

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	52119	Agenda Number	20.
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Meeting Date:	12/17/2015	Department:	Health and Human Services
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Subject

Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract with TEXAS RIOGRANDE LEGAL AID INC. to provide education and outreach regarding tenants-rights under the City Code, for a 12-month term from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016, in an amount not to exceed \$350,000, with four 12-month renewal options, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,750,000.

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding in the amount of \$350,000 is included in the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Operating Budget of the Health and Human Services Department. Funding for the renewal options is contingent upon the availability of funding in future budgets.

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is not required.

Purchasing Language:

Prior Council Action: On September 8, 2015, Council approved Ordinance No. 20150908-001 adopting the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Operating Budget.

For More Information: Stephanie Hayden, Deputy Director, Human Services, 972-5017; Robert Kingham, HHS Manager, 972-5026; Elena Shemilina, Agenda Coordinator, 972-5033.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

MBE / WBE:

Related Items:

Additional Backup Information

A recent report by the Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic of the University of Texas Law School found the City faces great needs in identifying dangerous rental properties, adequately monitoring repeat offenders, and utilizing appropriate enforcement mechanisms in handling rental-property nuisances. As part of the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget, City Council provided funding for an initiative called the Residents Advocacy Project, which aimed to improve the City's response to rental properties with dangerous conditions and nuisances, and short-term rental (STR) housing enforcement. The goals of the Residents Advocacy Project include: 1) providing education and outreach to empower tenants to better understand their rights related to City Code; and 2) empowering the City's Law Department and Code Department (Code) to pursue litigation in addressing substandard, dangerous rental properties, and non-compliant STRs.

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) is a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income residents in sixty-eight counties of Southwest Texas. TRLA is the third largest legal services provider in the nation

and the largest in the state of Texas. TRLA will perform proactive education and outreach to inform residents of their rights as tenants at rental properties and mobile home parks, forward complaints regarding substandard building conditions, and begin nuisance abatement efforts. TRLA will hire experienced English and Spanish-speaking outreach professionals that have expertise in housing laws and empower tenants to take actions to improve conditions despite fears of retaliation. TRLA will also communicate with Code to support their enforcement efforts against dangerous properties and repeat offenders.

PERFORMANCE

Performance Measures, as well as contract exhibits, will be negotiated with the TEXAS RIOGRANDE LEGAL AID INC. staff.

Related Departmental Goal: Provision: Social Services – Promote a healthy community by addressing the needs of vulnerable households.