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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Benton County Partners with Excellerate Foundation on \$8MM in Rental Assistance

Benton County will distribute federal funds through the foundation to provide COVID-19 relief.

Benton County Judge Barry Moehring is pleased to announce a collaboration with Excellerate Foundation to give rental relief to Benton County residents. On December 27th, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 established a new \$25 billion federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program for state, county and municipal governments with populations of over 200,000 people to assist those living in rental properties-who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to make their rental and utility payments.

Benton County received \$8,364,838.70 that can be distributed for this assistance until December 31, 2021. Hark at Excellerate Foundation will work with eligible households to connect them to ERA dollars and other resources, and payment will be made directly to landlords and utility companies on their behalf.

“We are excited to be leveraging our Hark division and technology to help the people of Benton County,” said Jeff Webster, President/CEO of Excellerate Foundation. “Furthermore, our partnership with United Way/2-1-1 and others during 2020 gave all of us exceptional experience at providing this type of support. Working with various partners in the community will be a tremendous step in the right direction to provide stabilization to many in need due to the pandemic.”

“After a year of sacrifices and hardships, many of our fellow citizens are now facing stark choices about making rent payments, keeping the lights on or putting food on the table,” said Benton County Judge Barry Moehring. “By offering rental assistance to those in need, this grant will help many of our fellow citizens persevere through what we all hope will be the last few months of the pandemic. I appreciate our partnership with Excellerate Foundation to make this a solution to one of our most pressing COVID-19 related issues.”

Applying to the 2021 Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program

To qualify, households must have an annual household income of approximately \$60,000 or less depending on family size. Other eligibility requirements apply. **Benton County and Excellerate are launching these funds into the community as quickly as possible. To learn more or apply, fill out the contact form on harknwa.com/getconnected or call 2-1-1.**

For interview requests for Benton County, please contact Channing Barker at (479) 721-3364. For interview requests for Excellerate, please contact Ali Johnson at ali.johnson@excelleratefoundation.com.