery, and Philadelphia, which have been able to distribute over \$107,261,844.31 in state allocated ERA funding as of the end of October to over 16,635 households.
4. Philadelphia, with its pre-filing Diversion Program, is leading the nation in disbursement of rental assistance and continues to be held out by researchers and the Department of Justice as a national model.
5. This work has been essential to the Commonwealth's efforts to stabilize the economy during the pandemic.
6. Counties across Pennsylvania still have 74,642 applications pending and \$485,463,777.05 ERA dollars to distribute.
7. If these counties' ADR programs end at this time, including the Diversion Program at issue here, then the Commonwealth could face a deluge of eviction court filings that would overwhelm the court systems.

8. This would be a disservice to both landlords and tenants who would have long waits for court dates while still waiting on pending rental assistance applications.
9. This Diversion Program, as well as other ADR programs that utilize pre-filing processes, has been successful in swiftly distributing rental assistance and resolving landlord-tenant matters without the need for costly and prolonged court proceedings.
10. Each county and its President Judge is well-positioned to determine what resources and challenges their particular county has and to make decisions in the best interest of their county.
11. Therefore, the Governor supports the Philadelphia Municipal Court's Request to continue the Diversion Program for 120 days.
12. Alternatively, the Governor requests that the Court expedite consideration of a simple rule of procedure that expressly authorizes local courts to implement ADR procedures in residential eviction proceedings by local rule.
13. Either action would help to ensure that local counties have the flexibility to continue this important work.

Date: November 8, 2021


GREGORY G. SCHWAB
General Counsel
Attorney I.D. 93310
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
333 Market Street, 17th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Tel: (717) 787-9350