The $1.9 trillion federal stimulus bill President Joe Biden signed last week included billions of dollars to help renters and homeowners who are behind on their mortgage payments.

State officials estimate Washington will get about $35 million in rental assistance and $30 million to help homeowners behind on their mortgages.

It’s not clear how much the federal government will ultimately give to Washington state, or how much King County will receive, according to King County Budget Director Dwight Dively.

"Last year, according to a county spokesperson, more than two-thirds of those who received help were people of color, and a sharp decline in the number of applicants qualified for assistance. Local governments are preparing to distribute federal rental assistance from the stimulus package passed in December," Dively said.

King County is in the process of directing about $45 million toward rental assistance. County staff and county council members last week said they plan to direct about a third of that money to community organizations serving people of color who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

"By directing $8 million to United Way of King County for its rental assistance program, about $7 million to the Office of Housing for assistance for tenants in subsidized housing, and $6.2 million to organizations with an established track record of serving people who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, King County is in the process of directing about $45 million toward rental assistance," McGowan said.

According to county data, about 5,500 households have expressed a need for assistance since the program started last month, according to a county spokesperson. More than half of those who received help were people of color, according to King County Supervisor Dave’avionne Graham.

The Seattle City Council this week will consider how to spend about $21.2 million for rental assistance and eviction relief. The Seattle City Council this week will consider how to spend about $21.2 million for rental assistance and eviction relief.

Seattle’s eviction moratorium through June 30.

"I basically have no other option than to hope it gets extended," he said.

If the city directs $8 million to United Way, the agency expects to start a rental assistance program in May, said Lauren McGowan, senior director of ending homelessness and poverty at United Way of King County.

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