



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Recommendation Number: 20200612-2D: The provision of sufficient financial assistance for Austin renters with disabilities

WHEREAS, Austin Texas is one of the most expensive cities in Texas. The average Austin rent is \$1,439 a month and the average income is only \$63,717 annually; and

WHEREAS, this pandemic merely compounded the already strained ability of Austin renters with disabilities to obtain and effectively retain safe affordable and accessible housing. A permanent residence for people with disabilities is key to building and maintaining community, to successfully transitioning out of high school, to helping either obtain or retain a job; and

WHEREAS, Massive employment furloughs, underemployment and unemployment directly related to the corona virus have made it difficult if not impossible for people with disabilities to then successfully pay rent in full. The unemployment rate for a person without disabilities is 14.3% and the unemployment rate for a person with disabilities is 18.9% according to statistics released from the United States Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy; and

WHEREAS, The City of Austin is prohibited under existing state statutes from implementing rent control which would limit the amount of rent increases once the annual rent has ended; and

WHEREAS, The Houston City Council comparatively allocated \$15 million in rental assistance for people impacted by the corona virus pandemic, the San Antonio City Council comparatively allocated \$25 million for people impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, and the Dallas City Council comparatively allocated \$13.7 million in rental assistance for rent to aid of people impacted by the coronavirus pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Several pre-existing apartment corporations located inside the City of Austin prohibit the property office from handling third party checks for tenant rent aid and contain no realistic consideration of a mass pandemic in a lease agreement or other mass disaster, which then forces most residents living on the apartment property to be unable to successfully pay rent in full, including people with disabilities and/or seniors who are especially vulnerable to both the coronavirus's immediate effects and long-term consequences;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities calls the existing \$1.2 million of rental assistance provided from the City of Austin inadequate in effectively and properly addressing both immediate and long-term effects of the coronavirus as it specifically impacts City of Austin residents with disabilities and recommends and supports City Council to allocate rental assistance efforts to match other Texas cities.

Date of Approval: 06/12/20

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 7-0 vote

Attest: *David Ondich*

(David Ondich, Staff Liaison to The Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities)