



# Austin Public Health



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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Stephanie Hayden, Interim Director 

**DATE:** January 19, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Response Resolution No. 20171005-030-Student Housing and Tenants' Rights

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Austin Public Health (APH) was charged with responding to Resolution No. 20171005-030. The resolution directed the exploration of viable options to assist a student with guaranteeing a lease and, if there are viable alternatives to requiring a guarantor for a lease. The resolution also directed the creation of a tenants' rights education and awareness campaign for students.

Austin Public Health, along with Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, Equal Employment/Fair Housing Office, Austin Code and Austin Tenants' Council worked collaboratively on this resolution. The team also communicated with University of Texas (UT) Student Body's leadership and the Austin Apartment Association.

The Equal Employment/Fair Housing Office conducted a survey of selected cities for best practices. New Hampshire Legal Assistance, Long Island (New York) Housing Services Inc., and Buffalo (New York) Housing Opportunities, reported that they have nothing specifically related to student financial aid source of income protections. Although, some have general source of income protections and general student status protections. The Seattle Office of Civil Rights have similar general protections not specific to students. However they note that alternative sources of income other than employment include any source of income that is lawful and verifiable, which could include student financial aid.

The team did find out that there are some properties, especially in West Campus, already accepting documentation of financial aid to demonstrate a students' ability to pay rent. The team is working with the Austin Apartment Association to send out reminders to their members in regards to accepting financial aid documentation. The Austin Apartment Association also indicated they are willing and able to help educate and remind members that guarantors do not have to be family members and that there are options and services available to anyone needing a lease guarantor.

The team also discussed the creation of a tenants' rights education and awareness campaign for students. While organizations had tenants' rights information and resources available there were not any specifically geared to students. Although this gap exists, there was not any funding available to create an educational and awareness campaign. The team compiled strategies and developed a financial impact chart which is below for Council consideration. Through the expertise of staff at Austin Tenants' Council, a booklet or series of fact sheets could be developed, drawing from the existing materials already in use, but with a focus on student issues. These materials could be distributed by the campaign through Facebook Ads, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), and YouTube videos as well as housed on participating Departments' websites. The representatives of the UT student body also recommended partnering with the Multicultural Engagement Center, the Gender and Sexuality Center, and the First Year Experience Office.

Estimated cost for development of materials and videos is \$10,000 and estimated cost for the marketing is \$15,000 for total cost of approximately \$25,000.

<b>Marketing and Education Campaign</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Develop educational resources and assets (booklet, fact sheet, flier and/or brochure)	\$3,000
Create YouTube videos	\$7,000
Printing of materials	\$2,300
Targeted Social Media ads	\$250
Door Hangars: ex. Gorilla Marketing	\$300
Geo Fencing	\$2,500
PSAs	\$9,000

In December 2017, City Council voted to create a Student Commission. Austin Public Health is currently working with legal on the bylaws for the Commission. Once it is formalized, Student Housing and Tenants' Rights will be one of the first items on their agenda. The Austin Apartment Association has committed to being a part of the presentation, along with the team working on this Resolution.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.