



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday, 12 August 2021

**Priority: HIGH**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***Minister Cox makes appeal to Landlords to withhold eviction***

**Port-of-Spain** --- The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is pleading with Landlords to hold their hands in evicting tenants who have not been able to pay their rent. Through its critical incidence mechanism, reports are being received from members of the public, as well as media personnel on various social issues that require emergency intervention. These include reports of single mothers and their children being forced to turn to the streets following eviction and or domestic violence.

According to Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox: “While there is no Pandemic related orders to protect tenants from being evicted, we want to ask Landlords to have some compassion for their tenants, during these unprecedented and challenging times. We must understand and appreciate that some persons have been placed in untenable situations given COVID-19 restrictions. We must be mindful of the need to come together and support each other, as we share the economic burdens at this time.”

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, is committed to ensuring that the opportunity for a good quality of life is afforded to all citizens, particularly those within the vulnerable populations. The Ministry continues to place focus on a more responsive and multifaceted social safety net system, where no one is left behind. In this regard, among the various grants available is the Rental Assistance Grant where persons are able to access rent for up to three months in the first instance in the sum of \$2500.00. In this Grant arrangement, persons are assessed through a Standard Means Test and following this, there must be an agreement with the landlord to enter into a contractual agreement with the Ministry so that direct payments can be made to the landlord.

In the Minister’s appeal, she encouraged landlords to accept the issuance of the Rental Assistance Grant available to tenants in such circumstances. According to the Minister - “The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services prioritises those types of payments and therefore I wish to appeal to landlords to utilize the system and support clients that are applying for the Rental Assistance Grant by accepting government invoices.”

The National Family Services Division (NFSD) of the Ministry also continues to work closely with various stakeholders, including the Gender-Based Violence and Victim and Support Units of Police Service, as well as the Gender Affairs Division (800-SAVE) in order to assist clients facing eviction removed to Government Shelters as quickly and safely as possible.

It should be noted that both mother and children are admitted to Government operated shelters, even children over the age of eighteen (18) who are dependent on their mother because of a disability or mental health issues. Other interventions by the National Family Services Division include liaising with various NGO's for placement of persons, writing referrals to the Housing Development Corporation, liaising with parents' grandparents and other immediate family members for temporary housing arrangements and negotiating additional time with Landlords pending the Ministry's Rental Assistance Grant.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services wishes to once again appeal to landlords to have compassion to those who fell behind on their rent due to COVID-19 as we all navigate the impacts of the pandemic. Persons are reminded to visit the Ministry's website at [www.social.gov.tt](http://www.social.gov.tt) for further information on grants and programmes available to citizens.

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**For more information:**

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