




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members 

FROM: Rosie Truelove, Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department

DATE: September 26, 2019

SUBJECT: Staff Update on Resolution No. 20180426-031- Comprehensive eviction counseling services and representation for residential tenants.

The Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department (NHCD) will be extending the response deadline for [Resolution No. 20180426-031](#), which directed the City Manager to propose an eviction counseling program, to late 2019. The resolution also directed the City Manager to identify any additional resources required to implement such a program, and to return with a budget item for Council consideration no later than June 30, 2018. Council recommended that the program provide early intervention services through education, support, and mediation after a tenant has received a Notice to Vacate, as well as representation during eviction court proceedings. Council approved a budget for this project in Fiscal Year 2018-19 totaling \$75,000.

Following the approval of the 2018 General Obligation Bonds and the publication of *Uprooted: Residential Displacement in Austin's Gentrifying Neighborhoods, and What Can Be Done About It, The People's Plan*, and other reports documenting the impact of displacement, NHCD staff assessed the resources available in the Housing Trust Fund to mitigate displacement of residents. As eviction is directly related to displacement, NHCD Staff identified an additional \$225,000 from the Housing Trust Fund to expand the Eviction Prevention program. The expanded program addresses all aspects called for in the resolution, including representation, counseling, education, support, and mediation. NHCD Staff is working with the Office of Innovation to design an expansive program for eviction prevention and to ensure the scope of work is achievable and that its impact is measurable.

NHCD also identified \$500,000 in the Housing Trust Fund for an Emergency Rental Assistance program, similar to the program managed by the Austin Public Health Department. After discussing the capacity of the Austin Public Health Department (APH) to manage the additional resources, it was determined that \$250,000 will be dedicated to the APH Emergency Rental Assistance program and \$250,000 will be tied to the Eviction Prevention program. Whereas the vast majority of eviction proceedings result from a financial strain causing a deficiency in payment, this additional funding will serve as emergency rental assistance for individuals experiencing or threatened by eviction. By including emergency rental assistance in the Eviction Prevention program, individuals in need will have more immediate access to resources that will help to prevent eviction.

NHCD Staff and the Office of Innovation continue to refine the program guidelines to incorporate this vital aspect of eviction prevention. Staff will issue the Request for Proposal with the intent of awarding the contract in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2019-2020. This contract will include services allowing for representation at eviction proceedings, counseling for tenants experiencing eviction, education for tenants and landlords to help avoid evictions in the future, and management of the emergency rental assistance funds. Staff is confident that the eviction prevention program and its design will have a significant impact on the current state of evictions in Austin.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
 J. Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager
 Chris Shorter, Assistant City Manager