



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members

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

**DATE:** April 24, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Response to Resolution No. 20180426-031 regarding comprehensive eviction counseling services and representation for residential tenants

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide staff's response to Resolution [No. 20180426-031](#) relating to comprehensive eviction counseling services and representation for residential tenants during eviction court proceedings. Responsive to this resolution, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) announced new Displacement Prevention initiatives that aim to assist households vulnerable to displacement due to increasing housing costs. The initiatives take a multi-faceted approach with programs that support individuals and provide opportunities for community groups to receive support for efforts that directly address the issues of gentrification and displacement.

Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) released a [solicitation](#) on March 3, 2020, for \$750,000 over three years for Tenant Stabilization Services that invites non-profit organizations to help tenants with housing stability services, such as rental assistance and eviction prevention support. The main goal of this solicitation is to reduce residential displacement of tenants in Austin.

Applications for this solicitation are due in April with contract execution expected in June. NHCD staff and the organizations considering submitting applications are fully aware of the urgent need that exists to provide comprehensive eviction counseling services and representation for tenants during court proceedings. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the need for these services.

The displacement prevention initiatives began in November 2019 with the [Displacement Mitigation Accelerator Grant Competition](#) spearheaded by the City's Innovation Office which provided \$100,000 to community-based organizations that offered innovative solutions to prevent displacement. The department is also [providing capacity-building grants](#) totaling more than \$300,000 to community development organizations to help neighborhoods experiencing displacement, or are at risk of displacement, to develop capacities and programs to address affordable housing and amenities specific to their neighborhoods.

This work is part of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development's (NHCD) [Displacement Prevention Strategy](#), which incorporates recommendations from the City of Austin's Anti-Displacement Task Force [Final Recommendations for Action, 2018](#) to address gentrification and to develop strategies for preserving and expanding the supply of affordable housing, supporting small businesses, and

preserving the City's cultural assets. The strategy also incorporated the work of the University of Texas gentrification study [Uprooted](#), as well as the [People's Plan](#), which recommends strategies to minimize displacement. The Displacement Prevention Strategy is also responsive to the directive to create an implementation plan for the *Strategic Housing Blueprint*, as called for in City Council [Resolutions 20170413-024](#) and [20170413-025](#).

Initiatives in the Displacement Prevention Portfolio will evolve to be responsive to continued community feedback and ongoing program evaluation, which will measure effectiveness of preventing households from being displaced from neighborhoods experiencing various stages of gentrification in accordance with the Austin Strategic Direction 2023.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 512-974-3064.

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