

**HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & REDEVELOPMENT POLICY
COMMITTEE
January 12, 2023**

Members Present: *Council Member, Chair Crystal Murillo
 Council Member, Vice Chair Juan Marcano
 Council Member, Allison Coombs*

Others Present: Mattye Sisk, Adrian Botham, Jacquelyn Bayard, Andrew Rael-Trujillo,
 Angela Garcia, Emma Knight, Jessica Prosser, Tim Joyce, Alicia Montoya,
 Sandra Youngman, Joseph DeHerrera, Emily Fuller, Sarah Carroll, Mindy
 Parnes, Bianca Lopez, Andrea Amonick, Daniel Brotzman, Jeff Hancock,
 Jennifer Orozco

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Member Murillo welcomes everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES

December 1, 2022 minutes are approved. Council Member Coombs abstained.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jessica Prosser announces there are upcoming agenda items penciled in for the next months.

Council Member Murillo announces the Annual Point-in-Time Count will be on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. The Online Portal is open for volunteers.

NEW ITEMS

Resolution to Support the 2023 IGA with Adams County to Fund Colorado Legal Services' Landlord/Tenant Legal Services Program

Summary of Issue and Discussion

Emma Knight, Manager of Homeless Programs, presents this item. The Project IGA started in 2018 with all the cities within the Adams County to create an eviction defense and Housing Assistance Legal Services Pilot Program with Colorado Legal Services (CLS). The project began with \$25,000 in funding. Members of the IGA approved a continuation of funding for the Eviction Legal Clinic Program through December 2022. Arapahoe County started a similar project with Colorado Legal Services in 2021 to run through 2024, and provided \$1.5 million in ARPA funds. In 2022, Arapahoe County took 491 cases in just Aurora. However, they did not provide data for 2021.

The Eviction Legal Clinic aims to reduce preventable evictions, mitigate eviction-related consequences, and connect tenants with community services. Services are provided to:

- Tenants who have received a Demand for Rent, Notice to Quit, or Demand for Compliance.
- Tenants who have received court papers for an eviction.
- Tenants who reside in subsidized housing who are facing eviction.
- Tenants who have a default judgement entered against them and have a basis for it to be vacated.

From 2021-2022, the clinic received 98 cases and 116 from other housing cases with a \$25,000 commitment. Aurora comprised 14% of usage within the IGA program which is why the members do not see the need to increase the commitment for 2023 proposal.

The IGA staff recommend continuing the funding of CLS and support continuing the Eviction Legal Clinic through 2024. Staff asks Council to move this resolution to Study Session.

Questions/Comments

CM Murillo asks what the best way is for people to get connected with CLS and asks staff to talk about the funding or resources Aurora has and at what point would the people need to go to CLS. Emma says the Councilmembers can make referrals as necessary and she will share some fliers CLS has provided to her. She also states that people can call the CLS main line to gather all the necessary information. Emma adds that staff would try to get more information from the person and determine what they need so they can make the appropriate referral. She says the city has the Aurora Flexible Housing Fund (“Flex Fund”) with an annual budget of \$600,000 this year. Last year, the Flex Fund received over 800 requests, so they are increasing the budget this year. However, they are limited with Marijuana Funds as they also provide other services with partner organizations. If someone does not qualify for the Flex Fund, they can refer themselves to other housing funds, such as Denver Flexible Housing Fund, depending on their needs. Occasionally, they can refer individuals to the Community Development team who were previously doing Emergency Housing Payment Assistance (ERAP) for services like mortgage assistance.

CM Murillo asks how the Flex Fund has been utilized to help individuals stay housed. Emma shares that the Flex Fund has helped with rental assistance, deposit assistance, and being behind on utilities threatening their housing situation. Rental assistance and deposit assistance are the top two categories that they have approved. Emma will provide an update at the February HORNS meeting about the Flex Fund yearly numbers. CM Murillo expresses her gratitude for the continued fund for the program and to continue helping people stay their houses and connecting them to resources.

CM Coombs asks if the city plans to participate in the Arapahoe County Program as they are serving large number of residents. Emma says that is a great idea, but Arapahoe County has not asked the city to participate yet. Arapahoe County hasn’t started an IGA or any other cities within it as they are paying for the program with ARPA Funds. However, they will likely ask for assistance at the end of the agreement with CLS, which is until mid-2024.

CM Marcano states the Eviction Labs Analysis data from 2016 had 3,131 eviction claims in Aurora, which is 8.5 households per day. He asks what they can do to improve the utilization of these services as it seems there is a lot more demand than what the Eviction Lab has captured as well as the expensive housing and increase in homelessness. Emma says the CLS information is available in the Homelessness website and the Housing and Community Services webpage. As far as the Flex Fund goes, folks would have to go to partner organizations that the CLS is partnered with to get the needed information and getting applications to be approved overall. The CLS have over 30 partner organizations utilizing the Flex Fund with 250 people within those organizations are able to submit those organizations as well. Jessica Prosser adds that they are also looking at state funding related to House Bill 1377 that allows for homelessness preventions and eviction preventions. Jessica also states that working with landlords and letting them know about these programs is another method that has worked well for rental assistance since it allows them to catch people before they get to a point of having court proceeding. Emma shares that they are placing software fliers up in libraries and will have the Communications teams to add the CLS information to those as well.

CM Marcano agrees with the approach of working with landlords and landlord recruiters, and posits that will be critical to the overall approach to keep people housed. He follows up with a question if they have already tried putting out fliers in clubhouses or common spaces in apartment complexes with the highest rates of eviction in the city. Emma states that to her knowledge, they have not done that but it is definite possible that they have but she was not aware of it. However, she agrees that they will do that and work with the staff to make that happen.

Outcome – This item is informational only. Council Members support moving the item forward to the January 23 Study Session.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

Updates from Community Members

CM Marcano is meeting soon with Craig Maraschky, CHFA, and Paul Williams with the Center for Public Enterprise to help the Aurora Housing Authority increase their ability to build housing faster. He wants to include in the results of the meeting for a discussion to evaluation the options either on February or March.

Next meeting: 2/2/2023

Meeting Adjourned: 11:32 AM

APPROVED: *Crystal Murillo*
[Crystal Murillo \(Feb 13, 2023 16:42 MST\)](#)
Committee Chair, Crystal Murillo