



City of Austin

P.O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767 -1088
www.austintexas.gov/housing

MEMO

Date: December 3, 2014

To: Mayor and Council

From: Betsy Spencer, Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development 

Subject: Update on Council Resolution 20141002-044: Good Landlord Program

This memorandum provides an update on a Council Resolution 20141002-044, which directed the City manager to “develop a voluntary Good Landlord Program for private sector landlords that meet high standards or help assist with difficult to house individuals and to bring the program back to Council for final approval by December 11, 2014. The program should include target goals and standards along with appropriate recognition and incentives.” To address this Resolution, NHCD requires an extension to April 30, 2015.

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) convened stakeholder meetings on October 21 and November 4, 2014, to consider elements and attributes of a Good Landlord Program and to discuss potential goals and incentives for participation. Please find attached the notes related to the stakeholder meetings.

Stakeholders at the meetings included representatives from the Austin Apartment Association, Austin Board of Realtors, Community Development Commission, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition, Housing Authority of the City of Austin, HousingWorks Austin, private landlords, Austin Tenants’ Council, and the Re-Entry Roundtable. Recognizing cross departmental impact and interest, NHCD also extended invitations to City departments to include Austin Code, Planning Development Review Department, Health and Human Services Department and Austin Energy. Representatives from these departments comprise the Imagine Austin Household Affordability Priority Program where issues on household affordability are discussed regularly.

NHCD will present the outcomes of the stakeholder meetings and hold a public input session at the December 2014 Community Development Commission (CDC) meeting. The CDC was not able to meet November 12, 2014, due to lack of quorum. The proposed timeline for actions related to the creation of a Good Landlord program is as follows:

- **December 9, 2014:** Community Development Commission: Briefing, public comments, and possible action
- **January 2015:** Follow up stakeholder meeting to finalize input; discuss financial feasibility of recommendations
- **February 2015:** Review potential program guidelines; discuss implementation and partner roles and responsibilities
- **March/April 2015:** Finalize potential program guidelines and Request for Council Action, if needed

Should you have questions regarding this item, please contact Rebecca Giello, NHCD Assistant Director, at 512-974-3045.

cc: Marc A. Ott
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager

Attachment: Good Landlord Program - Stakeholder meeting notes

Potential Attributes of a Good Landlord

- Provide decent, safe and sanitary housing
- Accept vouchers or other rental subsidies
- Provide some affordable units within Fair Market Rent (FMR) as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Energy-efficient/Green
- Service-enrichment
- Transit accessibility
- ADA accessible / universal design
- Responsive to code compliance issues
- Tenant protections: Re: eviction practices and prevention; Education; Safety/security
- Reasonable criminal background criteria (reasonable look back policy)
- Appeal process for tenant acceptance

Existing City of Austin Tools/Programs to leverage program elements

- Assistance with energy-efficiency upgrades
- Current incentives available through the SMART Housing program (expedited permitting, etc.)
- Funding available through the Rental Housing Developer Assistance Program through the Austin Housing Finance Corporation. Low interest loans provide opportunities for Rehabilitation of Rental property
- Minor home repair services could offer grants to incentive program participation
- Strong capacity by nonprofit community case management / service providers (i.e. permanent supportive housing)
- Tenant education (required for some rental vouchers) and currently offered by some agencies
- Mental Health First Aid Training for landlords and property managers (provided by ECHO)
- Landlord Education by nonprofit agencies regarding supportive housing, code enforcement, rebate programs, and tenants' rights.

Potential Incentives

- Funding availability to close "gap" by voucher/Fair Market Rent (FMRs)
- Tax incentives (i.e. freeze property taxes post-rehab with affordability restrictive covenant)
- Expedited permitting for rehab/upgrade/code compliance remediation
- Mitigation Fund
- Targeted affordable housing tax credit (Homestead Preservation District)
- Create small area FMRs to raise the value of the vouchers in certain areas (Housing Authority)
- Fast tracked services offered by Planning, Development & Review (permitting, inspections, etc.)
- Training for property managers specific to City of Austin services
- Minor Repair Services offering on-site maintenance provided by the City of Austin for private landlords
- Community-wide recognition (Media sponsor recognizing Good Landlords; private sector donors for program capacity)